

# EDUCATION NEWS & NOTES

## Stretched State Budgets Require More School Choice

(NAPSA)—The population of the U.S. is aging in a way that may present some challenges for public education in the near future.

Fortunately, according to a new report published by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and the Foundation for Excellence in Education, school choice offers a way to address those challenges.

The report, “Turn and Face the Strain: Age Demographic Change and the Near Future of American Education,” by Dr. Matthew Ladner, contends the aging of the U.S. population between now and 2030—what Ladner refers to as “Hurricane Gray”—will profoundly impact all aspects of the financing and operation of American social welfare functions.

He points to the fact that:

- Every day between now and 2030, 10,000 members of the baby boom generation will reach the retirement age of 65.

- The U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012 National Population Projections indicate the country will gain over 4.6 million residents ages 5 to 17 between 2010 and 2030.

- By 2030, 45 out of the 50 states will have a higher percentage of their population aged 65 or older than the oldest state (Florida) did in 2010 and all 50 states’ elderly populations will be higher than they were in 2010, also according to the Census Bureau.

All of which means that the percentage of those receiving state benefits is growing while the percentage of those who are working and can be taxed to fund benefits, such as public education and senior health care, is shrinking.



**The age-dependency ratio of taxpayers “pushing the carts” of Americans dependent on government services will reach historic proportions over the next 20 years.**

Ladner argues that this reduced funding base will make it difficult for public schools to prepare all students adequately. Private and charter schools of choice, he says, can help at a fraction of the cost.

Ladner contends that expanding school choice for all families would reduce the cost of public education and allow government to increase funding for other services, particularly for seniors.

He further argues in favor of shifting how states fund public education, from sending tax dollars directly to public schools to a system where families receive those tax dollars in government-authorized education savings accounts, or ESAs. In Arizona and Florida, parents can use ESA programs to pay for their children’s school tuition, tutors, therapists, online courses, curricula or a combination of each. Because students receive 90 percent of their dedicated public funding, ESA families actually save the state money.

To learn more, visit [www.edchoice.org/FaceTheStrain](http://www.edchoice.org/FaceTheStrain).