



Florida Bill Offers Gov't Cash to Families Who Surrender Educational Liberty

Florida lawmakers are considering a major bill that would offer government funding to homeschoolers and families with children in private school, but with a *major* catch that has critics alarmed. The controversy: Once parents accept the public money, they will give up much of their educational freedom and independence. There is a battle raging already.

The legislation, known as [House Bill 1](#), requires that parents receiving public funding take government-approved tests every year. Because testing drives curriculum, and many (if not all) of the tests are aligned with the politically toxic Common Core, critics are warning that the bill would force many homeschoolers and private-school students back into the government system they fled.



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Another major concern with the bill among advocates of educational liberty is a mandate requiring families receiving the funding to meet annually with a so-called “Choice Navigator.” While the precise nature of the job remains unclear, the “navigators” would determine the supposed “educational needs” of each child, then work with parents to ensure those “needs” are met.

State and national homeschool leaders have already sounded the alarm about the issues in emails to their membership. They are working mostly behind the scenes right now to get the concerns addressed, and potentially remove homeschool families from the legislation entirely. For now, families that do not take the money would not be affected.

“FPEA believes home education programs should remain privately funded and free,” said Florida Parent Educators Association Chairman Suzanne Nunn in an email alert. “While we understand the need for oversight of government money, House Bill 1 will significantly entangle home education programs in this oversight.”

Among other suggestions, FPEA, which represents Florida’s homeschooling families, is asking that parents who take government money and educate at home be considered an entirely separate category under the law. The group is working with the Home School Legal Defense Association, a national powerhouse representing hundreds of thousands of families. It, too, has expressed major concerns.

Aside from the taxpayer-funded option known as the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) that would be expanded, the bill also provides for scholarships through non-profit groups funded by tax credits. Legal experts have warned that government money will almost inevitably come with “strings,” while private funding facilitated by tax credits would be more conducive to preserving educational



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 15, 2023

liberty.

Multiple sources in Tallahassee who spoke with The Newman Report acknowledged the concerns. But so far, none of the concerns have been addressed with amendments. Some changes are being planned for the coming weeks. Lawmakers broadly expect the bill to pass, though various forces are working to amend it.

Republicans have a super-majority in the Florida legislature, where teachers' unions have relatively limited influence compared to more liberal states and districts. Gov. Ron DeSantis has expressed support for measures to help families exit government schools, but has not weighed in on HB1 so far.

Efforts by lawmakers, churches, and others to help families escape the increasingly out-of-control government schools are to be commended. As The Newman Report has documented for years, the dumbing down, sexualization, and indoctrination are an existential threat to America. However, the efforts must *never* come at the expense of educational liberty.

An exodus is already underway. Millions of families have fled in recent years, and millions more will leave in the years ahead. Lawmakers in Florida and nationwide must avoid *anything* that might undermine the educational liberty and independence of the state's private schools and the wildly successful homeschooling community.

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