

Issue: AZ Universal Voucher Program

## Arizona's Universal ESA Voucher Program Talking Points

### AZ Vouchers: Zero Guardrails, Zero Accountability, Zero Transparency

- Arizona's Republican legislature enacted a universal school voucher program in 2022 that provides approximately \$7,000 per student to families that opted out of the public school system.
- The program lets parents use the money to pay for private school tuition, home-schooling, tutoring and other expenses—with virtually no accountability.

### Runaway Costs

- Today, over 70,000 students participate in Arizona's voucher program which, originally budgeted at \$64 million, will cost the state over \$900 million in 2024.
- The impact on the 2024 budget is significant, with a \$400 million deficit for the current budget year and another \$450 in the coming year.

### ESA Voucher Users: the Disparity between Rich and Poor

- In 2023, 71.2% of voucher recipients were previously enrolled in private schools.
- Wealthier families are obtaining a greater percentage of vouchers, resulting in an increase in inequities among students.

### No Program Accountability

- Arizona's voucher program, one of the country's least accountable, does not require private schools to disclose information on their finances, operations or student achievement.
- Some parents are using their voucher funds for non-academic expenses, including kayak and horseback riding lessons, home gyms and televisions.

### Voter Dissatisfaction with the Voucher Program

- A majority of Arizona voters asked their opinion on universal vouchers were against the program, with 65% supporting a ballot measure to limit it to students in need.

### Fixing the Voucher Program

- Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs and Democratic legislators' plan to overhaul the voucher program would increase transparency and accountability by:
  - requiring private schools receiving vouchers to have minimum educational standards.
  - prohibiting private schools receiving vouchers from raising tuition at a rate greater than inflation.
  - requiring students receiving vouchers to have attended a public school for 100 days at any point in their education prior to becoming eligible for the voucher program.