

Big Sacrifices, Big Dreams: Ending America's Bigoted Education Laws

FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SEEKING THE BEST EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Our new documentary film traces the ordeals of four very different families who share the same struggle to send their children to schools that offer instruction rooted in religious faith, academic rigor, and a culture of respect.



FAMILIES OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

THE MORINS,

a Catholic family of eight from Fall River, Massachusetts, want a structure and values-based education for their children

ROBIN LAMP,

a Baptist single mom and her two teenage daughters, Haley and Hannah, from Stockbridge, Georgia, are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the state's bigoted Blaine amendments

ARLETE DO CARMO,

a first-generation Brazilian-American mom who works multiple housecleaning jobs to send her Presbyterian daughter, Sarah, to Marian High, a Catholic school in Framingham, Massachusetts

THE COSTONS,

a missionary couple, make financial sacrifices to enroll their three young children at Calvary Baptist Academy in Midland, Michigan

These families come from states that have legal barriers to programs that would make it possible for low- and middle-income children to attend parochial schools.

Their moving stories will endear them to audiences from every faith background – and mobilize sympathizers and activists to challenge the special interests that are protecting the *status quo*, perpetuating the shameful legacy of anti-Catholic bigotry, and blocking greater parental choice for all families of faith.

Learn how you can support this groundbreaking film project today – together, we can ensure that these stories touch the hearts of millions of families all across America, and inspire them to take action to end this injustice in their communities and states!

WAYS TO HELP US

HELP THIS FILM GO VIRAL!

Share the trailer and full documentary to friends and organizations you know

SHOW A FILM SCREENING DURING NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK 2018,

when organizations all across the U.S. will be holding events highlighting the benefits of school choice

SHARE WITH POLICYMAKERS AND POLITICIANS

Only they can tear down the legislative and constitutional obstacles to educational choice

HOLD A PUBLIC FORUM

and invite parents and religious, political and school leaders

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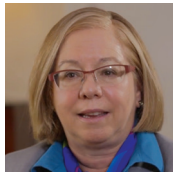
A Shameful Legacy

It's an untold story. Few people today know that opposition to school choice is born of 19th-century nativist bigotry. This film exposes this shameful legacy, tracing the history of the persecution and violence directed at Catholics by Know-Nothing mobs during the 1850s to generations that again in the late-19th and early 20th-centuries advanced legislative and constitutional changes to limit your educational choices even today.

In the film, **Raymond Flynn**, Former Vatican Ambassador and Mayor of Boston, and **Nancy Lusignan Schultz**, author of *Fire and Roses: The Burning of the Charlestown Convent, 1834*, describe how the Know-Nothing movement brought bigotry and hatred to a new level of violence and organization. Originally a secret society formed to oppose the influence of foreigners – specifically Irish-Catholic, Jewish and German immigrants – Know Nothing members feared non-Protestant and non-Anglo racial minorities, and believed that they undermined the American way of life, took jobs from “real Americans” and had an insidious influence on elections. In the 1850s they became an official party, and sought to insert provisions into state constitutions limiting the freedom of Catholics who refused to renounce the pope. Massachusetts passed the country's first anti-aid amendment in 1855. A late-19th century leader, U.S.



Raymond Flynn



Nancy Lusignan Schultz

Speaker of the House James Blaine, proposed a federal constitutional amendment to bar public funding of so-called sectarian (Catholic) schools or institutions. It failed, but proponents took action at the state level. Today, 38 states have them. What began as an anti-Catholic movement is now restricting the freedom of families of all different faiths, all across the country.

Repeal, through popular referenda, has proven difficult. As a result, while private entities deliver all kinds of public services (even in K–12 education where private entities engage in school construction, food provision, the development of curricular materials and tests, etc.), and though state and federal funds routinely support private colleges and universities, when it comes to K–12 schools there is an impenetrable wall of bigotry.

How did that happen? What were the attitudes and justifications for those changes? Today's monopolistic public school structure and parents' limited options are in part the result of the Know-Nothing Party and its legacy of bigotry. In recent decades, the U.S. Supreme Court has demonstrated deep interest in examining issues of religious education and attempts to limit parental school choice options.

THIS FILM DIRECTLY LINKS OPPOSITION TO SCHOOL CHOICE WITH LEGACIES OF BIGOTRY.

Such an association can weaken the strength of opponents' arguments and make individuals currently leaning against school choice either change their minds or distance themselves from the issue.

This change in public attitudes is critical, given that advancing school choice will require legislation and/or state and federal court action.



Massachusetts plays a key role in this debate. The Bay State was the center of the Know-Nothing movement and has the oldest version of Anti-Aid Amendments in the nation, as well as a second such amendment approved in 1917. Two-fifths of Massachusetts residents are Catholic, and its Catholic schools outperform the state's public schools, which are the best in the nation.

MORE WAYS TO HELP

INTERESTED IN MAKING A GIFT TO SUPPORT PROMOTION OF THIS FILM?

Gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, contact Brian Patterson at 617-723-2277 x217, bpatterson@pioneerinstitute.org.

INTERESTED IN HOSTING A FILM SCREENING BEFORE OR DURING NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK?

Contact Micaela Dawson at 617-723-2277 ext. 203, mdawson@pioneerinstitute.org.

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