



Taxpayers Funding Creationist Schools

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By: Lisa Barron

An increasing amount of taxpayer dollars is being used to subsidize tuition for private schools, including those that teach creationism, **Politico** reported.

While taxpayers in 14 states will fund nearly \$1 billion in private school tuition this year, about 26 states are considering setting up new voucher programs or expanding existing ones, according to the publication.

Some states reportedly are leaning towards establishing individual bank accounts containing state funds that parents can use not only on religious school tuition but also on books and tutors.

Arizona's state's high court ruled Friday that a voucher program is constitutional, and the legislature is trying to expand eligibility to siblings of current or past recipients, the Associated Press reported.

Advocates of science-based education are opposed to the shifting of public funds to private schools, including faith-based schools.

"I don't think the function of public education is to prepare students for the turn of the 19th century," Eric Meikle, project director at the National Center for Scientific Education, told **Politico**.

Critics also maintain that the expansion of voucher schools, which are able to ignore certain academic standards, will damage the bipartisan **Common Core** effort.

Still, there is a growing support base based for the voucher system. Among the major players promoting it is Americans for Prosperity, funded by billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch, according to **Politico**.

In the past year, AFP has worked to push the program in 10 states, including Maine, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin.

"School choice provides accountability simply by providing parents with the power of choice," Peggy Venable, the group's senior state policy adviser, told **Politico**.

Neal McCluskey, an education analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute, agreed. "If you want very rigorous evolution instruction, you should be able to choose that," he said. "But you have to let other people choose something else."