



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 15, 2015

Dear Parents, Teachers, Friends and Supporters of our children in Catholic schools:

I write to update you on our advocacy efforts to enact the Education Investment Tax Credit proposal and, more importantly, to solicit your help.

Despite the failure of lawmakers to enact our education tax credit proposal in 2014, we are presented with a new opportunity in 2015 to enact a program to assist tuition-paying families with the education of their children. The proposal will help families afford tuition at Catholic and other parochial schools by generating an additional \$150 million in scholarships. The bill also provides an equal level of support to public schools.

Because the measure stands to help children in all schools, it enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of our state Senators and Assembly members – Democrats and Republicans alike. Gov. Cuomo, who is focusing much of his attention on improving education in this state, also supports the proposal and even told supporters during his re-election campaign, that "the Education Investment Tax Credit is a matter of justice...that's the way I see it."

However, despite their expressed support for our proposal, Gov. Cuomo and legislators enacted a state budget last year that included a substantial increase in support for charter schools and public schools while ignoring the needs of tuition-paying families. While we support all educational options for families, taxpayer support for public and charter schools without support for tuition-paying families is unjust, unfair and unacceptable. We simply cannot permit lawmakers to continue to discriminate against the needs of low- and middle-income families who want a religious and independent school education for their children.

Gov. Cuomo is preparing his 2015 Executive Budget proposal for release on January 27. I ask that you join my Brother Bishops and me in calling Gov. Cuomo, no later than January 21. His number is (518) 474-8390. Simply ask that the Governor include the Education Tax Credit proposal in his Executive Budget.

Our efforts to seek assistance for tuition-paying families have not and nor will not cease and enactment of Education Tax Credits remains our top legislative priority in education. With your help, we can ensure that Catholic schools continue to serve children and families for generations to come. Please make the call to the Governor and then join us in praying that our elected leaders will serve the needs of all God's children, not just some.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Richard J. Malone
Bishop of Buffalo