



**NH State Senate  
NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Senate passes School Choice Scholarship Act**

*SB 372 expands educational opportunities for low and middle income families*

CONCORD - Legislation encouraging businesses to partner with local non-profits to expand access to non-public schools for low and middle income students passed the state Senate today.

Lauded by supporters as the best legislation of its kind for encouraging school choice, SB372 would establish an education tax credit for businesses that donate to registered 501(c)(3) scholarship organizations. These scholarship organizations will in turn provide tuition scholarships to eligible students attending or seeking to attend a private or an out of district public school. The average scholarship will be \$2,500 a year with scholarship funds also available for special needs students and homeschoolers.

**Senator Jim Forsythe**, R-Strafford, the legislation's prime sponsor, said, "Education tax credits enable more choices for parents, putting accountability for education directly in their hands. Studies have show increased accountability and competition improves the educational outcomes for students at both public and non-public schools and that should be the driving factor behind any education related legislation."

**Representative Gregory Hill**, R-Northfield, a House co-sponsor of the legislation, said, "We all understand that no school can be the right 'fit' for every student. We designed this program to help those families with limited resources afford the educational opportunity that best suits their child's needs." Note: **House Majority Leader D.J. Bettencourt** is also a cosponsor of SB 372 and is the prime sponsor of House companion legislation, HB 1607.

**Jason Bedrick, a Research Fellow at the Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy**, said, "Under the status quo, access to educational opportunities in New Hampshire is primarily determined by zip code and accident of birth. The School Choice Scholarship Act expands opportunities for low-income students and moves us toward an education system tailored to meet the individual needs of every child."

If signed into law. SB372 would make New Hampshire the ninth state to enact a scholarship tax credit program. Similar programs have succeeded in other states resulting in improved achievement for students as well as cost savings for taxpayers.

**Adam B. Schaeffer, Ph.D., a policy analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom**, said, "Education tax credits have been rigorously studied and vetted in states as varied as Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. They work. Education tax credits are the only education reform that can accomplish four vital things at the same time: increase educational freedom, save taxpayer money, increase achievement for kids in public schools and maintain the separation between church and state."

By using tax credits rather than vouchers, the bill ensures only private funds, not public money, is used for scholarships that may go to religious schools, putting the program on sound constitutional footing.

SB 372 now goes to the Senate Finance Committee for review. Revised fiscal notes on the legislation reveal the bill will have no impact on the budget this biennium and have a minimal impact on the next biennium. Similar scholarship programs in Florida, Arizona and Pennsylvania have in fact saved tax dollars in those states according to various studies.

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