



## **FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET**

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### **HB 2389 – HOMESCHOOL DIPLOMA EQUITY**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Every year in our state, thousands of students receive quality instruction by way of homeschool. Arizona law and policy has repeatedly recognized the equivalence of homeschooling to other types of educational avenues, and HB 2389 clarifies that diplomas and transcripts for all educational options must be treated equally by the government.

#### **BACKGROUND**

According to the most recent estimate from the National Center for Education Statistics, over 1.7 million students in the United States complete their education in the home and that number is only set to increase in the future.<sup>1</sup> In Arizona, the growth of homeschool groups has provided evidence of a vibrant and thriving community of children educated in the home.

Arizona's public higher education institutions already provide the same opportunities, credits, and scholarships to homeschooled students that are available to students who attended secondary school in Arizona's public or charter schools. However, a new problem has come to light with regard to state agencies not recognizing that the diplomas of homeschool graduates meet employment requirements. HB 2389 addresses that issue.

In 2016, during routine records reviews at two child care facilities, the Department of Health Services (DHS) refused to accept homeschool diplomas, supported by transcripts, as sufficient evidence of education. Two homeschool graduates faced demotion and termination. In another instance, homeschool graduates were unable to meet the requirements necessary to even apply for positions as peace officers and correctional officers.

Commendably, both the Arizona Peace Officers Standards and Training Board (AzPOST) and DHS have worked with homeschool groups to create positive solutions to these problems for their respective agencies. But, an agency-by-agency approach is inefficient and could lead to inequitable results.

HB 2389 simply standardizes the approach that is already in place for these two agencies and applies it across the board to all government entities.

The bill directs the state, its agencies, and local governments to treat all diplomas and transcripts from the school options listed in state law (public, charter, private, home, and ESA) equally.

## TALKING POINTS

- **Parents and students who have followed the compulsory attendance law should be treated evenhandedly by government agencies.** Arizona has a longstanding public policy of respecting parents' education decisions, including the decision to homeschool, and HB 2389 continues that policy by ensuring diplomas and transcripts are treated equally for all school options.
- **The bill makes into law the agreements already implemented by two state agencies.** Additionally, numerous federal laws and federal agencies also recognize homeschool graduation credentials.

## CONCLUSION

Homeschools are a cornerstone of education in Arizona. The families and children who choose a home education deserve to be treated fairly in government employment.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *2016 Digest of Education Statistics, Number and percentage of homeschooled students ages 5 through 17 with a grade equivalent of kindergarten through 12th grade, by selected child, parent, and household characteristics: 2003, 2007, and 2012* (2016), [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15\\_206.10.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_206.10.asp?current=yes) (last visited Feb. 11, 2017).