

June 25, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and House Minority Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and for the K-12 education provisions included in the CARES Act, particularly the discretionary funding for governors and the inclusion of equitable services for private school teachers and students in the recovery. As Congress works on the next phase of education aid, we, the undersigned, write to express our strong support for language that would ensure *all* students receive education support, regardless of where they attend school.

For millions of K-12 students, the pandemic has led to an unprecedented interruption of critical classroom instruction time, educational programs, and services. Many of these students have fallen behind or will not be prepared to advance to the next grade. When governors took swift action to close schools at the onset of the pandemic, they treated public and private schools and their students equally by closing all schools. **We believe it is essential for the response to support students at all schools—both public and private—equally, too.**

We recognize many students and families are facing acute hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is true for students attending private schools across America, especially more than 1.7 million students from lower income families who are now facing additional economic uncertainty and potential instability in their children's education. With many families suddenly facing unexpected and immense financial challenges with income loss, they may not be able to make required tuition payments. Those hardest hit by economic uncertainty and income loss are typically the most vulnerable—namely the poor and minority communities. **We believe that**

families seeking the best education opportunities for their children, especially those facing difficulties due to COVID19, should be supported.

Additionally, many private schools support their economically diverse student body through private philanthropy, which is also in jeopardy due to the economic downturn from COVID-19. **We believe public and private school students must be given the resources for success, particularly students in need.**

Private school closures would be devastating for families, students and communities. It will be equally devastating, financially, for public school districts. A strategic federal investment will help prevent a flood of students from private schools into districts that are already projecting major budget shortfalls. States and districts will face an unbearable financial burden if current private school students transfer into public schools in significant numbers. If private schools are shuttered because families are not paying tuition for an extended period of time, the increase of public education expenditures for millions of new students coming back into the district systems will be staggering. Should 20 percent of private school students have to be reabsorbed into the public system, it will [cost the public system roughly \\$15 billion](#). **We believe students should be supported in the education environment that is the best fit and causes the least disruption to their learning.**

Further, migration of students from private schools to over-crowded public schools will not only cost more money but will directly impact any re-opening of public schools and their capacity to maintain social distancing. Such a prospect is all the more ominous given the higher than average spread of the contagion in minority communities.

In response to these concerns, we submit the following ideas for inclusion in the next COVID-19 relief package:

Emergency Appropriation – Appropriate a one-time emergency tuition grant for low to middle-income private school families.

Federal Tax Credits for Scholarship Funds – Create an annual federal tax credit for voluntary donations to state-based scholarship granting organizations and workforce training organizations. The scholarships could be used by families for an array of educational options, including private school tuition, skilled trade union apprenticeship programs, and industry recognized certification programs. The grant amount, per state, could be tied to ESEA Title IIA calculations. States receiving these emergency grants

would continue the scholarship programs, funded through philanthropy and the federal tax credit, going forward.

These initiatives could be funded by setting aside 10 percent of any new federal COVID-19 relief funding provided to public schools. This percentage would be consistent with the overall population of private vs. public students in the country. Also, with continued uncertainty ahead, it is important to pair any one-time direct aid with a comprehensive, sustainable tax credit to sustain scholarships for children long term. **We believe it is important for families to receive education support and funding from these proposals.**

We all believe that *all* of our nation's children deserve access to a quality education. As the country responds to COVID-19 and prepares for the 2020-21 school year, we look forward to working with you to preserve and strengthen educational opportunities for all students.

Sincerely,

Agudath Israel of America
American Association of Christian Schools
American Federation for Children
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)
Catholic Education Partners
Center for Education Reform
Center for Free Economy
Council for American Private Education
Cristo Rey National Network
Ed Choice
#EdTaxCredit50
Invest in Education Coalition
Jesuit School Network
Leadership Roundtable
Men and Women for a Representative Democracy in America
National Catholic Education Association
Phyllis Schlafly Eagles
Ready Education Network
The Catholic Association
The Silver Shield Foundation
Tradition, Family, Property, Inc.
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Catholic Education

