

Are Senators Who Attended Elite Schools Blind to the Plight of American Parents?

Following the vitriolic confirmation of Betsy DeVos as the U.S. Secretary of Education, [Cheryl Kirk](#), a mother of three children in the Indiana school choice program, took to the web to write an open letter to Senator Al Franken about his opposition to school choice for families like her own. In Kirk's eyes, it seemed quite elitist for Franken to send his own children to Dalton School, an elite private academy, while telling her family that they should be content with D or F rated public schools.

In her frustration, Ms. Kirk [went on](#) to tell Franken:

"I assume you realize that the fancy Dalton School you are used to isn't really what school is like for regular Americans like me. I certainly hope you realize that."

Like Ms. Kirk, one would think that Senator Franken would realize this. But what if he doesn't?

That thought actually might be a greater possibility than we realize. Is it possible that politicians like Franken are opposed to allowing parents to send their children to better schools because they haven't had much exposure to what's happening in the public schools?

With this thought in mind, I decided to investigate how many current Senate members graduated from a private school. The chart below lists this information in order by state. After removing the Senators for whom no school information was available, one ends up with 10 out of 46 Republican Senators who graduated from a private high school and 15 out of 45 Democrat Senators who did the same. All told, such numbers

indicate that 27 percent of the 2017-2018 Senate enjoyed private education.

By comparison, [only 10 percent](#) of the U.S. student population attends private school. That means that U.S. Senators are 270 percent more likely to have had a private education than the general population.

Is it possible that such a disparity has caused the ruling class to be oblivious to the type of education the nation's schools actually provide?

Tim Scott

Alabama	Luther Strange	R	Public
Alabama	Richard Shelby	R	Public
Alaska	Dan Sullivan	R	Private
Alaska	Lisa Murkowski	R	Private
Arizona	Jeff Flake	R	Public
Arizona	John McCain	R	Private
Arkansas	Tom Cotton	R	Public
Arkansas	John Boozman	R	Public
California	Dianne Feinstein	D	Private
California	Kamala Harris	D	Public
Colorado	Michael Bennet	D	Private
Colorado	Cory Gardner	R	Public
Connecticut	Chris Murphy	D	Public
Connecticut	Richard Blumenthal	D	Private
Delaware	Tom Carper	D	Public
Delaware	Chris Coons	D	Private
Florida	Bill Nelson	D	Public
Florida	Marco Rubio	R	Public
Georgia	David Perdue	R	Public

Georgia	Johnny Isakson	R	n/a
Hawaii	Mazie Hirono	D	Public
Hawaii	Brian Schatz	D	Private
Idaho	Jim Risch	R	Private
Idaho	Mike Crapo	R	Public
Illinois	Dick Durbin	D	Private
Illinois	Tammy Duckworth	D	Public
Indiana	Joe Donnelly	D	n/a
Indiana	Todd Young	R	Public
Iowa	Joni Ernst	R	Public
Iowa	Chuck Grassley	R	Public
Kansas	Pat Roberts	R	Public
Kansas	Jerry Moran	R	Public
Kentucky	Mitch McConnell	R	Public
Kentucky	Rand Paul	R	Public
Louisiana	Bill Cassidy	R	Public
Louisiana	John Neely Kennedy	R	Public
Maine	Angus King	I (Caucus with D)	Public
Maine	Susan Collins	R	Public
Maryland	Ben Cardin	D	Public
Maryland	Chris Van Hollen	D	Private
Massachusetts	Elizabeth Warren	D	Public
Massachusetts	Ed Markey	D	Private
Michigan	Debbie Stabenow	D	Public
Michigan	Gary Peters	D	Public
Minnesota	Amy Klobuchar	D	Public
Minnesota	Al Franken	D	Private
Mississippi	Roger Wicker	R	Public
Mississippi	Thad Cochran	R	Public
Missouri	Claire McCaskill	D	Public

Missouri	Roy Blunt	R	n/a
Montana	Jon Tester	D	Public
Montana	Steve Daines	R	Public
Nebraska	Deb Fischer	R	Public
Nebraska	Ben Sasse	R	Public
Nevada	Catherine Cortez Masto	D	n/a
Nevada	Dean Heller	R	Public
New Hampshire	Jeanne Shaheen	D	Public
New Hampshire	Maggie Hassan	D	Public
New Jersey	Bob Menendez	D	Public
New Jersey	Cory Booker	D	Public
New Mexico	Martin Heinrich	D	Public
New Mexico	Tom Udall	D	Public
New York	Kirsten Gillibrand	D	Private
New York	Chuck Schumer	D	Public
North Carolina	Thom Tillis	R	n/a
North Carolina	Richard Burr	R	Public
North Dakota	Heidi Heitkamp	D	Public
North Dakota	John Hoeven	R	n/a
Ohio	Sherrod Brown	D	Public
Ohio	Rob Portman	R	Private
Oklahoma	Jim Inhofe	R	Public
Oklahoma	James Lankford	R	Public
Oregon	Jeff Merkley	D	Public
Oregon	Ron Wyden	D	Public
Pennsylvania	Bob Casey Jr.	D	Private
Pennsylvania	Pat Toomey	R	Private
Rhode Island	Sheldon Whitehouse	D	Private
Rhode Island	Jack Reed	D	Private
South Carolina	Lindsey Graham	R	Public

South Carolina	R	Public	
South Dakota	Mike Rounds	R	n/a
South Dakota	John Thune	R	Public
Tennessee	Bob Corker	R	Public
Tennessee	Lamar Alexander	R	Public
Texas	Ted Cruz	R	Private
Texas	John Corny	R	Private
Utah	Orrin Hatch	R	Public
Utah	Mike Lee	R	n/a
Vermont	Patrick Leahy	D	Private
Vermont	Bernie Sanders	I (Caucus with D)	Public
Virginia	Tim Kaine	D	Private
Virginia	Mark Warner	D	Public
Washington	Maria Cantwell	D	Public
Washington	Patty Murray	D	n/a
West Virginia	Joe Manchin	D	Public
West Virginia	Shelley Moore Capito	R	Private
Wisconsin	Tammy Baldwin	D	Public
Wisconsin	Ron Johnson	R	Public
Wyoming	John Barrasso	R	Private
Wyoming	Mike Enzi	R	Public

Image Credit: Jamie Howren Library of Congress. Picture of former Senator Paul Simon and current Senator Al Franken.
