



The Justice Foundation

Advancing Life, Liberty, and Justice

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE
ON SCHOOL CHOICE
August 24, 2012**

My name is Allan Parker and I am the President of The Justice Foundation, headquartered in San Antonio, Texas. I represented public school districts as their attorney while at Gary, Thomasson, Hall and Marks in Corpus Christi, Texas, from 1979 to 1983. Thereafter I was a professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio and taught Education Law and Civil Procedure. I was designated a Hero for Children by the State Board of Education in 2000 for my contributions to public school education in Texas.

After more than thirty years' experience in Public Education Reform, including representing public school districts, representing parents, and being appointed by the State Board of Education as one of the official evaluators of the Open Enrollment Charter School Program, I firmly believe there will never be an efficient and productive education system in Texas until there is universal school choice for all students.

Choice and freedom are catalysts to improvement from the bottom up. When parents are free to leave a school that is not meeting the needs of their child, then they are empowered to get a better education for their children. This is not only good for that particular child, but forces improvement at the local level and improves conditions for those children who voluntarily choose to stay in a school.

In addition, the issue is not whether public schools or private schools are better, the issue is what is best for a particular child at that stage in the child's life. The parents are generally in the best position to make that determination, though compulsory attendance laws will always force uncaring parents to place their children in some school. The children of uncaring parents are better protected by letting caring parents exercise choice, thus forcing change at the local level rather than expecting them to demand and achieve change through the political process.

Allan E. Parker
President
The Justice Foundation
7210 Louis Pasteur Dr., Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78229

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The Justice Foundation | 7210 Louis Pasteur Drive, Suite 200 | San Antonio, Texas 78229 | 210-614-7157 | 210-614-6656 fax
info@txjf.org | www.thejusticefoundation.org | www.operationoutcry.org