

## President Trump: School Choice Is The ‘Civil Rights Issue Of Our Time’

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On Thursday, President Trump redeclared his commitment to enacting school choice, a conservative pitch most popular in the black American community, many of whom have grown weary of sending their children to government-funded public schools.

Speaking at the “Transition to Greatness” roundtable, the president called upon Congress to enact school choice now, hailing it as the great “civil rights issue of our time.”

“We are renewing our call on Congress to finally enact school choice now, school choice is a big deal, because access to education is the civil rights issue our time,” the president said. “I’ve heard that for the last, I would say year, it really is, it’s the civil rights issue of our time.”

President Trump elaborated on the benefits of school choice by forcing underperforming schools to better improve their methods.

“When you can have children go to a school where their parents want them to go, and it creates competition, and other schools fight harder, because all of a sudden they say, ‘Wow, we’re losing it, we have to fight hard,’” the president said. “It gets better in so many different ways, but there are groups of people against that. You have unions against it, you have others against it, and they’re not against it for the right reasons, they were against it for a lot of the wrong reasons.”

President Trump’s push for school choice at this turbulent moment in history is not coincidental, being that black American voters routinely have expressed support for it alongside criminal justice reform, which the president helped to enact with the First Step Act.

According to the [CATO Institute](#), poll after poll shows that black American voters overwhelmingly support school choice when the question is framed neutrally:

The journal *Education Next* has for several years asked questions both neutral and not so neutral to gauge school choice support. As I noted in my initial response to the CAP paper, the 2016 survey found “a whopping 64 percent of African Americans supported ‘a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools.’” The 2015 survey revealed that 58 percent of African Americans favored a program “that would give all families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with the government helping to pay the tuition.” 66 percent supported a similar program just for low-income families, and even

when using wording closer to PDK's, pluralities of African Americans supported it. In 2016 EdChoice asked three forms of a question about vouchers, and the composite average was 61 percent of African Americans favoring them.

The Black Alliance for Educational Options has also conducted polling, with very straightforward wording, such as “do you support or oppose parent choice,” and “do you support school vouchers/scholarships?” Asking African Americans in New Jersey, Tennessee, Alabama, and Louisiana these questions, in 2015 BAEO reported support ranging from 61 percent to 65 percent, depending on the state.

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