



Secular Maryland

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### **HB 569 - OPPOSE**

HB0569 Primary and Secondary Education - Education Savings Account Program - Established (Maryland Universal School Choice Act)

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

This bill would create tax exempt savings account exclusively for non-public primary and secondary education that would be utilized for private tutoring and other education related expenses. State grants for the full per student cost of a public education would also go directly into the savings accounts. It would send the same full government subsidies into the tax exempt savings accounts of affluent families sending their children to well funded private school . It would give more government money overall per student to private schools than to public schools. Lawmakers who vote for this bill will be voting to, in effect, replace public school education with private school education. It would be astonishing for this anti-public school bill to be reported favorably by the committee in either chamber, let alone in a floor vote.

Secular Maryland is skeptical of the wisdom of state government subsidies for private schools. Studies of student outcomes show no overall educational achievement outcome benefit for students who receive government subsidies to attend private schools in comparison to the students attending public schools. Insofar as we continue to fund private schools, we think transparency on educational outcomes of all schools receiving government funding from properly conducted state-wide standardized testing is needed, and only those private schools that show overall outcomes equal to, or better to, the local public schools should qualify for government funding, which should not exceed the funding going to students going to public schools.

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