

New Jersey Catholic Conference

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ACTION ALERT

ISSUE: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now known as No Child Left Behind) will be reauthorized in Congress in the upcoming weeks. Nonpublic schools have participated in this program since 1965, when the Catholic Bishops of the United States emphasized the need to include all students (not just those in public schools) in the benefits of this program. However, since that time, the way in which nonpublic school students and teachers benefit from subsequent versions of ESEA has been complicated by both local school districts and state education agencies in the provision of required benefits.

OUR POSITION: The New Jersey Catholic Conference and the New Jersey Network of Catholic School Families support the full participation of nonpublic school students and teachers in all aspects of this omnibus education bill.

ACTION: The House Education and Labor Committee is encouraging all stakeholders (including parents) in this legislation to send their priorities to the Committee's email address (eseacomment@mail.house.gov) by Friday March 26. We ask that you email to this address a simple message emphasizing the importance of the nonpublic school community in this legislation, both historically and at the present time. Therefore, we want the students and teachers in our schools to have equal benefits for the tax dollars paid by our parents.

If you wish to expand your comments, the points to keep in mind are the following:

1. There has been equitable participation by students in nonpublic schools as a requirement in ESEA since it was first passed in 1965. The equitable participation has been part of all subtitles of this act (e.g. Title I, Title II A & D, Title IV, Title V, etc.) that are permitted constitutionally.
2. In recent years, funds which have been generated by students in nonpublic schools have been converted to public school programs in which our students cannot participate. Examples of these programs include the Supplemental Education Services and all School Improvement programs.
3. The reauthorization of ESEA should contain a provision to enable the proportional share of funds to serve nonpublic school students and teachers be based on the TOTAL allocation of a program *prior to a school district setting aside funds which only public school students can use.*

Individual schools may have examples of how students and teachers do not receive the full benefit of these federal funds have not done so in the past. Please do not hesitate to provide specific examples in your email message.

We need your assistance in making these comments known to the House Education and Labor Committee using the email address listed above prior to March 26, 2010.

Thank you for your immediate cooperation.