**Sample Op-Ed**

While everyone in the country is celebrating Memorial Day weekend and the start of summer, I am here to suggest that the 29th of May should also be a day that is acknowledged and celebrated this weekend. Why the 29th? Well, it is section 529 of the internal revenue code that allows for tax advantaged education saving programs. So, May 29th has been renowned in the industry as a day to encourage saving for education and preparing for academic success.

The timing could not be any better as students are getting out of school, many graduating and looking forward to the promise of higher education ahead. Paying for that education should not be a concern or a hinderance but, unfortunately, many times money is the largest hinderance to further education. The cost of a four-year public college has increased 225% over the last 30 years, according to the College Board. How can families prepare for an ever-increasing cost of education?

Thankfully, {INSERT PROGRAM NAME} here in {INSERT STATE NAME} has been working diligently to provide a tax-advantaged 529 program available to {INSERT RESIDENT NICKNAME i.e. HOOSIERS}. In fact, across the country over 15.7 million accounts have been opened be individuals and they have collectively saved over $480.3 billion. {INSERT PROGRAM SPECIFIC STATS LIKE THE AVERAGE AGE OF A BENEFICIARY OR AVERAGE ACCOUNT BALANCE} While saving for the entire cost of education may be daunting, every dollar saved is one more dollar that someone would not need to borrow and that is a win.

{INSERT PROGRAM NAME} accounts can be used at any institution that accepted FASSA funding so a four-year private university, a two-year community college or even apprenticeship programs. These educational opportunities don’t even need to be located in {STATE NAME} to be used – they can be used in any state! One of the biggest concerns is “What if my child chooses not to use their 529 funds?” Luckily, there are several provisions for that money to still be put to use. An account owner can transfer the money to another beneficiary in the same family or it can be indefinitely left in the account until a need arises. Worst case solution, the money can be withdrawn with a small penalty for the earnings in the account during the time it was active.

Want to participate? Leading up to the 29th of May, {INSERT PROGRAM NAME} has the opportunity for {INSERT LOCAL 529 DAY PLANS}

For all the Star Wars fans, let’s make the 29th of May at least as popular as the 4th of May.