



Driverless Cars and...School Choice?

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Self-driving cars may soon be on American streets, as more companies begin to test self-driving automobiles. Much of the self-driving car discussion has centered on safety concerns, but Jason Bedrick, policy analyst with the Cato Institute, has an interesting take on driverless cars: they could improve school choice.

According to a study by the Center for Reinventing Public Education on Denver and Washington, D.C. schools, 25 percent of all families, and one-third of poor families, did not send their children to the school of their choice "due to transportation difficulties." Half of the parents who were sending their children to private or charter schools had a commute time of at least 20 minutes. In more rural areas, writes Bedrick, transportation becomes an even more significant problem.

So where does the driverless car come in?

- Bedrick explains that driverless cars can drive much faster than humans can, because the car can respond to problems more quickly than a human can react; this allows the self-driving car to carry on at much higher speeds than a car driven by a person could, while performing at an even higher safety standard.
- Not only would commutes be shorter, but the self-driving car would allow parents to be more productive during their drives, meaning that "the distance that parents will consider logistically feasible will significantly increase."

Bedrick uses his own address as an example of the choice options that appear when one's ability to drive is expanded. There are 12 private schools within three miles of his house in Arizona, 34 schools within five miles, 69 schools within 10 miles and 234 within 25 miles.