



New York State Catholic Conference

2017 Issue in Brief

Issue

Support the Education Affordability Act to help families, wherever their children attend school

Background

The Catholic Conference advocates for legislation that would establish tax credits to support increased individual and corporate donations to scholarship granting organizations, as well as to the public school sector; personal tax credits for families' education expenses, including tuition; and teacher tax credits for their out-of-pocket expenses for classroom supplies.

Messages

- Families who choose a Catholic school for their children shoulder a dual burden of paying taxes to support children in public schools while paying tuition to support their own children's education.
- Low- and middle-income families continue to be denied access to the same quality schools for their children as are available to more affluent families. Until some form of financial assistance is provided directly to these families, their children will continue to be denied equal educational and economic opportunity.
- The Education Affordability Act proposal would encourage increased business and individual donations to scholarship organizations and to the public school sector; provide a personal income tax credit directly to families for their tuition expenses; and a personal income tax credit for teachers to offset out-of-pocket expenses for classroom supplies.
- The Education Affordability Act would help support the education of all children regardless of where they attend school and would help to continue to save taxpayers billions of dollars every year by helping give parents the opportunity to enroll their children in religious and independent schools.
- Similar programs have been enacted in 26 states and the District of Columbia with great success for both the public and non-public school sectors. Some of these programs date back 30 years.
- Tuition Assistance Programs have long-existed at the college level but there is no such program for parents struggling with tuition at the elementary and secondary level.
- Several U.S. Supreme Court decisions have upheld the constitutionality of a variety of school choice initiatives, including education tax credits.