

## ***Parent Trigger Is The Wrong Kind Of Choice, Cato Argues***

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The Cato Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based, think tank that has been an ardent supporter of school choice, has published a piece opposing the 'parent trigger.'

The law allows the majority of parents at chronically low-performing schools to petition for one of four methods to overhaul their schools, including replacing administrators and staff, closing the school or converting to a charter school.

Advocates argue the law would provide parents more leverage when dealing with school districts and boards reluctant to acknowledge a problem. But Neal McClusky has an issue that the law doesn't go far enough in the eyes of the free market advocates at Cato. Parents should have control of the money that pays for their child's education and the ability to use it at whatever school they believe is best, McCluskey writes.

*While I sympathize—obviously—with those who advocate giving parents more power, I cannot help but conclude that the parent trigger is a very poor way to do this. For one thing, it is inherently divisive: what about the 49 percent, or 30 percent, or whatever percent of parents who don't want the changes the majority demands? They've got no choice but to fight it out with their neighbors. It is also inefficient: individual children need all sorts of options to best meet their unique needs and abilities, but the trigger would just exchange one monolithic school model for another.*

*The trigger, quite simply, is no substitute for real educational freedom: giving parents control of education funds, giving educators freedom to establish myriad options, and letting freedom, competition and specialization reign.*

The parent trigger went down on the legislative session's final day with a tie vote in the Senate. Advocates say they will bring the bill back next year, and opponents say they will work to stop it again.