

Quotes about the DeVos Nomination

1. The National Review supported the DeVos nomination. In an editorial, the conservative publication condemned the size and scope of the ED and applauded the idea of school choice. The editorial noted a slippage in reading and math scores in 2015 (as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress), and argued that this shows that the recent education initiatives have not worked. They also pointed to the success of DeVos' American Federation for Children in helping to elect reform-minded candidates.

DeVos has long been bullish about the prospects for school choice in its many forms, observing that the ineffectiveness of the public-school monopoly, often ruled by thuggish teachers' unions, has become obvious. It's part of the reason that Congress passed and President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act last December, the most sweeping education-reform bill since No Child Left Behind, and the most significant deregulation of American education in recent memory — now in need of a secretary who will enforce its terms.

Meanwhile, school choice — a term, she has said, that ought to encompass everything from “vouchers and tax credits [to] virtual schools, magnet schools, homeschooling, and charter schools” — is taking root as a viable, and better-performing, alternative. As education secretary, DeVos will be in the ideal position to roll back the mess of federal regulations that have hamstrung teachers and kept students in failing schools, to restore to states a measure of power over their own education systems, and to help make the government a resource for, not an impediment to, student success. Conservatives opposed to another four years of top-down meddling in the nation's classrooms should applaud this principled choice.

2. Diane Ravitch, and author and historian of American education and a best-selling author, writes in *In these Times* that DeVos and Prince families “have contributed generously to anti-gay and anti-labor causes over the years, but Betsy DeVos and her husband, Dick, have shown a special passion for privatizing public education.” Ravitch, who has written extensively about education reform, argues against DeVos's deep support for “school choice.”

School choice advocates seldom mention that every dollar allocated to vouchers or charters is a dollar subtracted from public schools, which are compelled to lay off teachers, increase class sizes and cut programs in response. Meanwhile, voluminous research on charters shows that they do not necessarily offer better quality education. Even those schools that get high test scores often achieve this by cherry-picking new students and culling existing ones through high attrition rates. Vouchers, meanwhile, help prop up religious schools that teach creationism and employ few, if any, certified teachers.

The DeVoses and their foundations have spent millions nationwide to elect pro-school choice candidates to school boards, state legislatures and Congress. Anyone who wants to understand the failure of the school choice movement should look to Michigan. Charter schools were first authorized in the state in 1993. In 2014, a [year-long investigation](#) by the Detroit Free Press concluded that the state was spending \$1 billion annually on charters that performed poorly, and were neither accountable nor transparent. Today, 80 percent of the state's approximately 300 charter schools are operated by for-profit management. Since the onset of school choice, Michigan's performance on national tests has steadily declined.

3. Former presidential candidate Jeb Bush was enthusiastic about DeVos' appointment. Writing in USA Today, Bush reiterated the anti-big government positions he took in his campaign. He also condemned teachers unions, and opined that school choice benefits lower income children.

While the vast majority of K-12 spending is done by state and local governments, the bulging layers of bureaucracy that administer education policy are the direct result of federal overreach into our education system. As a result, too many education dollars are wasted on bureaucrats and administrators instead of being driven down into the classroom where they could make a bigger impact on learning.

Instead of defending and increasing Washington's power, Betsy will cut federal red tape and be a passionate advocate for state and local control of schools. More importantly, she will empower parents with greater choices and a stronger voice over their children's education. In the two decades that I have been actively involved in education reform, I have worked side-by-side with Betsy to promote school choice and put the interests of students first. I know her commitment to children, especially at-risk kids, is genuine and deep.

4. The New York Times editorialized against DeVos's nomination. The editors noted her record in Michigan to stop legislation designed to hold charter schools accountable. They also noted her reluctance in the hearings to support Education Department efforts to prevent fraud by for-profit colleges.

"Government really sucks." This belief, expressed by the just-confirmed education secretary, Betsy DeVos, in a 2015 speech to educators, may be the only qualification she needed for President Trump.

Ms. DeVos is the perfect cabinet member for a president determined to appoint officials eager to destroy the agencies they run and weigh the fate of policies and programs based on ideological considerations.

She has never run, taught in, attended or sent a child to an American public school, and her confirmation hearings laid bare her ignorance of education policy and scorn for public education itself. She has donated millions to, and helped direct, groups that want to replace traditional public schools with charter schools and convert taxpayer dollars into vouchers to help parents send children to private and religious schools.