



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION AND TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

PARENT EMPOWERMENT AND HOMESCHOOLING IN TEXAS

HOW WILL ESAs AFFECT HOMESCHOOL FREEDOM?

ESAs will increase homeschool freedom.

Families who choose to use them will have broader access to education providers and services. ESAs also acknowledge that parents, not preassigned state schools, should be the ones deciding how children are educated and how Texas education dollars are spent.

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HERE ARE 3 SPECIFIC WAYS TO MAKE SURE THAT A PARENT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM ENHANCES HOMESCHOOL FREEDOM AND DOES NOT RESTRICT IT:

- Make it opt-in
 - If families don't want to participate, they don't have to. If they get a bad feeling, they can walk away. Families decide whether or not to participate. Homeschooling without voluntarily applying for an ESA will always be an option.
- Include zero federal funding
 - Federal education funding is not controlled by the state of Texas and does have clear strings attached that are hard to untangle. Leave it out of an ESA program.
- Write crystal-clear parent protections into the law itself
 - This way, if a lawmaker or bureaucrat tries to use a program to justify regulating homeschools in the future, the law is clearly on the parents' side—because the law itself says a legal version of, “in no way does this give the state the authority to regulate families, private schools, or the curriculum they choose.”

DO TEXAS HOMESCHOOLERS WANT ESAs?

Yes! A statewide survey conducted by the Texas Home School Coalition found that over 70% of Texas homeschool families support ESAs.



WOULD ESAS OPEN THE DOOR FOR MORE HOMESCHOOL REGULATION IN TEXAS?

No. Here's how we know:

- There have been no regulatory increases on homeschoolers in any state for the last two decades. Over 30 states other than Texas have one or more parent empowerment programs. Eight states have ESA programs. None of those programs have resulted in increased restrictions on homeschoolers.
- Let's narrow the field to low-regulation states similar to Texas. At least 7 other states are also low-regulation and have parent empowerment and/or homeschool sports access laws. Again, none of those states' programs have resulted in increased regulations on homeschoolers.
- New regulation requires new legislation. Every session, someone could try to regulate private and/or homeschools. Empowering parents in Texas wouldn't start that effort, it's always around. Confirming the right to homeschool in Texas back in the early 1990s, passing school choice in the present, or any future victory for parent empowerment does not give families the ability to sit back and take those freedoms for granted. The only way Texans keep their freedoms is constant vigilance.

HOW ARE HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS REGULATED IN TEXAS?

Homeschool regulation in Texas revolves around whether students are subject to the state's compulsory attendance laws, requiring that every school-age child attend school. The Texas Supreme Court ruled unanimously that homeschools are a type of private school and are therefore not subject to compulsory attendance laws. This ruling applies to students receiving parent-directed instruction in a curriculum that includes reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and good citizenship.

So if a student is receiving parent-directed instruction, in good faith, from a curriculum that actually exists and covers those five key subjects, they fall under the private school exemption to Texas's compulsory attendance laws.



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