

Education Choice for All Students

A Moral & National Imperative



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*A Policy Briefing Presented by the
Center for Urban Renewal and Education*

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Designed by Beck & Stone • Published September 2021
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Background

Education choice, also called “education freedom,” is the idea that parents should be able to choose where to send their children to school. The call for education choice impacts approximately 48.1 million students enrolled in K-12 public schools across America and their parents.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that K-12 public school enrollment dropped by more than 2 percent in fall 2020¹ and other reports cite post-pandemic increases in private school enrollment and homeschooling. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of America’s children still attend a taxpayer-funded government school to which they were assigned because of where they happen to live.

The Department of Education estimated that \$709 billion would be spent on public K-12 education in the United States during the 2020–2021 school year (not accounting for funding changes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic). This amounted to a projected expenditure of \$14,000 per student, with the federal government providing about \$40 billion of the total funding.

Title I (one) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965 provides for federal funds to school districts that are earmarked to help low-income students. In the 2020–2021 school year, about \$16.3 billion in federal funds went to school districts for this purpose. A small portion of Title I funds are shared with private schools, but some public school districts are not entirely cooperative in distributing those funds.

Responding to a complaint filed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles in September 2019, the California Department of Education issued an “investigation report” on June 25, 2021, charging the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) with “egregious” violations of federal law by withholding millions of dollars in Title I funds from archdiocesan schools.²

This report finds that K-12 education in the United States is far from what it should or could be. As a nation we are underperforming by international standards. CURE is also concerned that low-income Americans are particularly underserved by our nation's approach to education.

Lack of Competition

The public school system is controlled by government bureaucrats and unions. Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman described the situation in a 1993 article:

The behavior of union officials does not reflect the views of all or perhaps even a majority of union members. Public school teachers know what is at issue. In Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities, twice as large a fraction of public school teachers send their children to private schools as the citizenry in general. I have talked to many teachers who don't like the conditions in their schools, and have heard some denounce at public meetings the conditions at their schools that prevent them from being effective teachers. Most of the extra money that we have been spending on schooling has not been going to classroom teachers. It has been going to administrators, to consultants, and for all sorts of noneducational purposes.

Moreover, I believe that public schools would be the chief beneficiaries of effective, unhindered, empowered parental choice. Our institutions of higher education, both public and private, are number one in the world; our public elementary and secondary schools are near the bottom. How come? The answer is in one word: choice. Students can choose among many institutions of higher education (though here, too, the heavy hand of the government is increasingly reducing the diversity of educational alternatives); at lower educational levels, only those of us who can afford to pay twice for the schooling of our children have effective choice. Let parents have effective choice, and the public schools would rapidly shape up or go out of business.³

Apple founder Steve Jobs said:

The unions are the worst thing that happened to education because it is not a meritocracy. It turns into a bureaucracy, which is exactly what has happened. The teachers can't teach, and administrators run the place, and nobody can be fired. It's terrible.⁴

We know that the key to the success of our great American economy is freedom and competition. Competition is what produces excellence.

How can it be that in a sphere where excellence is possibly more important than anywhere else—the education of our children—we don't have freedom and competition?

Union Control

In the 2017–2018 school year, there were about 3.5 million full- and part-time teachers in America's public schools.⁵ According to the U.S. Department of Education's 2015–2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey, about 70 percent of public school teachers are in a union or employees' association.⁶

The largest teachers' union in America, the National Education Association (NEA), boasts 3 million members.⁷ The second largest teachers' union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), boasts 1.7 million members.⁸

While many members of these two giant teachers' unions are early childhood and K-12 public school teachers, many others are paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education personnel, nurses and health professionals, retirees, community allies, and other public employees.⁹

Union Values

The AFT and NEA are closely aligned with the hard left in American politics. In 2016, the AFT adopted a "Stand With Planned Parenthood" resolution saying:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers stands with Planned Parenthood and the millions who depend on its healthcare services, including contraception...and legal, safe abortions...

RESOLVED, that the AFT condemns the decades-long assault on Planned Parenthood by anti-abortion groups that demand barriers to reproductive health care and make it as difficult as possible for women to access the health care they need...

