

The Center for Education Reform



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PRESS ALERT

For Immediate Release

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CER CONDEMNS COURT RULING DENYING QUALITY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

(Washington, DC 12/11/00) *The following is a statement by Jeanne Allen, President of the Center for Education Reform on the ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit striking down the Cleveland Scholarship Program.*

The decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit striking down the Cleveland Scholarship Program has dealt a devastating blow to the educational futures of the nearly 4,000 Cleveland children and their families who participate in it.

The Cleveland program is a life-line for thousands of disadvantaged young people in Cleveland. It is their best hope for educational opportunity and serves as a bold example of reform for other States and cities. If this decision is allowed to stand, these low-income kids will be wrenched from their school, and denied the best opportunity they've ever had for educational success.

Allowing the consumer to decide where to spend the state education dollar is not dissimilar from allowing the patient to decide where to spend his or her state health dollar – and just as constitutional.

In fact, federal and state governments already provide billions of dollars in support to religiously affiliated organizations such as hospitals, universities, and social service providers. Government vouchers for low-income parents exist to help fund daycare at private and parochial facilities. Thousands of students in higher education use federally funded Pell grants, National Direct Student Loans, and GI benefits to attend religious colleges and universities. In Florida alone, the Florida Department of Children and Family Services will spend \$46 million this year for social work performed by Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Lutheran, and other faith-based organizations. The state also funds religious institutions to administer juvenile justice programs.

As do most parents in this country, we've always believed and continue to believe, that parents are a child's first teacher and as such they and only they should decide where and how their children are educated.

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The Center for Education Reform is a national, independent, non-profit advocacy organization providing support and guidance to individuals, community and civic groups, policymakers and others who are working to bring fundamental reforms to their schools. For further information, please call (202) 822-9000 or visit our website at <http://edreform.com>.