Op-Ed Sample:

As we welcome another school year, it is hard not to reflect on what school was like at this time last year. While the world appears to be sorting out a new normal, the priorities of families with their finances has seen a definite change. In many ways, uncertainty and chaos makes a clear path for individuals on what they would like to do differently or change. The 529 college savings plan community has experienced that change as well.

According to the College Savings Plans Network (CSPN), at the halfway point of 2021, nationally, more than $464.3 billion dollars were being saved in more than 15.3 million 529 accounts. 15 million Americans now have dedicated funds in their name to help achieve goals of higher education.

This September is College Savings Month, and we honor the 15.3 million Americans saving and the {INSERT STATE NUMBERS} saving in the {PROGRMAM/PLAN NAME}. With the uncertainty of the financial world, these individuals know that there is money being set aside for the future. But why are they saving it in 529 accounts? Why not in a bank account or other financial product?

A 529 plan is a tax-advantaged investment plan designed to help families save for a child’s or grandchild’s future higher education expenses. While commonly referred to as 529 plans, they are formally known as “Qualified Tuition Programs,” as defined in Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code and are administered by state agencies. Savings in a 529 plan grow free from federal income tax, and withdrawals remain tax-free when used for qualified higher education expenses. {INSERT SPECFIC STATE INCENTIVES}

As of August 20th, 529 plans have been part of the Internal Revenue Code for over 25 years. The longevity of these programs speaks to the quality and importance they bring to Americans financially.

For these reasons, many {INSERT STATE REFERENCE, ie HOOSIERS} have found 529 savings accounts are the best vehicle for saving for higher education. Back to School time is a great reminder every year to review financial plans for future education costs. Every single dollar saved is much better than a dollar borrowed but that takes planning and some personal sacrifice before higher education becomes a reality for most families.

To learn more about 529 plans across the country, visit [collegesavings.org](https://www.collegesavings.org/) and utilize the new “529 Plan [Search and Compare](https://www.collegesavings.org/529-search-and-comparison/)” tool. If you would like to open a {INSERT STATE PLAN} or find out more information, visit us at {INSERT WEBSITE}. {COULD INSERT SPECIFIC INSENTIVES AROUND COLLEGE SAVINGS MONTH SPECIFIC TO STATE PROGRAM}

What will you be saving for?