

The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty: Releases school choice study in Mississippi

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February 8, 2018 - Milwaukee, WI - The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, in conjunction with the Mississippi State University's Institute for Market Studies, is releasing a new study: "[Mississippi's Game Changer: The Economic Impact of Universal School Choice in Mississippi](#)." Building on WILL's previous research on the [economic benefits of school choice in Milwaukee](#), the study estimates that more than \$1.5 billion dollars in economic impact could accrue to Mississippi through the implementation of a universal ESA, which is currently being debated in the state legislature.

The authors of the study, WILL Research Director Will Flanders and Cato's Policy Analyst Corey DeAngelis, presented the findings Wednesday in Jackson, Mississippi. The roll-out of the study included meetings with state lawmakers, the chamber of commerce, and the public. The authors were interviewed by local media.

The study comes in the middle of a major Education Savings Account (ESA) bill advancing through the state legislature. SB 2623 would give nearly all students in the state access to a taxpayer-funded education savings account to spend on educational services, including private school tuition, transportation, online classes, and tutoring. It would be one of the most expansive school choice programs in the nation.

Dr. Will Flanders on the study: “The debate over school choice is reasonably focused on the dollars and cents. We wanted to show the benefits of school choice extend far beyond the immediate financial impacts to have a transformative, economic impact on the state.”

Among the findings of the study, if Mississippi would enact a universal ESA:

- Mississippi would have 9,990 fewer felons and 13,824 fewer misdemeanors by 2036, leading to a reduction of over \$384 million in costs to society.
- Mississippi would have 7,798 more graduates by 2036, leading to social benefits in excess of \$1.6 billion.
- Mississippi would pass West Virginia in 14 years on per capita personal income, and the advantage would grow to around \$2,300 per person by the year 2036.

Co-author Corey DeAngelis of the Cato Institute adds, “Mississippi has an opportunity to become a leader in the effort for education reform across the country. Thousands of students stand to benefit from the opportunities that school choice can offer.”