NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Speaker Steve Montenegro (R-29)
1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Friday, February 6, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Montenegro: Union-Backed Ballot Initiative Targets Parents' Right to School Choice

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – House Speaker Steve Montenegro today responded to the filing of a union-backed ballot initiative targeting Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Accounts, warning that the proposal is a deliberate attempt to regulate the program out of existence after repeated failures by ESA opponents at the Legislature. The measure would strip parents of educational freedom and force thousands of students back into district systems that families have already chosen to leave:

> **"The ballot campaign announced by ESA opponents has one clear goal: to strip parents of the freedom to choose the best education for their children. If successful, it would gut Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account program and force tens of thousands of students out of schools that work for them and back into district systems that have already failed too many families.**
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> **This effort is not about accountability or improvement. It is a direct attack on parents—working families, military families, rural families, and families of children with special needs—who finally have options and refuse to give them up. ESA opponents are willing to sacrifice students' futures to protect an education bureaucracy that puts its own power ahead of kids.**
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> **This push comes on the heels of coordinated teacher sick-outs that shut down district schools across Arizona, disrupted learning, and left parents scrambling for childcare. The same forces that supported those closures are pushing to eliminate school choice. Make no mistake: they will not stop until families are once again forced into district systems where unions call the shots and parents have none.**
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> **House Republicans built the strongest school choice program in the nation because parents, not government or union bosses, know what their children need. Arizona families will not be pushed back into one-size-fits-all education, and we will not allow activists or special interests to rip opportunity away from students who are succeeding.**
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> **We stand with parents. We will defend ESAs. And we will make sure voters understand exactly what this ballot scheme would do to Arizona children and families."**

Steve Montenegro is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and serves Legislative District 29 in the West Valley, Goodyear, and Surprise. Follow him on X at @SteveMontenegro.

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