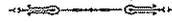


CONNECTICUT
FEDERATION
OF CATHOLIC
SCHOOL PARENTS



JOHN L. CATTELAN
DIRECTOR

**Testimony of John L. Cattelan, Director
Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents
H.B. 6627, An Act Concerning a Tax Credit for Corporate Donations to Scholarship Funds
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
March 28, 2010**

Senator Daily, Representative Widlitz and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is John Cattelan and I am the Director of the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents, and I am here today to speak in support of H.B. 6627, An Act Concerning a Tax Credit for Corporate Donations to Scholarship Funds.

My testimony today will touch on three topics. How this program is working in seven other states, the false notion that only the best students will take advantage of this program and the Constitutionality of this proposal.

Seven states -- Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island -- allow some form of a tax credit for corporations that donate to a scholarship fund. The scholarship funds are used to pay for the tuition of students who otherwise could not afford to attend a private or religious school.

In these seven states, a tax credit program allowed more than 57,000 students to attend a private or religious school in 2009 and over \$200 million was provided in scholarship funds.

Catholic schools only administer placements tests, not admission tests. We look at the entire student and we don't only consider test scores when granting admission to a student.

Students who are doing poorly in public schools are most likely to take advantage of school choice programs. Generally, students who succeed in a school see no need to switch schools. Studies also demonstrate that most parents—regardless of their income—make good choices when provided with school options.

Finally, the United States Supreme Court has ruled in a dozen cases and state Supreme Courts in three cases that support government assistance to private and religious schools. This includes the landmark 2002 case *Zelman v. Simmons Harris* which upheld the constitutionality of Cleveland's school voucher program.

I would also add that we do not have a Blaine Amendment in our state constitution that forbids direct government aid to educational institutions that have any religious affiliation.

Thank you and I would be happy to take any questions.

