



February 27, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of HB 1221 which will allow parents to use their 529s for K-12 tuition. Most private schools have a significant part of their enrollment represented by lower income families who should have the right to give their students an educational alternative to public education. These families would benefit immensely from being able to contribute to and use 529s for K-12, knowing they will not pay taxes on the earnings.

To think that public school education can meet the needs of everyone is like Scrooge saying "There are plenty of workhouses are there not, let them go there" when being asked for a Christmas donation to support the poor. In addition to that, the cost of a college education is causing more and more students to seek out a trade right after high school, making a meaningful high school education even more important.

Please help the state of Colorado not be a Scrooge. We are in strong support of allowing families to use their 529s for K-12 education and HB 1221.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Barricklow".

Betsy Barricklow
Co-Director
Tara Performing Arts High School



March 22, 2018

Colorado State House Education Committee
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to consider moving forward House Bill 18-1221 to grant an income tax deduction for 529 account distributions used for K-12 grade education expenses in Colorado, which would align Colorado's law with the recent federal law change.

Catholic schools have a long and rich tradition of providing an alternative, transformative educational experience for students and families who chose to make the personal sacrifice of paying school tuition in addition to the taxes they pay for their local school districts. For the 2016-17 school year, based on the national public school average cost of \$11,066 per student, Catholic schools provide more than 20 billion dollars a year savings for U.S. taxpayers for those students in Catholic schools (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) who do not use taxpayer dollars by attending Catholic schools.

Our schools are vibrant beacons of light in their communities and our families who make up the schools deserve the opportunity to receive some tax relief in exchange for lightening the load of our public school systems. For families to have the chance to receive a deduction for using 529 account distributions for Catholic school tuition after saving taxpayers such a large amount seems both fair and just.

Thank you for your consideration. We greatly respect the often thankless work you do to make Colorado the best state in the union to live and raise a family.

With very best wishes for God's blessings,

Jay Clark
Executive Director



Colorado Association of Private Schools

March 5, 2018

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

The Colorado Association of Private Schools (CAPS) believes that 529 Plans are a great way for parents to save for their child's college education.

And now, passage of the federal *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* allows parents who have 529 Savings Accounts to use them also to pay for K-12 tuition at private schools.

As an association representing 15,000 families that attend member private schools in Colorado, we urge you to pass House Bill 1221, sponsored by Representative Tim Leonard and Senator Tim Neville to align Colorado law with federal law.

We also ask you to vote down House Bill 1209 sponsored by Representatives Pettersen and Garnett that would ban the use of 529s for K-12 tuition.

- Hard-working families who choose religious and non-sectarian schools continue to fund public education with their taxes. *That's a win for Colorado.*
- Hard-working families who choose religious and non-sectarian schools thus pay twice for education (taxes and tuition). *That's a win for Colorado.*
- Every child in a religious or non-sectarian private school saves Colorado \$9,245 in per pupil state spending (Census Bureau data [2015] as reported by Governing.com). *That's a win for Colorado.*
- Allowing these families a modest state income tax break on their 529 savings investments can be a big help to Colorado families at little cost to Colorado.
- Making Colorado law conflict with federal law creates unnecessary confusion and complication in an otherwise helpful and efficient savings program.

By passing HB 1221 you will benefit families in the State of Colorado by continuing to give them a state income tax deduction for their 529 Savings Plans.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

Tom Cathey, The Association of Christian Schools International

Holly Goodwin, The Colorado Springs Catholic Diocese

Adam Dufault, The Archdiocese of Denver

Weston Kurz, Dayspring Christian Academy



EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Elementary Campus ... Pre-school through Sixth Grade
2511 N. Logan Avenue / Colorado Springs, CO 80907 / Phone (719) 634-7024 / Fax (719) 328-1554

Secondary Campus ... Seventh through Twelfth Grade
4052 Nonchalant Circle South / Colorado Springs, CO 80917 / Phone (719) 597-3675 / Fax (719) 597-6983

March 8, 2018

To be read and/or submitted to the Colorado House of Representatives.

Greetings Members of the Colorado House of Representatives,

I name is Dr. Jim Johnson and I am the superintendent of a private school in Colorado Springs. I represent the families of about 300 students here in our school. We are thankful for the work of the federal government to reform taxes on December 22, 2017. This reformation enabled the existing 529 plans to be expanded to include K-12 education. It is our hope that the Colorado legislation can be secured to allow similar action here in our state.

Therefore, we stand in support of HB 1221 and in opposition to HB 1209.

Respectfully submitted,


Dr. Jim Johnson
Superintendent – Evangelical Christian Academy

Dear Committee members

I am writing in support of House Bill 1221, to permit the use of funds saved in a Colorado 529 plan for K-12 private tuition.

I am a 47-year-old resident of Longmont, Colorado and, together with my husband, am the mother of two daughters who attend Crossroads School. Education is important in our family, and from the time that my daughters were born we began setting aside funds to provide for college. Initially these were in simple savings or in bonds, but when 529 accounts became available then we leapt upon the opportunity that those accounts offered.

When my daughters were in the earliest grades we tried homeschooling them. However, as we came near to the middle school grades an obstacle appeared. One daughter was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, and the other with a Generalized Anxiety Disorder. These conditions demanded greater educational skill than we were prepared to offer. Some sort of special help was needed.

