

School Choice Rally 1.29.16

Thank you, **Janice**.
And good morning, everyone!

What a GREAT turnout!

I know there are
School Choice events
going on *all* across America
this week.

But I can't imagine
the crowds being as great
as *this* one --
RIGHT HERE
at our State Capitol.

So, to the elected officials --
-- the teachers, the parents --
and of course,
the BEST students
in the country:

WELCOME --
and THANK you
for joining us today.

There are few issues in education
as critically-important --
-- and as unifying --
as a parent's right
to choose
the best school
for their child.

And as this great annual tradition
has demonstrated
for five years running...

-- When it comes
to celebrating
educational excellence --

-- NOBODY
does it bigger
or better --
-- than National School Choice Week!

Year after year --
-- kids, parents,
principals, teachers,
and leaders from every
professional
and philanthropic background --

-- rally by the THOUSANDS
to support
and promote
SCHOOL CHOICE.

YOU all
have contributed
to making THIS coalition
the greatest education-related effort
IN THE WORLD...

And more importantly --
-- to making ARIZONA --
THE national model
in advancing
parental choice
in education.

This is something
we can ALL be proud of.

Ensuring
opportunity in education --
for ALL children --

-- is not a political
or partisan effort.
It is a PRIORITY effort.

And it's CONTINGENT
upon OUR ability
and commitment --

to expanding OPTIONS
for kids and parents --

-- and empowering
FAMILIES
to make the decisions
that only THEY can.

**

Government can do a lot --
-- and we *are* --
to improve
educational results
for our kids.

Whether it's
passing Prop 123 --

-- and getting
teachers and principals
the resources
they've been asking for --
WITHOUT raising taxes ...

Or making it easier
for our best public schools
to expand
at low cost ...

Getting more kids
OFF wait lists,
and INTO the best public schools
of their family's choosing ...

We are focused
on constant improvement
for our kids.

But the resources
and the reforms
can only go as far --

-- as the options available
to families.

Which is why
we must CONTINUE
to make
parental choice
a REALITY --

-- not just a talking point.

Across the country
and here at this Capitol today --
-- are educators and advocates
representing a variety
of GREAT schooling options.

From traditional public schools,
to magnet schools --
-- to public charters--

-- to private --
-- to online --
-- to homeschooling.

Not ONLY
do parents need to know
these options exist ...

They ALSO must have
as much information and input
as possible
about each of them.

There's nothing
more important
for a parent --

-- than doing the right thing
for their child.

And as those of us
with kids in school,
know --

these decisions --
-- the ones
that are going to determine
our children's success
in school, college, career and life --
-- can be daunting.

OUR goal --
-- in Arizona --
is to make the process
as stress-free
and seamless
as possible.

We're already
doing that better
than anyone in the country.

Thanks to fantastic
education leaders
like **Janice Palmer** ...

-- and the entire membership
of **AZSBA** --

the FIRST
School Boards Association
In AMERICA
to sign on as a partner
to School Choice Week.

Thanks to
nationally-renowned advocates
like **Lisa Graham Keegan** --

-- one of the most hard-working
and influential
school choice champions
on the planet ...

Thanks to all the organizations
and public servants
represented at this Capitol --

-- the parents, the students,
the stellar teachers
like **Christine Marsh** --

-- *2016 Teacher of the Year* --

--who make our state proud --
and make the difference
in our kids' lives
every day.

Thanks to ALL of you --
-- education in Arizona
is on the rise.

And we're not slowing down.

As we join here today
in celebration
of the largest
education rally
in Arizona history --

there are some out there
who are more interested
in protecting the status quo --

-- rather than
promoting parental freedom
in education.

All WE can do
is continue to share
our message --

-- louder, wider
and more often.

My concern is --
and always will be --
-- for these kids here today --

and all over our state --
-- in classrooms,
-- at the local library,
-- at their kitchen table --

We owe it to them
to keep standing up for them
and their families.

Great things happen
when good people
come together
and put Arizona kids first.

That's what we're doing
by coming out
in numbers today...
and throughout this past week.

School choice
is about more
than just a week in January.

School choice
should be our mission
today, tomorrow,
and every day.

And I look forward
to standing with you,
and working with you --

-- to make Arizona
the best state in the country --

-- for children and families
looking for a world-class education.

The momentum is on our side --
so let's keep it up.

Thank you.