



# Cities on a Hill

## Contents

VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR DISABLED STUDENTS  
A SUCCESS, STUDY FINDS ..... 1

CHARTER SCHOOLS EARN VOTE OF  
CONFIDENCE FROM NY PARENTS ..... 1,2

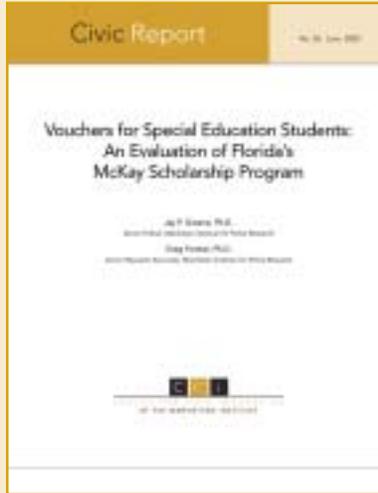
THE INVESTMENT EFFECTS OF RENT  
DECONTROL IN CAMBRIDGE, MA:  
LESSONS FOR NEW YORK POLICYMAKERS ..... 2

HOW SCHOOL CHOICE CAN HELP  
CHILDREN IN FAILING SCHOOLS:  
MAKING THE CASE FOR REFORM IN TEXAS ..... 3

FINDING THE FAITH TO MAKE A NEW START:  
HOW FAITH-BASED PRISON PROGRAMS  
DECREASE RECIDIVISM ..... 4

## Voucher Program for Disabled Students a Success, Study Finds

In June, CCI released the first empirical study of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program, *Vouchers for Special Education Students: An Evaluation of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program*. The McKay program is currently the second largest voucher program in the nation, with 375,000 eligible students and over 9,000 vouchers in use. The McKay program is the only program in the nation open to all disabled students who attend public schools; vouchers in the program exactly match the amount that would have been spent educating eligible students in a public school.



The study, authored by Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., and Senior Research Associate Greg Forster, Ph.D., was conducted through interviews with both current and former McKay program participants. It found that McKay schools outperformed Florida public schools on virtually every empirical criterion measured. Over 90% of current McKay participants were satisfied or very satisfied with their McKay schools, and class size in McKay schools was almost half that found in public schools (25.1 students in public schools compared to 12.8 in McKay schools). Significant improvements were also noted in declines in student victimization and behavioral problems.

Mandated special education funding is spiraling out of control in many localities, despite the fact that many students still lack needed services. However, the superior performance provided by the McKay program was achieved for the same or only slightly more money per pupil than is spent in public schools. Even though the McKay program allows participants to choose schools that charge tuition above the amount of the voucher, 71.7% of current participants and 75.8% of former participants report paying either nothing at all or less than \$1,000 per year above the voucher.



Congressman  
John Boehner

The Honorable John Boehner, Chairman, House Committee on Education and the Workforce (R-OH) joined committee member Rep. Jim DeMint (R-SC) in heralding the CCI report as good news for parents and their children with special needs in Florida.

Access this report at: [www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_38.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_38.htm)

## Charter Schools Earn Vote of Confidence from NY Parents

On Tuesday, June 3, CCI released the results of a poll of 300 parents of New York charter school students. Performed by the internationally respected polling firm of Zogby International, *What Parents Think of New York's Charter Schools* is the first attempt to accurately gauge the degree of parental satisfaction with charter schools.

*continued on page 2*



## The Investment Effects of Rent Decontrol in Cambridge, MA: Lessons for New York Policymakers

In May, CCI issued its second report by MIT Professor Henry O. Pollakowski on the impact of rent regulation on urban housing markets. This report, published while New York policymakers debated reauthorization of New York's rent control laws, shows that rent deregulation in Cambridge, MA in 1994 led to an investment "boom" in formerly rent controlled housing.



Study author  
Dr. Henry Pollakowski

Professor Pollakowski determined that in Cambridge—even after adjusting for general real estate market conditions—investment in previously rent controlled buildings increased by approximately 20% over what would have been the case if rent control had been maintained. This finding held true across a wide variety of neighborhoods and building types; both affluent and modest income neighborhoods experienced an investment increase attributed to the end of rent regulation.

Professor Pollakowski's study of the Cambridge housing market (a market similar to New York's in many respects) suggests that deregulation of the New York City housing stock should lead to significant new investment in both affluent and modest income neighborhoods.

Given the need for better maintenance and increased renovation of New York's aging housing stock, this study shows how the operations of an unregulated housing market can improve the average New Yorker's access to affordable quality housing.

Access this report at: [www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_36.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_36.htm)

## Charter Schools *continued from page 1*

The report shows that parents in New York are extremely satisfied with the work the charters are doing in almost every aspect of schooling. Their assessments are particularly striking when asked to compare the charter to the school, usually a standard public school, which their child attended prior to enrolling in their charter school.

In fact, parents throughout New York State were twice as likely to give their child's charter school an "A" grade overall (42%) compared to their child's prior school (21%). 79% of respondents said their charter school deserves an "A" or "B" for its quality of instruction, compared to only 52% for their child's previous school.

When judging the individual components of charter schools, 90% of parents were satisfied with the safety of the

schools, 87% were satisfied with parent-teacher relationships, 86% with the amount and quality of homework, and 85% with class size. 84% of parents were satisfied with the school's academic quality, and 81% were satisfied with the discipline and communications from school personnel.

Safety and school discipline are perennial problems in many public schools, and here too charter schools continued to impress parents: more than nine in every ten parents say there is no problem at their child's charter school with carrying guns on school property (94%), gang activity (93%), drug use (93%), or destruction of school property (91%).

