



These parents might miss school choice revolution because of one politician

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Wyoming's Republican House Speaker, Albert Sommers, is unilaterally blocking a bill that would empower all families with school choice.

The bill already passed the state's GOP-controlled Senate and has 33 cosponsors – a majority of the chamber – signed on from the House. Considering more than half of the chamber cosponsored, the proposal clearly has the votes needed to pass the Wyoming House floor.

The Wyoming Freedom Scholarship Act would create an education savings account program allowing all families in the state to take their children's taxpayer-funded education dollars to the education providers of their choosing. State funding would follow the student to an education savings account that their parents could use for any [approved education expenses](#) including private school tuition, tutoring, online learning, and instructional materials.

[Wyoming is the "most Republican state"](#) according to Gallup polling and the Cook Partisan Voting Index. School choice is on the Republican Party platform, and the GOP controls more

than 90 percent of the seats in the Wyoming House, but Speaker Sommers still will not allow the bill to leave his drawer.

Speaker Sommers is additionally blocking a parental rights bill that would ban classroom instruction of sexual orientation and gender identity prior to fourth grade.

Rep. Sommers told local reporters that he blocked the parental rights bill because it conflicted with his belief "in local control."

The Speaker said he blocked the Senate's school choice bill because it was "identical to the one that already failed in [the House] Education Committee."

These both sound like convenient excuses to kill policies that are strongly supported by his own party and constituents.

The most plausible explanation comes from the chair of the Wyoming Freedom Caucus, Rep. John Bear, who said, "I believe the biggest pressure [against the bill] is coming from the teachers union, of which [Speaker Sommers is] very supportive of."

Indeed, the Wyoming Education Association gave Rep. Albert Sommers a perfect score for the 2021 legislative session.

Speaker Sommers should read the room. This bad [news for Wyoming parents](#) comes as other red states are engaging in friendly competition to empower all families with education freedom. In 2021 and 2022, respectively, West Virginia and Arizona passed bills expanding school choice to all families. Iowa and Utah recently passed universal school choice bills.

Arkansas and Oklahoma each recently passed universal school choice bills through a chamber with supermajority support. There is a solid chance other states such as Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas will go all-in on school choice this year.

The dominoes are falling in other red states. Parents in "the most Republican state" of Wyoming, however, might miss out on the school choice revolution because one politician decided to trample on their right to educate their children as they see fit. Hopefully, the Speaker will have a change of heart, soon.

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