

CIVIL's Education Enterprise Zones

A Parent's Right to A Quality Education Should Not Be Abridged.

(5/20/2020, Scottsdale, AZ.) For three generations, parents in the inner city and rural America have been forced to enroll their children in public schools that are underperforming or failing. They shouldn't have had to wait more than a *month*, much less five decades to get to access to a high-quality education.

It's not for lack of effort or good intentions that local, state, and federal governments haven't delivered, however, there is no reason that parents and students in underperforming schools shouldn't have the numerous options that rich parents do in in the suburbs. **It's just not fair.** Over five decades, combative politics has built a two-class education system, one for the haves and one for the have-nots. This is education inequality at its worst and shouldn't be tolerated. Education Enterprise Zones can help. Education Enterprise Zones will ensure that parents of students in failing schools have alternatives comparable to the numerous quality school choices wealthier parents send their kids.

The purpose of Education Enterprise Zones (EEZ) is to put the right to a public education in the hands of parents, not politicians, bureaucrats, and unions.

Education Enterprise Zones will allow families stuck with failing or underperforming schools to self-organize and invite education providers to propose alternative schools. Enterprise Education Coupons will be provided to parents to enroll students in the new education solutions of their choice. School options may include charters, private, online, home schooling, and religious institutions.

The U.S. Department of Education will provide best practices culled from the best K-12 schools in America so that new education providers have a head start on good processes that have already succeeded across the United States. States may provide additional insights. Additionally, federal and state departments of education will deliver success benchmarks for each year so parents can measure the quality of their children's progress.

Similar to an economic enterprise zone, an education zone will provide regulatory relief and financing for their children's education that would otherwise be impossible in the current political climate. For parents in states that do not wish to participate financially, the federal government would provide funding. The aim is for registering parents to acquire at least three school solutions from which the parent group can choose to register their children. Schools could be broken into K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and high school with starting enrollment ranges beginning at 150 students.

Over the last fifty years, local, state, and federal government initiatives for improving education, especially for inner city and rural schools, included busing, budgetary equalization, Title IX, No Child Left Behind, Common Core, and a doubling, in real dollars, of education spending. Yet, outcomes have continued to decline. Without parent engagement and options that transform the culture of education for the student, all the money in the world will not achieve better results.

Tom Lewellen believes that, as the ultimate purchaser of education, parents, as customers, have a right to choose the quality of education they want for their children, and if their first choice fails, they deserve alternative solutions. The problem with public schools is that they can't fail and repeating their failures year after year has destroyed the education culture.

America's education report card has not been good. According to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), proficiency results show the challenge: 37% of 12th graders are proficient in reading, 25% in Math, and 22% in Science. Economics, History and Geography fared no better. **Results for inner-city schools are on average about ten points lower.** For an industrial economy in the 1930s, NAEP's test results would have been adequate. For a 21st century knowledge economy, these results need to be flipped so that 63% of students – or more! - are proficient in reading and 75% and 78% respectively for Math and Science.

Our education system needs an update and Education Enterprise Zones will allow competition that will increase education quality and outcomes. Bill Gates has recommended more education choice. EEZ provides much broader choices for the students most in need of a quality education.

If the US economy is to accelerate into this century, to beat the mediocre 2.1% growth rate over the last 20 years, and to compete effectively against China's 30-year plan to kick western civilization to the curb, our education system must ensure that every student is proficient in math, science, reading, and writing. We must prepare our children to compete for 21st century jobs or they will lose the competition to robots.

The costs of a poor education vastly increase the likelihood a child will drop out of school, have a more difficult time getting a good job, and decrease the likelihood of engaging in the most important economic success event of a lifetime, marriage. Our anti-poverty programs have not reduced poverty over the last 50 years because our schools are unable to educate those children most in need of climbing onto first rung of economic success: an education. The number of people leaving poverty is equal to the number entering poverty due to the lack of an education.

Today, bright, talented kids in poor neighborhoods throughout our country are being sacrificed to prop up failed schools. Without a quality education, many will approach the job market without the necessary credentials for even a subsistence level job, many will lead limiting lives hampered by the social ills we're all too aware of, and others will wind up in prison. The cycle of inter-generational poverty and broken lives continues. 'It's shameful,' adds Lewellen.

A diverse education market in our poorer communities will produce options for a good or great education giving children most in need a better shot at their Pursuit of Happiness.

This Press Release is the second of six Proposals that will help raise the average GDP from the current 2.5% average the first 20 years of this century, to 4.5% the rest of the century.

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