

QuickPoint! - In 2025, Universal School Choice Comes First to Tennessee

By Kathryn Hickok

[Tennessee's Education Freedom Act of 2025](#) has become the nation's 13th universal school choice law. Tennessee lawmakers last week passed the statewide educational choice program, which will initially fund 20,000 scholarships—worth about \$7,296 each—to children who want to attend private schools.

Half of the scholarships in the first year are reserved for families whose incomes are at or below 300% of the eligibility level for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program. The rest of the scholarships are open to children of any income. [Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson explained](#), “This legislation has been marketed as a parental empowerment tool.... We’re not going to penalize people who work hard and might do a little better than someone else. We want these to be universal.”

School choice empowers parents to choose the educational environments that will best help their children succeed. [At least 40% of all students nationwide](#) are eligible to participate in a school choice program. When parents have choices, students have more opportunities for their individual learning needs and goals to be met. Tennessee deserves congratulations for opening the doors to success for children in the Volunteer State.

Kathryn Hickok is Executive Vice President at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization, and Director of Cascade's Children's Scholarship Fund-Oregon program.

February 5, 2025

Word Count: 191

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author's own.