RESOLVED, that the AFT will call upon all its state affiliates, locals and members to urge their legislators, both state and federal, to stand up for women's health and defend, not defund, Planned Parenthood.¹⁰

The NEA advocates for “social and educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and White privilege perpetuated by White supremacy culture.” They argue that, “in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of White supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and White privilege.”¹¹ This ideology underpins the push for divisive critical race theory indoctrination in K-12 schools and colleges across America.

Both the AFT and NEA have been in the forefront of LGBTQ advocacy and have supported sex education curriculums that many parents find objectionable. They have called for large increases in domestic government spending and have opposed vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other policies that would provide low-income families with more choices in where their children are educated.

During the spring of 2020 and the 2020–2021 school year, teachers' unions set a very high bar for steps that needed to be taken to reopen schools for in-person education.¹² This reflected the inclination of the teachers' unions to put the interests of teachers ahead of the needs of children, who suffered socially, emotionally, and academically by their absence from in-person school during this period.¹³

Education Makes a Big Difference

When we talk about education, it's important to be thinking about what good ends we are trying to achieve. For our purposes, it is important to consider how education reduces poverty, although it is vital to remember that education aims at other high priority non-economic goods as well. It is clear that there is a very direct connection between education and earning power. Here's where blacks and whites over age 25 stood in 2020 regarding education achievement, according to the United States Census Bureau:¹⁴

Education Level	White %	Black %
High School degree	88.7	86.6
Some College	63.7	56.2
Associate degree	48.5	38.0
Bachelor's degree	37.5	27.8
Advanced degree	14.0	9.9

Although the gap between high school graduation rates for blacks and whites has almost completely closed, it still is the case that blacks are graduating high school with deficient skills in reading and math and that far fewer blacks than whites are moving on to higher education.

This has meaningful implications in earning power.

The United States Census Bureau reported that median black household income for 2019 was \$45,438, compared to the national average of \$68,703. According to that same report, the black poverty rate was 18.8 percent, compared to the national average of 10.5 percent.¹⁵

Lagging International Test Scores

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is conducted every three years and measures achievement of students around the world in three areas: math, reading, and science. Their 2021 assessment has been delayed due to COVID-19, so the most recent numbers are from 2018.

The 76 developed and developing world countries assessed included high performers like China, Singapore, Canada, and Estonia, along with low performers like Lebanon, Kosovo, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines. How does the United States fare against these other nations?

In science, out of 76 countries measured, the United States finished 18th. The average score of these nations was 489 and the U.S. score was 502.

In reading, the United States finished 13th out of 75. The U.S. score was 505, compared with an average of 487 among all the nations.

In math, the United States finished 37th out of 76. The U.S. score was 478, compared to the average of 489 for all the nations assessed by OECD.¹⁶

Given that the United States is one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the world, these mediocre results on international science, reading, and math tests is something to be concerned about.

China is our leading global competitor—economically and militarily. Along with Singapore, China is leading the pack and substantially outperforming the United States. This has grave implications for the future, especially if left-wing activists in the United States succeed in lowering academic standards in the name of racial 'equity.'

COVID Shifting the Landscape on School Choice

As teachers' unions opposed the opening of schools for in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents sought alternatives through private schools and homeschooling.

The U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey found that in late April/early May 2020, about 5.4 percent of U.S. households with school-aged children reported homeschooling. By October 2020, that number more than doubled to 11.1 percent. The proportion of black families homeschooling increased by nearly five times, from 3.3 percent to 16.1 percent.¹⁷

The Associated Press (AP) interviewed some parents to find out why they had switched from public schools to homeschooling. They reported:

The parents in one of those households, Arlena and Robert Brown of Austin, Texas, had three children in elementary school when the pandemic took hold. After experimenting with virtual learning, the couple opted to try homeschooling with a Catholic-oriented curriculum provided by Seton Home Study School, which serves about 16,000 students nationwide....

"I didn't want my kids to become a statistic and not meet their full potential," said Robert Brown, a former teacher who now does consulting. "And we wanted them to have very solid understanding of their faith...."

Charmaine Williams, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of Baldwin, also is using the National Black Home Educators curriculum as she homeschools her 10-year-old son, Justin, and 6-year-old daughter, Janel.

Williams said she and her husband tried two previous stints of homeschooling for Justin after school officials complained about his behavior. Now—with the new curriculum and an accompanying support network—they feel more confident about choosing it as a long-term option.

"At school, children have to follow a certain pattern, and there's bullying, belittling—compared to being home where they're free to be themselves," Williams said.

