

Assistance for Catholic Schools and Students

Catholic Social Teaching:

“A particularly important contribution many families make to the common good of society is the education of children. Parents – the first and most important educators – have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to their children’s needs, including public, private, and religious schools. Governments should help provide the resources required for all parents to exercise this basic right without discrimination, and for all children to access the educational opportunities most suitable to their needs.” *Faithful Citizenship in Virginia, Virginia Catholic Conference (2007).*

2009 Legislation:

Business Tax Credits. Legislation (**HB 1965, Delegate Saxman**) that would establish income tax credits for businesses and individuals who contribute to public-school foundations or scholarship foundations is under consideration in the **House Committee on Finance**. A similar measure (**SB 1221, Senator Obenshain**) is being considered in the **Senate Committee on Finance**. The Virginia Catholic Conference endorses both bills.

School-Supplies Tax Credits. Other tax-credit bills – also supported by the Conference and before the House and Senate Finance committees (respectively) – are **HB 1976**, sponsored by **Delegate R. Lee Ware**, and **SB 1278**, sponsored by **Senator Newman**. **HB 1976** and **SB 1278** would establish tax credits for school supplies. The credits would be available to parents of children who attend public or nonpublic schools or who are home schooled – with a limit of \$125 for individual taxpayers, and \$250 for taxpayers filing jointly.

Talking Points for Meetings with Legislators:

- All parents with school-aged children contribute to Virginia’s education system—regardless of what schools their children attend. Enabling parents who choose a nonpublic school for their children to realize a return on this investment enables Virginia to promote equity in the services it provides children.
- **HB 1965** and **SB 1221** are beneficial for both the public- and nonpublic-school communities.

- **HB 1965** and **SB 1221** would also increase the range of options available for more children whose parents cannot afford to pay tuitions.

- **HB 1976** and **SB 1278** would benefit all parents with school-aged children. At a time when many families are facing economic hardship, allowing tax credits for school supplies would reduce the strain that some parents face.