

Education Tax Credits are an increasingly popular way parents can make the best choices for their child's education.

Several states have various forms (Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota & Pennsylvania) for either personal or business taxes. Other states are considering them.

What are “Tax Credits”?

“Tax Credits” are about just one thing: helping parents make the best choices for their children and allowing parents to spend on their child's education the way they think is right without worrying what the costs are.

Why “Tax Credits”?

Who knows better than a parent and a child what type of education they need? Sometimes a child needs a tutor or an SAT prep course to better explain things. Sometimes they need some extra books or special computer software to help them learn. Sometimes a child needs special education services or therapy. And sometimes, instead of a public school, it is a private school that meets a child's needs best. Government gives tax credits for all kinds of things – like buying more energy efficient windows, buying a hybrid car that uses less gas, or a business that invests in research and development. Nothing is more important than the education a child. Government should do all they can to help “empower” parents to do it right.

How Do “Tax Credits” Improve the Nation's Education System?

The future of each child depends on the quality of their education. It affects the job they can have, the places they can live and the quality of their day to day life. Every child needs – and deserves – the very best quality education they can get. America's schools must teach the skills necessary for American workers to compete in the global marketplace. Tax credits are a smart way getting more money directly to schools, parents and children.

Do We Have a Stake in “Tax Credits”?

The answer is an overwhelming yes. Yes, because it will help every child get the education they are entitled to. And we have stake in high quality public schools that graduate well educated and productive citizens.

Like all Americans who care for our country and its future we are concerned about children who are trapped in dysfunctional schools (particularly in the inner cities) and not receiving the education they deserve. We are all invested in having a top quality educational system for all Americans – and tax credits will help make that so.

And yes, because our community will benefit from a dollar for dollar credit on their tax bill that lessens the enormous financial burden of tuition. Some Jewish parents can not afford the cost of a Jewish day school.

Do “Tax Credits” Violate the Constitution?

No. First, there is no government money that goes to a private school. Second, there are many allowed uses for government money in private schools. Since 1947, the US Supreme has allowed bus transportation, secular textbooks, school nurses and the like. And “tax credits” themselves were a case taken to the Supreme Court back in 1983 – and they said it was allowed.

Won't “Tax Credits” Destroy the Public School?

No. “Tax Credits” will help both our public and private schools. Public school students, especially those in inner cities, will get the help they need in the form of tutoring or other help.

Who benefits from tax credits?

Everyone. Parents have the power to choose what is best for their child and their child gets the best education they can.

Most of all, students benefit. If they need some extra help, or if they need some special education services, testing or therapy, they get it – right away. If they need a test prep course to get into a better college or some summer school to catch them up or get them ahead, they can get it, all without any extra bureaucracy.

Who supports tax credits?

A wide coalition of education advocates, business groups that need an educated workforce, parents and advocates of those with special needs, as well as a wide array of religious groups and elected officials as well as political leaders across America and from all ends of the ideological spectrum.

What can I do?

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

Urge your elected officials to support tax credits.

You may arrange meetings through the OU/IPA (212-613-8123 or ipa@ou.org).

Call, write or e-mail if you can not meet.

Make sure they know this is a community priority.

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America/ Institute for Public Affairs

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The ABC's of Education Tax Credits