"There's no turning back for us now," she added. "The pandemic has been a blessing—an opportunity to take ownership of our children's education."

Joyce Burges, co-founder and program director of National Black Home Educators, said the 21-year-old organization had about 5,000 members before the pandemic and now has more than 35,000.¹⁸

According to Education Week magazine, based on a nationally representative survey of parents by the EdWeek Research Center, nine percent of parents who weren't homeschooling their children during the 2019–2020 school year said they planned to do so during the 2020–2021 school year.

Education Week further reports that homeschooling in response to the pandemic

is driving enrollment declines in schools and districts across the country, according to a majority of principals and superintendents surveyed by the EdWeek Research Center. Fifty-eight percent in a mid-October [2020] survey listed home schooling as being a major contributor to enrollment declines caused by COVID-19—more than any other single reason, such as losing students to charter schools, private schools, or “pandemic pods” in which families band together to hire instructors who teach their children at home.

In North Carolina, Education Week found that “more than 10,000 new families filed notices of their intent to home school between the beginning of July and the end of August [2020], compared to just over 3,500 during the same time period last year.”

Wisconsin reported “a spike in parents and guardians filing with the state their intent to homeschool. For the previous two years, intent to home school forms were submitted for about 14,800 students between the beginning of July and mid-October. [In 2020] the number was just over 23,000.”

At the local level, Education Week cited the DeForest school district in suburban Madison, Wisconsin. While the number of students leaving the district was relatively small at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year (about 50 out of nearly 4,000), the school district's leader estimates

that the number of new families enrolling in kindergarten compared to previous years dropped between 15 and 20 percent.¹⁹

Resources for Private Educators

The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which partners with about 100,000 members, has a map on their website that provides detailed information on how to withdraw from public school, as well as state-by-state homeschooling requirements including testing and mandatory subjects.²⁰

HSLDA has been operating for more than 35 years “to advance and protect homeschool freedom in the courts, legislatures, and in the court of public opinion.” They “equip parents with resources, educational consultants and Compassion grants because [they] love homeschooling and want more families to experience it.”²¹

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) helps schools and educators deal with today's challenging times. ACSI has a map on their website to help parents find Christian schools across America.²² They also provide resources about curriculums and assessments, accreditation and certification, professional development, and legal and legislative issues.

The American Association of Christian Schools (AACS) serves more than 100,000 students and teachers in member schools throughout the United States. The purpose and objectives of AACS are to aid in promoting, establishing, advancing, and developing Christian schools and Christian education in America.

AACS has a federation of state associations that work with the national association to provide member services.²³

State Legislators Promote School Choice Initiatives

While many conservative legislators have long favored school choice, the issue is gaining momentum at the state and federal level.



Mike McShane, Director of National Research at EdChoice, reports that 13 states created five new school choice programs and expanded 13 existing programs between January and May 2021:

Education savings accounts, or ESAs, are the vanguard of school choice policy. No longer must students exchange a voucher or a tax-credit scholarship at a single educational institution. Now, funding is placed in a flexible use spending account that families can spread across private schools, tutoring, therapies, and other educational resources. West Virginia passed an absolutely massive ESA bill that will have the broadest eligibility of any school choice program in the nation. Kentucky and Missouri were the first states to create ESAs that would be funded by tax-credited donations rather than by the state. And not to be left out, Indiana created a new ESA program, and Florida consolidated one of its voucher programs with its ESA program, allowing more students to have access to ESAs.

McShane further noted expanded voucher and tax credit programs in Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Indiana and Maryland. Finally, “Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, and South Dakota either created new tax-credit scholarship programs or expanded eligibility or funding for their existing programs.”²⁴

The American Legislative Exchange Council reports that 42 states and the District of Columbia have laws allowing public charter schools to operate, and half the states have some form of private school choice program.²⁵

EdChoice has a map of the 50 states that describes the kinds of school choice programs various states have enacted. The site is updated regularly to reflect new developments.²⁶

Congressional Initiatives on School Choice

Despite the fact that President Joe Biden is firmly in the camp of the teachers’ unions, school choice advocates in Congress are pressing ahead with creative ideas to empower parental choice in education.

Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) and Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX) have introduced the Support Children Having Open Opportunities for Learning (SCHOOL) Act (H.R. 1770, S.665) to provide flexibility and options regarding K-12 education. The SCHOOL Act would:

1. Amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to allow certain funds authorized under those laws to follow a child, whether learning in person or remotely, to the public school, private school, or homeschool of the child’s choice.
2. Allow those funds to be used for a range of needs, including:
 - a. Curriculum materials
 - b. Technological educational materials
 - c. Tutoring
 - d. Extracurricular activities
 - e. Private school tuition
 - f. Educational therapies for students with disabilities
3. Ensure each child would receive the same amount of funding, regardless of where the child is enrolled.
4. Ensure that no child choosing to take advantage of these opportunities would be precluded from a federally funded school food program.
5. Protect non-public education providers from Federal and State control.

Rep. Ted Budd (R-NC) and Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) have introduced the Academic Partnerships Lead Us to Success (A-PLUS) Act (H.R. 513, S.106). The bill would give states more flexibility to spend their federal education dollars in the form of block grants.

Under the A-PLUS Act, states would submit a “declaration of intent” to the Department of Education to consolidate federal education programs and funding and redirect resources toward education reform initiatives directed

by the state for any “purpose described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.” However, this would not include “any program funded pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.”

In introducing the bill, Rep. Budd said, “I believe that every child deserves the freedom to attend whatever school their family chooses. I also believe that our states are the laboratories of democracy and can spend their education funding better than a faraway bureaucracy in Washington.” Sen. Daines said, “We should empower state and local leaders to have more of a say in the classroom, and keep DC bureaucrats and the federal government out of it.”²⁷

Senators Mike Lee (R-UT) and Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) have introduced the Children Have Opportunities in Classrooms Everywhere (CHOICE) Act (S. 1757). Their bill would create education savings accounts with federal education funds. It would also expand the qualified expenses for 529 accounts for use in private schools and homeschooling.

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) has proposed the Educational Opportunities Act (S. 447). This bill would provide donors a dollar-for-dollar tax credit (up to \$4,500) for donating to non-profit organizations that provide tuition vouchers to low-income students (household income up to 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) to attend private schools.

COVID-19 Bill May Enable School Choice Initiatives

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) was enacted into law (Public Law 117-2). This major coronavirus relief bill provides \$126 billion to assist with safely reopening schools and accelerating the academic recovery of students through the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER).

In Section 9901, ARP authorizes the much more flexible \$350 billion of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds allocated by the US

Treasury Department, which may also be used for educational purposes. An American Enterprise Institute (AEI) report says the “flexibility offered through this program provides the opportunity for state and local leaders to provide direct financial assistance to underserved families to help address the well-being of children and accelerate their academic recovery (including through tutoring and parent-directed compensatory education services), social and emotional development, educational enrichment, and career development.”²⁸

The author of the AEI report, Senior Fellow John P. Bailey, says that “governors, mayors, and other state and local leaders should consider using the funds to establish individual education recovery benefits that provide low-income families with direct financial assistance to address the inequities exacerbated by closed schools and poor-quality remote learning.”

Bailey notes that guidance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury

points to ways these funds can be used to address the needs of children who were hurt by COVID-19. Among the suggested allowable uses are tutoring; expanding early learning educational services; improving summer, after-school, and other extended learning and enrichment programs; and providing additional funding to low-income schools...

The federal government has trusted low-income families to spend other direct cash assistance for their own best interests. State and local governments should also trust them to spend an education recovery benefit for their children's best interests.

These funds are available through December 31, 2024, but they are being allocated for various purposes. Therefore, school choice advocates should promptly request that state and local governments make some of these funds available to low-income parents to help their children recover from the educational deficiencies caused by COVID-19. Parents should be able to use the funds to pay for services from private providers, including religious organizations and schools.

Religious School Choice and the Courts

In a 5-4 decision (*Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*) on June 30, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a major victory for religious schools. The Court held that the Montana Constitution's "no-aid" provision to a state program providing tuition assistance to parents who send their children to private schools discriminated against religious schools and the families whose children attend or hope to attend them in violation of the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.²⁹

On July 2, 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it will hear a case (*Carson v. Makin*) brought by families from Maine who want to access a state tuition program to send their children to religious schools.

A Maine Department of Education rule allows families who live in towns that don't have public schools to receive public tuition dollars to send their children to the public or private school of their choice. However, that program excludes religious schools from eligibility.

