



The Daily Dish

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Millions will have an [extra bill on their taxes](#) this year. Up to 6 million will choose to pay the first ACA penalty in lieu of obtaining health care insurance, according to the Treasury Department. An additional 15 to 30 million do not have insurance, but qualified for an exemption. Based on costs alone, [6 out of 7 uninsured young adults](#) will save money if they forgo insurance and pay the penalty.

The promise of “middle class economics” may in reality do more harm than good for middle class incomes. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reports that “recent tax proposals would do little to boost incomes for middle-class households, and actually could wind up raising taxes on many, at least by some measures.” The report continues to explain that at best the plan’s impact will be “negligible-essentially, no change in after-tax incomes.” Not quite the economic plan the White House promised.

Eakinomics: National School Choice Week

This is [National School Choice Week](#), an apt moment to remind ourselves that education is not exempt from the dynamics that prevail in other parts of society: monopolies are always potentially bad, usually actually bad, and the ability of new entrants to provide a competitive product or service is the best way to tame these tendencies and satisfy the most consumers. In the school choice arena this means that options should be available to permit parents to send children to a school that best fits the child’s educational needs. In the past two decades, options available to parents have expanded beyond the use of public funds for private schools to include magnet schools, home schools, web-based schools, charter schools and others.

These options are important because the traditional schools are failing too many. The United States spends \$12,608 per pupil per year – more than any other developed nation according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Unfortunately, one private research firm found nearly 3,500 failing districts and over 22,990 failing public schools across the country. These schools trap students, inhibit them from reaching their full potential, and too often relegate them to poverty.

For those students, the new options are literally a lifeline and explains their growth. In 2005-2006, 50,000 students participated in online classrooms but the number mushroomed by 450 percent by 2011-2012. For charter schools enrollment rose from 789,000 students (2003-2004) to 2.57 million (2013-2014), with another 1.04 million on waiting lists. An estimated 642 new charter schools opened in the 2013-2014 school year alone. The number of students involved in school choice is increasing each year.

Most importantly, the research suggests that these new options are raising the level of educational attainment. That, in the end, is the goal of any new approach to delivering a quality education.

Many reformers focus on top-down regulations to “force” failing schools and districts to change their ways. Inertia, incompetence, and unions usually make this a tough road to reform. The lesson of school choice is that a better route is to permit A+ schools to provide an alternative and let the power of choice drive reform.

From the Forum

[Americans Underestimate Future Need of Home Health Care](#) by Brittany La Couture, AAF Health Care Policy Analyst