Now I need to backup and explain that "special ed" is a tough subject for me. I myself required special help from late elementary school through high school due to a reading problem stemming from vision difficulties. For me, special ed was not a pleasant experience. I was withdrawn from the regular classes where my friends were and set aside into classes with kids that had far more severe issues than myself. Because of this experience, when my own daughters needed help I was determined to find as positive an environment as I could to meet their needs.

We found that environment at Crossroads School in Longmont. Crossroads has an emphasis on being a place where kids with difficult circumstances can find a supportive learning environment, and my daughters have both thrived there. In our specific case, we were able to find the money for tuition in our regular budget and savings. However, it seems clear to me that had our financial circumstances been different, then having the 529 money available for K-12 tuition could have made the difference in my daughters even completing secondary school.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jones

Friday, March 9, 2018
Eric Strassburger
3574 South Hudson Street
Denver, CO 80237

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello Madame Chair and members of the committee my name is Eric Strassburger and I am here today representing myself and my family to voice my support for HB 1221 and my opposition to HB 1209.

My wife and I struggled with a miscarriage and trying unsuccessfully to get pregnant over 3.5 years. We felt like we won the lottery when we gave birth to our first daughter (Cosette) and then twin girls (Adalay and Harlyn) a year and a half later. Now we feel like we are literally going to have to win the lottery to cover the costs of sending them to our home parish of Most Precious Blood and my alma matter of Regis Jesuit High School that would total roughly \$338,250 using today's tuition rates. Catholic education has been a priority for my family for generations, and I too am trying to shoulder the necessary financial burdens like my parents and grandparents before me. We setup multiple 529 plans using gifts from their baptisms but we are feeling the pinch with Denver's high cost of living like many other middle-class families.

As a result, I was very pleased when I found out that the federal tax reform bill expanded 529 plans to include K-12 educational expenses. This expansion offers a new avenue for my family to save and utilize pre-tax dollars to potentially pay for K-12 private school tuition for our daughters. As you know Colorado is one of a handful of states that must adopt legislation in order for my family, and so many other families like mine, to have the same 529 state tax benefits for K-12 educational use that I currently have for college savings and use.

It is my hope that Colorado will do the right thing by allowing a family like mine the power and flexibility to use the money in our 529 account to determine what is in the best educational interests of our children, not just when it comes to college, but also regarding K-12 education. The ability to invest in my children's future by choosing a school that best meets their current needs and adequately prepares them for college will pay dividends in the future.

Aligning Colorado law to mirror what the federal government has allowed for regarding 529 accounts is exactly why I support HB 1221 and oppose HB 1209 and I respectfully ask that you support HB 1221 and oppose HB 1209.

Sincerely,

Eric Strassburger

March 1, 2018

To Members of Colorado State Assembly
& the House Education Committee,

First we'd like to thank Timothy Leonard, Tim Neville and co-sponsors of HB18-1221. This letter is to urge you and other members of the House Education Committee to vote in favor of HB18-1221. Further, we would like to communicate our opposition to HB18-1209.

It is critical to support parents' right to choose educational path suited to their own children. This bill is another step to allow our community to use their *own* after-tax contributions into a 529 plan toward qualifying educational expenses - including K12 education.

It is crucial that Colorado law honors the federal Tax Cuts and Job Acts law by passing HB18-1221 which will then align the federal and state laws in the matter of using 529 funds for K12 education.

We would like to also express our opposition to HB18-1209. Not only do we strongly disagree with this proposed legislation, there should *never* be a tax-recapture clause or any penalties whatsoever if a family were to choose to use 529 funding for k12 education. The prospect of a penalty for doing with the federal law allows is absurd.

Please vote in favor of HB-1221 which in turn validates our freedom in America and supports the principles of a free-market economy.

Respectfully,

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Scott Harry
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Dear Representatives,

Please make distributions for K-12 tuition expenses eligible for the Colorado state tax deduction and protect withdrawals for this use from state tax recapture by supporting HB18-1221. This would then reflect the recent changes made at the federal level in the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* and would make Colorado more competitive with other states in supporting school-age families and their educational decisions.

Colorado taxpayers, whether they have school-age children or not, share in the responsibility of funding public education. We, as citizens of the state of Colorado, all benefit from an educational system that meets the needs of all of our children. Our public schools are some of the most successful in the nation at meeting the wide-ranging educational needs of hundreds of thousands of children.

However, there are times when parents feel their child's educational needs are best met outside of the public school system. The reasons parents may choose a private education for their child are many. They may have a child with specific physical, developmental, cognitive, or emotional challenges that their local public school is not able to address according to their child's specific needs. Some parents may opt for a private school for their child because of the school's specific method of teaching or educational philosophy. Other parents may choose a private school for the additional character, faith, or moral development the school can provide. Some parents may have a child with high academic, musical, or athletic aptitude and may want a private school with an emphasis in the area in which their child excels. Still other parents may wish to send their child to an international school with a focus on multicultural and multilingual educational opportunities.

Parents know best what type of school is most appropriate for their child's educational, emotional, and developmental needs. Aligning Colorado law with the new federal law in the area of 529 plans will empower parents to make the best individual educational decisions for their individual children without minimizing the importance of supporting public education. Just as children from the same family are not all the same, their educational needs may not be the same either. While public schools successfully meet the needs of a majority of children, they may not meet the needs of every family or every child within the same family. Opening 529 plans to K-12 tuition would give parents greater liberty to customize their child's education in order to meet their individual needs and maximize their scholastic accomplishments. Please vote yes on HB18-1221.

Respectfully,

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2. Todd Hattenbach
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