Despite the endorsement charter schools have received from parents, there are to date only 38 charter schools in New York State, with just 18 in New York City.

Access this report at: [www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_37.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_37.htm)

## How School Choice Can Make the C

How can school choice reforms help children? This report discusses the evolution of the school choice movement from across the country and discusses this topic at a conference co-sponsored by the Center for Civic Innovation and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Analysis.



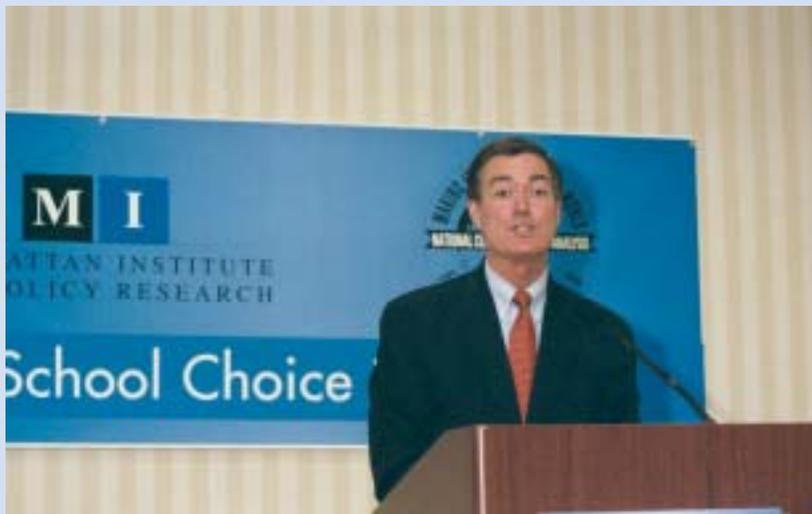
## Help Children in Failing Schools: Case for Reform in Texas

Children trapped in Texas' worst performing schools? Leaders across the country and Texas gathered in Dallas on May 8th to discuss the case for reform. The event was sponsored by CCI and the Texas-based National Center for Education Policy Research.

During the first panel session, leading researchers and administrators from existing school choice programs examined statistical and empirical evidence of school choice success from across the country, and suggested what programs worked and why. Participating on this panel were Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow Jay P. Greene; Barbara Horton, School Board Member, Milwaukee Public Schools; Sol Stern, Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute; and Lori Taylor, Senior Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. David Brennan, Chairman of the educational management firm White Hat Management, LLC, moderated the panel and contributed the perspective of the private sector to the discussion.

The second panel featured local advocates exploring important facets of the Texas educational experience, and outlining why school choice promised real educational benefits for the Longhorn State. Brooke Rollins, President of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, moderated this panel. Panelists included Robert Aguirre, Chairman of the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (CREO); the Rev. Raymond Bryant, President of the Dallas Chapter of the Black Alliance for Educational Options; and Linus Wright, former Superintendent, Dallas Independent School District.

The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Colorado Governor Bill Owens. In April 2003, Governor Owens signed into law the nation's newest parental choice program. When fully implemented, nearly 20,000 Colorado students will be able to use a voucher to choose a non-public school that better meets their educational needs. Colorado is the first state to enact a voucher program since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2002 that such programs were constitutional.



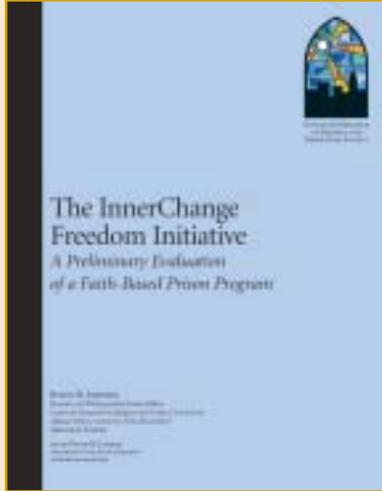
Top: Governor Bill Owens (R-CO) addresses the crowd.  
Middle: Sol Stern, Jay Greene, and David Brennan.  
Bottom: Jay Greene interviewed by a Dallas radio station.



Top to Bottom: Reverend Raymond Bryant, Linus Wright, Robert Aguirre, and Brooke Rollins; Manhattan Institute Vice-President David DesRosiers opening the conference; Governor Owens and Sol Stern exchange thoughts; audience members listen attentively to a panelist's remarks.

# Finding the Faith to Make a New Start: How Faith-Based Prison Programs Decrease Recidivism

In June, CCI co-published with the University of Pennsylvania a new report on how faith-based prison programs can reduce re-arrest and incarceration rates for released prisoners. This study, by Byron Johnson, CCI Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania, followed released prisoners for two years after they had graduated from the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI).



IFI is a faith-based pre-release program operated by Prison Fellowship Ministries through a contract with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The IFI program involves prisoners in 16 to 24 months of in-prison programs and 6 to 12 months of aftercare following release from prison. Program graduates have completed not only the in-prison phases dealing with biblical education, work, and community service, but also have completed an aftercare program in which the participant must hold a job and have been an active church member for 3 consecutive months following release from prison.

The two-year study (2000-2002) of IFI program graduates shows a significant linkage between faith-based mentoring and decreased recidivism rates. When IFI graduates are compared to a similar group of released inmates (controlled for race, age, offense type, and salient risk factor score) that met IFI program criteria but did not enter the program, program graduates were 50% less likely to be arrested, and 60% less likely to become re-incarcerated.



Dr. Byron Johnson

Access this report at: [www.manhattan-institute.org/innerchange.pdf](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/innerchange.pdf)

4

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