The Institute for Justice, which represents the families, believes this is a "potentially landmark case" and says the state of Maine is "singling out religion—and only religion—for exclusion from its tuition assistance program."³⁰

The Supreme Court's decision in this Maine case is expected to be handed down in June 2022. The Institute for Justice says these families "seek to vindicate their right, once and for all, to select the best school for their children, whether the schools are public, private or religious."³¹

Recommendations

Parents should consider removing children from public schools.

The promotion of critical race theory in public schools is raising fundamental questions about the education of our nation's children. Education is about more than teaching children to read and write. It is about transmitting a worldview and a set of values that will define how our youth

think and how they will live. Many public schools have been captured by teachers' unions, and those unions do not hold conservative views on equal opportunity, sex education, or capitalism. Parents should prayerfully consider removing their children from public schools and insist that legislators let the money to educate those children follow each child.

Pastors should start private schools and homeschool networks.

As key leaders in many communities, especially low-income communities, pastors can play an enormous role in guiding their congregations. They can stress the importance of instilling Biblical values and urge parents to remove their children from the toxic culture that is pervasive in many public schools. Pastors of small churches should pool resources with other likeminded pastors to start a private school. If it's not possible to start a private school in the near term, or if a private school is not for everyone, homeschool networks are another effective means for parents to pool financial resources and instructional capabilities.

State legislators, governors, and local officials should expand access to school choice, including for religious schools.

More than 90 percent of funding for K-12 education is provided at the state and local level. Therefore, it is imperative that state and local officials embrace the principle that money should follow each child as parents direct it, including for private and religious schools and homeschooling. Education savings accounts with maximum flexibility are an efficient and equitable means to facilitate parental choice in education. Tax-exempt education scholarship funds are another effective means to help children from lower-income families access high quality private education. State leaders should also ensure that federal funds that flow through state agencies are provided on an equal basis for children educated through private schools and homeschooling, to the maximum extent permitted by federal law.

Congress should make all federal funds for education available to private schools and home schools on an equal basis.

Senators and House members have proposed creative ideas to empower parental choice in education. Ideally, all federal education funds should be block granted to the states with instructions that they be provided on an equal basis for public, private, or homeschool education. At a minimum, Title I funds for low-income students should flow to local communities through the states and be distributed equally to students regardless of the type of school they attend. Congress should also permit dollar for dollar federal tax credits for contributions that provide scholarships to low-income children to attend any school of their parents' choosing. It is imperative that Congress exercise its oversight responsibilities to ensure that the executive branch (e.g., U.S. Department of Education) is treating private education and homeschooling fairly and in accordance with federal law and the U.S. Constitution. This includes careful oversight of the federal rulemaking process and executive branch guidance that is sent to states and local communities.

The President and Secretary of Education should use their bully pulpits to promote education freedom in America.

It is impossible to consider our nation as free when parents have no choice regarding how to educate their children. The President, Vice President, Secretary of Education, Attorney General, and other high-level federal officials should promote education freedom as a matter of justice, equal opportunity, economic empowerment, and national security. The public school system is controlled by government bureaucrats and unions, so that must change. We know that the key to the success of our great American economy is freedom and competition, and the President has the most high-profile bully pulpit to make that case with regard to education. The President, his appointees, and all government employees have an obligation to ensure that our laws are faithfully executed and our constitutional freedoms protected. These officials should promulgate federal rules and

regulations in a manner that maximizes opportunities for parents to choose the best educational tools for their children.

School choice advocates should file lawsuits to ensure that children have the right to attend private, religious, or home schools.

It is a fundamental principle of our faith that all people have a God-given right to be treated equally; this right is enshrined in our nation's founding documents and the U.S. Constitution. When low-income children and others are denied the opportunity to receive a good education, the moral fabric of our nation suffers and we fall short of our founding ideals. The public school system is failing millions of our children, especially low-income children. We must use every tool at our disposal to right this wrong, and that must include legal action through the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court has begun to affirm the right of parents to educate their children in a religious setting, and we must ensure that right is fully protected. CURE is continuing our work with likeminded advocates to advance educational freedom and equal opportunity for all American children.



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²⁹ SCOTUSblog, “Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue,” accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/espinoza-v-montana-department-of-revenue>.

³⁰ Patrick Whittle, “US Supreme Court to hear Maine religious school tuition case,” *Associated Press*, July 2, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/me-state-wire-us-supreme-court-maine-religion-education-053be754922af11fe1bceaf408dof910>.

