



Committee on Catholic Education

3211 Fourth Street, NE • Washington DC 20017 • 202-541-3132 • 202-541-3390

June 9, 2017

The Honorable Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

As Chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to propose principles for a federal tax credit scholarship program.

First, I offer my appreciation for your leadership in encouraging true choice for parents and their children. Our shared Catholic faith teaches us that parents are the first and primary teachers of their children and that any delegation of that authority should be empowered by the public authority while always remaining at the parents' discretion. A federal tax credit is in keeping with that vision.

The design of a federal program empowering parental choice in education is of utmost concern to the Catholic education community. As you design a federal tax credit for K-12 scholarships, please consider the following principles:

1. Schools which accept scholarship students must retain their autonomy, both in regards to religious identity and educational character. This independence includes, but is not necessarily limited to, control over mission-driven hiring, academically-stringent admissions, and curriculum.
2. The program must ensure real opportunity to access non-government education – i.e., families with incomes up to 400% of poverty should be eligible; donation caps on individuals and businesses must allow for generous giving; there should be no artificial limit to the size of individual scholarships; qualifying families in all fifty states must be able to access a scholarship.
3. Oversight of this program should be based upon the satisfaction of participating families. Parental surveys, the number of families renewing scholarships, student graduation and matriculation, and basic accounting requirements, for example, are sufficient to assess and maintain the integrity of the program.
4. The motivations of those dedicating their talents to founding, managing, and funding scholarship-granting organizations (SGO) must be respected. A tax credit is simply a recognition that providing educational choice for those in need serves the common good; as such, it should tolerate all forms of giving, including sector-specific SGOs, so as not to depress participation or limit the freedoms of advocates.

Your proposal of a federal tax credit for K-12 scholarships has enormous potential to improve the lives of all children. The fundamentals of your proposed legislation are strong and encouraging. Your attention to these guidelines is appreciated. I look forward to working with you on behalf of Catholic school students, families, and communities to ensure this program is a success for the families of America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Murry SJ". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Most Reverend George V. Murry, SJ
Bishop of Youngstown
Chairman



Committee on Catholic Education

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June 9, 2017

The Honorable Todd Rokita
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rokita:

As Chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to propose principles for a federal tax credit scholarship program.

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Most Reverend George V. Murry, SJ
Bishop of Youngstown
Chairman