



# Parent Advocate

## The Catholic school is a great part of the solution to our national educational challenge.

Dear Friends of Education

May 15, 2009

It has been our privilege and responsibility as a nation through the years in assuring that our youngest generations are educationally prepared for the challenges ahead. While we have had much success, the changing worldwide environment challenges us much further. The education of our people should be one of our top priorities if the United States is to remain competitive economically, socially, environmentally, militarily, and artistically, compassionate and in research and development.

Much has changed in recent education. While many areas of upper education have maintained competitiveness, elementary and secondary education appears to be falling behind the global competition. Realistic analysis suggests we avail of every resource to assist us in our improvement efforts.

One of the gems of total formation in our country for the past two centuries has been the Catholic school. Based on values, academic excellence, dedicated and qualified teachers and “self discipline”, the localized school communities engendered neighborhood support and stability, high expectations and perform-or-else expectations. Millions of our people have had the privilege of benefiting from this successfully proven formula.

Many of the Catholic school across the country are in jeopardy primarily because of financial stress. In recent years, hundreds of such fine schools have closed in the urban areas where they are needed most. Alas, one of the greatest contributors to our nation’s success is mildly fading away before our eyes and though much effort is being made by parents, parishes, community leaders and even state legislators, the trend of closure continues.

Our nation needs the Catholic School for its vibrancy, educational quality, competitive spirit, neighborhood stability and from the perception of so many, its values. Such spiritual values are our privilege as Catholics and we gladly undertake to support them but the issue of health, security, enrichment, transportation, textual resources, buildings etc. are the collective responsibility of our larger community. Within our constitutional parameters we ought to give comparable aid to what we do overseas in each classification.

*Continued page 3*

## INDIANA PASSES SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDITS

In June, Indiana became the seventh state to have a scholarship-tax-credit program and the eleventh state to have a private-school-choice program.

Private donors—both individuals and businesses—contribute funds to scholarship-granting organizations, which use 90% of the donated funds to provide scholarships for children from low-income households. As an incentive, donors receive a state tax credit equal to 50% of their donations. Unlike other states, Indiana has no maximum on the credits available to individual or corporate donors, but there is a \$2.5 million annual aggregate limit.

Indiana’s new program is similar to **LB 67**, which

is pending in the Nebraska Unicameral for the 2010 session. Now is the time to contact your state legislator to urge him/her to advance and pass LB 67.

Indiana’s governor was a key ally in the process there, by inserting the idea into the state budget. The strategy worked. The victory was achieved by collaboration between School Choice Indiana, the Indiana Non-Public School Educational Association, the Indiana Catholic Conference and the Alliance for School Choice. In addition, the Friedman Foundation provided a big boost with a fiscal analysis showing the idea could save money for the state’s taxpayers through shifts in enrollment.



## NEW HOPE FOR CONTINUING SCHOOL CHOICE IN D.C.?

A bipartisan effort was launched July 30 to save the Washington, D.C. school voucher program. Senator Joseph Lieberman and five other senators introduced a bill to reauthorize the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) for five more years.

The bill would also increase the scholarship amounts from \$7500 to \$9000 for K-8 and \$11,000 for high school, indexing the amounts for inflation. The amount would still be less than the average of \$29,000 per child spent by the D.C. public schools to educate students.

So far 3,000 families have benefitted from this pro-

gram designed to give low income families an educational lifeline to schools of their choice. Eight thousand families have applied for scholarships, indicating the demand for scholarships exceeds the supply by more than 2:1.

The OSP is supported by a majority of the D.C. City Council and by almost 75% of D.C. residents according to a new poll released in July.

If nothing is done, at least 216 students will permanently lose their scholarships and be without other realistic options. A special website [www.savethe216.com](http://www.savethe216.com) has been created to help.



Catholic Schools have a fantastic history in all continents. They are even more necessary today, when we consider the manifold crisis that education is currently going through. Therefore, we need Catholic schools that turn globalization toward a spirit of solidarity, of real help for the needy, of respect toward very culture. ... Only globalization realized on such a basis will truly build up the good of all humanity.

**Yes, we need Catholic schools!**

*Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect, Congregation for Catholic Education*

## \$5 BILLION FOR “EDUCATION REFORM”

On July 24, U. S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced the criteria for states to compete for “Race to the Top” stimulus funds (“RttT”), an unprecedented \$5 billion available to states to spend on “education reform”.

The successful grantees are to achieve significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas: 1) adopting internationally-benchmarked standards and assessments; 2) recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; 3) building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and 4) turning around lowest-performing schools.

The grants will be awarded in two phases: fall 2009 and spring 2010. Gov. Dave Heineman and State Education Commissioner Roger Breed have confirmed that Nebraska will apply for RttT funds in the competitive grant process. It appears that there is no equitable participation and few if any benefits for private schools in this federal program.

### Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents Enrollment Form 2009-2010 PO Box 94872, Lincoln NE 68509

*Clip and Mail*

Annual Membership is \$3.00 (Individual or Family)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Please provide your email address in order to receive Action Alerts and Legislative Updates.**



Cont'd from page 1

**The Catholic school is a great part of the solution to our national educational challenge.** With that in mind I took the liberty to write to President Obama in April requesting inclusion of this option in all future thinking. Please take the time to reflect, influence, and challenge those who have access to decisions. We have many of the answers. We can help, but we need to be in the conversation.

Sincerely,

Rev. Monsignor Vincent T. Kelly  
 Vicar of Education  
 Archdiocese of Miami

Monsignor Vincent T. Kelly served as a diocesan priest in the Diocese of Lincoln from 1956-1969. He served at St. Wenceslaus, Wahoo; Immaculate Conception, Ulysses; Aquinas High School, David City; St. Cecilia, Hastings; Saint Cecilia High School, Hastings; Lourdes Central Catholic, Nebraska City; St. Clara in Peru, and the Newman Center at Peru State College.