³¹ Institute for Justice, “Maine School Choice III,” accessed August 18, 2021, <https://ij.org/case/maine-school-choice-3>.

About the Authors



Star Parker

Founder & President

CURE was founded by Star Parker in 1995. Parker holds a bachelor's degree in Marketing and International Business from Woodbury University and has received numerous awards and commendations for her work on public policy issues. In 2016, CPAC honored her as the “Ronald Reagan Foot Soldier of the Year.” In 2017, Star was the recipient of the Groundswell Impact award, and in 2018, Bott Radio Network

presented Star with its annual Queen Esther award.

Serving on the National Religious Broadcasters Board of Directors and the Board of Directors at the Leadership Institute, Star is active in helping other organizations that impact the culture, particularly for younger generations. To date, Star has spoken on more than 225 college campuses, including Harvard, Berkeley, Emory, Liberty, Franciscan, UCLA, and University of Virginia.

She is a regular commentator on national television and radio networks including the BBC, EWTN, and FOX News, and the author of four books: *Necessary Noise: How Donald Trump Inflames the Culture War and Why This Is Good News for America* (2019); *Uncle Sam's Plantation: How Big Government Enslaves America's Poor and What We Can Do About It* (2003/2012); *White Ghetto: How Middle-Class America Reflects Inner City Decay* (2006); and *Pimps, Whores and Welfare Brats: From Welfare Cheat to Conservative Messenger* (1997).



Marty Dannenfelser

Director of Governmental Relations

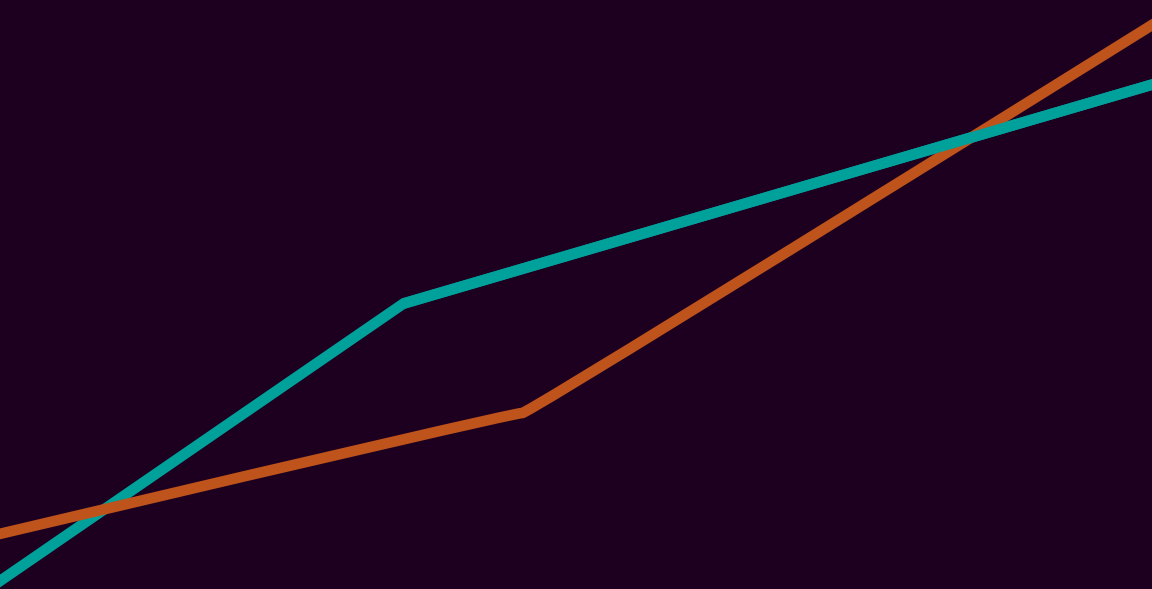
Marty Dannenfelser is Director of Governmental Relations for CURE. He tracks proposals from the White House, executive branch agencies, Capitol Hill, and the policy community—particularly as they relate to culture, race, and poverty—and shares CURE's ideas on free markets, religious freedom, personal responsibility, and other policy matters.

Dannenfelser previously served as the presidentially-appointed Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and as Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Office of Public Liaison. He has served in senior policy, government relations, and external relations positions with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Energy. Dannenfelser has also served as Senior Policy Advisor and Coalitions Director for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and as Legislative Director for a Member of Congress.

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