



IWV Supports the Catch Up Our Kids Act

July 26, 2022

Dear Senators,

Independent Women's Voice, which fights to enhance people's freedom, opportunities and well-being, supports the Catch Up Our Kids Act, introduced by Senator Ted Cruz, which seeks to address the learning loss crisis in the U.S. created by school closures and limited access to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I wrote in **this policy focus** for Independent Women's Forum (IWF), IWV's sister organization, the majority of students entered the pandemic with weak academic skills, but school closures and atrocious remote instruction compounded this existing problem.

Sadly, young children, students from low-income households, and students with disabilities experienced the most learning loss. As a **recent Harvard study found**, students in states and school districts that kept schools closed longer have suffered the most, and schools with large numbers of low-income and minority students were closed the longest.

Presently, school districts and unions hold all the power when it comes to education. The Catch Up Our Kids Act recognizes that the best way to effectively address the crisis we are in and get students back on track is to put power back into the hands of parents.

To do this, funding must be directed towards students. The Catch Up Our Kids Act proposes tax incentives supporting educational choice and freedom, including the expansion of 529 education savings plans to include homeschool expenses for a period of three years, and reallocating available Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) funding to Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) that could award student scholarships.

We thank Senator Cruz for his leadership on this issue, and urge you to join him in efforts to ensure that parental rights and educational freedom, not bureaucratic systems and union control, are prioritized.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ginny Gentles".

Ginny Gentles

*Director, Education Freedom Center
Independent Women's Voice*