

unhealthy food, especially processed food, sugary food, food with unhealthy additives, meats with hormones and antibiotics from animals raised on pesticide-treated feed, and so on. Access to healthy food is a freedom issue.

And when conservatively run states turn down funds for Medicaid, that is a freedom issue—both for the people who are being denied health care, and for everyone else to whom a curable disease can spread when health care is denied to a significant number of the people they interact with every day.

Freedom issues are powerful issues.

Education

Conservatives want to eliminate public resources as a moral issue. In their view, they are given for free and therefore take away personal responsibility and the incentive to work. Education is a main example. In conservatively run states, like Wisconsin, funding for public education has been severely cut.

The conservative movement against public school education offers the alternative of charter schools, religious schools, and private schools. Charter schools are schools paid for publicly but run privately—very often by for-profit corporations.

The CREDO study at Stanford in 2013 found that about 75 percent of charter schools have results that are worse than, or no different from, traditional public schools. A small percentage of charter schools do have better results. But since funds for charter schools are taken from public school budgets, charter schools tend to drain money from public schools and make public education worse on the whole, even for the best public schools.

Moreover, charter schools have no accountability to local school districts or the public. A consequence in Texas, for example, is that charter schools tend to debunk evolution and science and teach creationism. In Michigan, 80 percent of schools are now charter schools, and they are doing no better at educating children in poverty than public schools.

The conservative framing is that public schools are “failing” and that vouchers for religious or private schools give parents “choice.” Those