# Support LB 67-Scholarship Tax Credit

More information on **LB 67** at [www.nebcathcon.org](http://www.nebcathcon.org)

## CONTACT YOUR NEBRASKA STATE SENATOR

You can email senators through the Nebraska Legislative web page at <http://nebraskalegislature.gov> or by using the legislator's first initial plus their last name followed by (example: lheidemann@leg.ne.gov).

### MAILING ADDRESS

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
 District # \_\_\_\_ State Capitol  
 P.O. Box 94604  
 Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dst.	Senator	Capitol #	Room	From
1	Heidemann, Lavon	471-2733	1004	Elk Creek
2	Pankonin, Dave	471-2613	2004	Louisville
3	Price, Scott	471-2627	1528	Bellevue
4	Pirsch, Pete	471-2621	1404	Omaha
5	Mello, Heath	471-2710	1206	Omaha
6	Nelson, John E.	471-2714	2028	Omaha
7	Nordquist, Jeremy J.	471-2721	1208	Omaha
8	White, Tom	471-2722	1120	Omaha
9	Howard, Gwen	471-2723	1124	Omaha
10	Vacant	471-2718		Omaha
11	Council, Brenda J	471-2612	1115	Omaha
12	Lathrop, Steve	471-2623	2000	Omaha
13	Cook, Tanya	471-2727	1115	Omaha
14	Gay, Tim	471-2730	1402	Papillion
15	Janssen, Charlie	471-2625	1403	Fremont
16	Rogert, Kent	471-2728	2011	Tekamah
17	Giese, Robert J.	471-2716	1118	So Sioux City
18	Lautenbaugh, Scott	471-2618	1021	Omaha
19	Flood, Mike	471-2929	2103	Norfolk
20	Ashford, Brad	471-2622	1103	Omaha
21	Haar, Ken	471-2673	1522	Malcolm
22	Stuthman, Arnie	471-2715	1101	Platte Center
23	Langemeier, Chris	471-2719	1210	Schuyler
24	Adams, Greg	471-2756	1107	York
25	Campbell, Kathy	471-2731	1019	Lincoln

Dst.	Senator	Capitol #	Room	From
26	McGill, Amanda	471-2610	1017	Lincoln
27	Coash, Colby	471-2632	1117	Lincoln
28	Avery, Bill	471-2633	1114	Lincoln
29	Fulton, Tony	471-2734	2107	Lincoln
30	Wallman, Norm	471-2620	1406	Cortland
31	Pahls, Rich	471-2327	1401	Omaha
32	Karpisek, Russ	471-2711	1015	Wilber
33	Utter, Dennis	471-2712	1529	Hastings
34	Dubas, Annette	471-2630	1018	Fullerton
35	Gloor, Mike	471-2617	1523	Grand Island
36	Wightman, John	471-2642	2010	Lexington
37	Hadley, Galen	471-2726	2104	Kearney
38	Carlson, Tom	471-2732	1022	Holdrege
39	McCoy, Beau	471-2885	1117	Omaha
40	Dierks, M. L. "Cap"	471-2801	2108	Ewing
41	Sullivan, Kate	471-2631	1019	Cedar Rapids
42	Hansen, Tom	471-2729	1012	North Platte
43	Fischer, Deb	471-2628	1110	Valentine
44	Christensen, Mark R.	471-2805	1000	Imperial
45	Cornett, Abbie	471-2615	1116	Bellevue
46	Conrad, Danielle	471-2720	1008	Lincoln
47	Schilz, Ken	471-2616	1202	Ogallala
48	Harms, John N.	471-2802	2017	Scottsbluff
49	Louden, LeRoy J.	471-2725	1016	Ellsworth



## SENATOR MIKE FRIEND RESIGNS; ASSUMES NEW POSITION



After seven years of service in the Nebraska State Legislature, Omahan Mike Friend resigned his legislative position effective Aug. 16. At the request of the Governor, Friend will serve as the new head of the State's Office of Violence Prevention.

Senator Friend served as sponsor or co-sponsor of the following school-choice bills: LB 769 (educational expense tax credits) 2006; LB 431 (educational expense tax credits) (2007); LB 67 (scholarship tax credits) (2009). He was of great assistance in preserving the textbook loan program and in supporting increases in its appropriations, as well as other legislative actions of benefit to private-school students, families, schools and teachers.

NFCSP extends gratitude to Senator Friend for his service and his support for non-governmental education; and wish him the best in his new position of public service.

## NDE RULE 10 REVISED

Governor Dave Heineman has approved revisions to NDE Rule 10 which governs accredited schools. The revised rule took effect July 7. The previous draft of the rule was rejected for not squaring with the new state accountability law (NeSA), which governs statewide testing for public school districts. Private schools are not included under NeSA mandates, which were enacted by LB 1157 in 2008.

An agreement was reached between Nebraska-Council of American Private Education and NDE on some wording in the revised rule that mistakenly ap-

plied to private schools. N-CAPE and the Nebraska Catholic Conference have received written assurance from the NDE that the rule will not be interpreted in such a way as to extend the state mandate to private schools.

Future changes to Rule 10 are anticipated in conjunction with the statewide P-16 initiative, which deals with education from preschool through college. Monsignor James Gilg, Omaha Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools serves on the Executive Committee of the P-16 group.

### NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Identity Unity Collaboration Empowerment

Nebraska Catholic Conference Affiliate  
PO Box 94872  
Lincoln NE 68509-4872

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
LINCOLN, NE  
PERMIT NO. 985