

U.S. Bishops' Education Chairman Applauds Bipartisan Legislation Honoring Contributions of Catholic Schools

February 5, 2021

WASHINGTON –Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ of Oakland, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Catholic Education applauded Representative Darin LaHood (IL-18) and Senator Pat Toomey (PA) for introducing H. Res. 66 and S. Res. 33, "Supporting the Contributions of Catholic Schools."

Bishop Barber stated:

"Catholic schools are a unique gift to the nation. We honor the dignity of every child through an integral formation that includes academic excellence, but with an equal focus on heart, mind, and soul. This is a preparation not only for college and career, but for heaven itself. This commitment was on full display in the past year as Catholic schools excelled during the COVID pandemic. Amidst this national crisis, Catholic schools rapidly transitioned to online learning in the spring of 2020, and our Catholic school leaders worked all summer to prepare buildings for in-person learning. In the fall of 2020, eighty percent of Catholic schools offered some degree of in-person learning."

Catholic social teaching instills a love of community and country with graduates contributing to civil society at all levels, most notably among our nation's leaders, including at the highest levels of government and public service.

The bipartisan resolution in the House and Senate, highlights the following:

Whereas the theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2021 is "Catholic Schools: Learn. Faith. Excellence. Service." and reflects Catholic schools' purpose to form students to be good citizens of the world, love God and neighbor, and enrich society with the leaven of the gospel and by example of faith: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

...supports the dedication of Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the United States toward academic excellence, and supports the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the Nation.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), Catholic school student enrollment for the school year 2020-21 is almost 1,650,000 in over 6,000 schools including 22 percent of students from racial minority backgrounds, 18.1 percent from Hispanic heritage, and 24.5 percent from non-Catholic families. The COVID pandemic has had a devastating impact on Catholic schools with over 200 schools permanently closing in 2020.

The full text of the House Resolution is available [here](#).

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