



## Report about Homeschooling Overreaches on Claims

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**Key New NEPC Review Takeaway:** In asserting a connection between school choice growth, homeschooling freedom, and increased educational innovation, report merely relies on occasional correlations.

The Cato Institute recently released a report arguing that homeschoolers should support school choice proposals because greater educational freedom empowers parents to provide richer learning opportunities for their children.

Robert Kunzman, Managing Director of the International Center for Home Education Research and a professor at Indiana University, reviewed *Homeschooling and Educational Freedom: Why School Choice is Good for Homeschoolers*. He found that while the report does identify some ways that homeschooling can contribute to educational innovation, its primary theme—repeated suggestion of a strong relationship between homeschooling growth and the expansion of other school choice policies—is not adequately established.

Drawing on four states with expansive education choice programs, the report's rationale is grounded on a purported chain of causation from robust school choice policies to homeschooling growth to educational innovation.

Professor Kunzman explains that these causal contentions are purely speculative and are not borne out by the broader state-level data. In fact, he writes, at least half of all states lack reliable data. Among states with data, some that do show dramatic homeschooling growth have regulatory environments more favorable to school choice, but enough counterexamples exist to make even simple conclusions uncertain.

While these problems compromise the usefulness of this new report, Kunzman notes that homeschooling is indeed a context in which educational innovation can flourish. The flexibility of homeschooling provides ample room for learning experiences that can meet the needs of individual students. But beneficial innovations are not the sole province of homeschoolers, since we find compelling examples in all sectors of schooling.

Professor Kunzman concludes that homeschooling serves as one potentially effective option for a good education. He also cautions that modest state oversight of homeschooling is useful to protect children's basic educational interests while preserving freedom for parents and their delegates to tailor the learning experience.