



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: info@azfree.org

Arizona Free Enterprise Club Joins Legal Challenge to Union-Backed Anti-ESA Initiative

PHOENIX, ARIZONA – Today, the Arizona Free Enterprise Club announced that it is working alongside the Goldwater Institute in support of its legal challenge to the union-backed ballot initiative seeking to impose sweeping new restrictions on Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account program. Greg Blackie of the Arizona Free Enterprise Club will serve as a plaintiff in the case.

Goldwater is leading the legal effort to challenge thousands of signatures submitted by the campaign behind the so-called Protect Education Act. The Arizona Free Enterprise Club has worked closely with Goldwater and other school choice advocates to review the petitions, identify serious irregularities, and help ensure that Arizona's ballot qualification laws are fully enforced.

According to the initial challenge, **tens of thousands of collected signatures are subject to disqualification**, which would leave the initiative without enough valid signatures to qualify.

The complaint also raises serious concerns about the individuals hired to circulate petitions for the anti-ESA campaign, including petition gatherers with significant criminal histories. These revelations raise questions about the campaign's vetting, oversight, and commitment to protecting the integrity of Arizona's initiative process.

Save Our Schools Arizona and its teachers union allies have spent years accusing ESA parents of "fraud and abuse" while demanding more regulations, investigations, and background checks for families and education providers. Yet their own signature-gathering campaign raises serious questions about whether even basic oversight was conducted before petitions were placed in the hands of paid circulators.

Arizona Free Enterprise Club President Scot Mussi released the following statement:

"Save Our Schools and the teachers unions have spent years accusing ESA families of fraud and demanding greater scrutiny of parents. Now, their own campaign is facing serious questions about the people they hired to gather signatures.

"Arizona's election laws must be fully enforced. If this campaign failed to collect enough lawful and valid signatures, it must not qualify for the ballot."

The Protect Education Act would restrict eligibility for Arizona's ESA program and take educational opportunities away from thousands of families. The initiative is backed by Save Our Schools Arizona, the Arizona Education Association, and national teachers union interests seeking greater government control over the educational decisions of Arizona parents.

The Arizona Free Enterprise Club supports the Goldwater Institute's challenge and calls for the full enforcement of Arizona law. If the campaign failed to collect the required number of valid signatures, the initiative must be removed from consideration for the November ballot.

For more information about the Arizona Free Enterprise Club, visit www.azfree.org.

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