University Consortium of Catholic Education
USA Workforce Coalition
William E. Simon Foundation
Xaverian Brother Sponsored School
Thomas B. Fordham Institute
AL Alabama Opportunity Scholarship Fund
AR ACE Scholarships - Arkansas
AZ A Degree for Me
AZ Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization
AZ Arizona Council for American Private Education (AZCAPE)
AZ Arizona Private Education Scholarship Fund, Inc.
AZ Arizona Private School Tuition Organization AZPSTO
AZ Arizona School Choice Trust
AZ Arizona Tuition Organization (AZTO)
AZ Arizona's Catholic Tuition Support Organization (Arizona CTSO)
AZ Arizona's STO Association (ASTOA)
AZ AZ4Education Scholarship Foundation
AZ Children's First Foundation
AZ Cochise Christian School Tuition Organization
AZ Institute for Better Education
AZ Jewish Tuition Organization
AZ Montessori Scholarship Organizations
AZ Orme Primavera Schools Foundation
AZ School Choice Arizona
AZ School Tuition Organization 4 Kids (STO4Kids)
AZ T.O.P.S. for Kids
AZ White Mountain Tuition Support Foundation
CA California Policy Center
CA Pacific Research Institute
CA The BASIC Fund (Bay Area, CA)
CO ACE Scholarships - Colorado
CO Independence Institute
CO Ready Colorado
CO Seeds of Hope (Denver, CO)
CT CEO Foundation of Connecticut
CT Yankee Institute
FL Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
FL James Madison Institute

FL Step Up for Students (FL)
GA Apogee Scholarship Fund
GA Georgia Center for Opportunity
GA GOAL Scholarships
IA Iowa Advocates for Choice in Education
IA Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education
IL Big Shoulders Fund
IL Empower Illinois
IN Indiana Non-Public Education Association
IN Institute for Quality Education (IN)
IN Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization of Indiana
KS ACE Scholarships - Kansas City
KY Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions
LA ACE Scholarships - Louisiana
LA Arete Scholars
LA Aspiring Scholars
MA Archdiocese of Boston
MA Campaign For Catholic Schools
MA CSF/ Inner-City Scholarship Fund
MA Lynch Foundation
MA The Catholic Foundation of Southeastern MA
MD Children's Scholarship Fund Baltimore
MI Mackinac Center for Public Policy
MN AIM Higher Foundation
MN Catholic Community Foundation
MN Catholic School Center for Excellence
MN Center of the American Experiment
MN Freedom Foundation of Minnesota
MN Minnesota Independent School Forum
MN Opportunity For All Kids
MO Children's Education Alliance of Missouri
MO Today and Tomorrow Foundation (St. Louis, MO)
MS Mississippi Center for Public Policy
MT ACE Scholarships - Montana
NC Civitas Institute
NC John Locke Foundation
NC Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina
ND Roughrider Policy Center

NE Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha
NH Children's Scholarship Fund New Hampshire
NJ Catholic Partnership Schools (Camden, NJ)
NJ Diocese of Paterson
NJ Healy Educational Fund
NJ Tri-County Scholarship Fund (NJ)
NJ Archdiocese of Newark
NV AAA Scholarship Foundation
NV Dinosaurs & Roses Scholarship Organization
NV Education Nevada Of Northern Nevada (EFNN)
NV IPOF Las Vegas
NV Nevada Policy Research Institute
NY Archdiocese of New York
NY BISON Children's Scholarship Fund (Buffalo and Western NY)
NY Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens
NY Children's Scholarship Fund (New York)
NY Cornelia Connelly Center
NY Dominican Academy
NY New York State Association of Independent Schools
NY NYCAN
NY Partnership for Inner-City Education
NY Regis High School
NY Saint Ignatius School
NY The Loyola School
OH Howley Foundation
OH Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund
OH School Choice Ohio
OK Crossover Scholarship Fund
OK Go for Catholic Schools, Tulsa
OK Opportunity Scholarship Fund Oklahoma
OK Tax Credit Scholarship Program of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City
OK The Academy Scholarship Granting Organization
OR Children's Scholarship Fund Oregon
PA ACE Scholarship - Philadelphia
PA ACSI Children's Education Fund (ACEF)
PA Business Leadership Organized for Catholic Schools (BLOCS)
PA Children's Scholarship Fund of Philadelphia
PA Commonwealth Foundation

PA Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation
Eastern Pennsylvania Scholarship Foundation (EPSF)-Diocese of Allentown Brooke
PA Tesche' Board Member & LLC Managing Member
PA Faith In The Future
PA Foundation for Catholic Education-Archdiocese of Philadelphia
PA Independent Mission Schools
PA Scholarship Partners Foundation-Diocese of Greensburg
PA Second Century Scholarship Fund-Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown
PA STAR Foundation scholarship Fund-Diocese of Erie
RI Rhode Island Center for Freedom and Prosperity
SD Great Plains Public Policy
TN Beacon Center
TN Memphis Opportunity Scholarship Trust
TX ACE Scholarships - Houston
TX Texas Public Policy Foundation
VA Christ Chapel Academy
VA Frontier Foundation
VA Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy
WA Washington Policy Center
WI Maclver Institute for Public Policy
WI School Choice Wisconsin
WI Wisconsin Council of Religious & Independent Schools
WI Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty
WV Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy
WY ACE Scholarships - Wyoming