



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON · DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
Representing the Virginia Catholic Bishops in Public Policy Matters

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Virginia Catholic Conference Renews Push for Parental Choice in Education

Parental choice in education is a fundamental right which the Catholic Church has long recognized, and for which the Virginia Catholic Conference has consistently advocated in the Virginia General Assembly.

This issue once again will be a hotly debated topic in the upcoming Virginia General Assembly session, which begins in mid-January. At that time, the Conference will renew its advocacy for the Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit bill, which would provide tax credits to businesses that make donations toward scholarships that enable economically disadvantaged children to attend nonpublic K-12 schools.

With production of a new video, the Conference has launched an intensified outreach effort to win passage of the bill, which will provide greater educational opportunities for more Virginia students, particularly those from low income families, according to Executive Director Jeff Caruso.

“For the last two years this legislation has fallen just two votes short of passage,” Caruso said. “If it is to pass in 2012, the bill needs strong grassroots support.”

“The bill’s benefits for our local communities and Catholic schools statewide are three-fold,” Caruso said. “It will provide critical support for low-income students desiring a Catholic education. It will save all Virginia taxpayers money. And finally, it will support the long-term viability of Catholic schools throughout Virginia by sustaining enrollments and leveraging greater investments.

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Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit

To re-invigorate the effort, the Virginia Catholic Conference – collaborating with the Catholic Schools Offices in Richmond and Arlington, the Mid-Atlantic Catholic Schools Consortium and the Diocese of Arlington’s Office of Communications -- developed a short video to generate greater interest in advocacy for the scholarship tax credit bill.

"The Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit: Taking Action for a Brighter Tomorrow" (produced by Triune Production Studios LLC) is designed to increase understanding and involvement in legislative advocacy among parents, Catholic school educators, parishioners, and the public. The five-minute video can be viewed on the Conference website at www.vacatholic.org.

In addition to watching the video, visitors to the Conference website are urged to sign up for the Email Advocacy Network, to learn about and take action on parental choice in education , as well as other issues involving life, social justice, and family matters.

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