



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

March 5, 2013

Dear Members of the Wisconsin Legislature,

We write to you from the perspective of a faith community that began teaching needy and vulnerable children in Wisconsin before its statehood. We urge you to support Governor Walker's expansion of parental choice programs and the creation of the Special Needs Scholarship Program.

We back this effort out of a conviction that parents, as the primary educators of their children, must have the community's support in selecting a form of education that best meets their child's needs – academic, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical.

Choice in education is a tool through which parents may ensure the proper formation of their children. Though this right extends to all families, we support this limited expansion as a much needed step in the right direction, especially for families hindered by limited means and limited options.

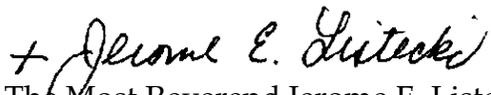
Some suggest we support choice in education because it funds our schools. Others say the programs devalue public education. Neither is the case. Vibrant religious and independent schools can and do coexist with quality public schools. It is possible to affirm and support both.

Nor do we accept the notion that expansion of educational choice in primary and secondary schools diverts resources from public education. In our pluralistic society, we continually recognize the work of both public and private actors with state and federal funds. Catholic hospitals, charitable agencies, and universities, along with their public counterparts, receive public funds to assist the poor and vulnerable. Public and nongovernment sectors continually cooperate to make life better for thousands of needy people. It is true for Wisconsin families in their homes and outside of school, and it should be true for them in school as well.

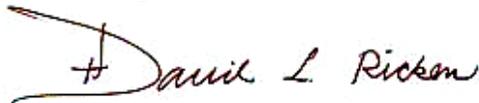
For centuries, the Catholic Church has supported the role of education as integral to the advancement of the human person. It is as important as a right to food, shelter, clothing, and work. As a people of faith, we have been, and remain, willing and useful

partners with public institutions. Our Catholic school communities are eager to strengthen this partnership in education. We hope our contributions continue to be welcome. Please support choice in education.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Jerome E. Listeck
Archbishop of Milwaukee



The Most Reverend David L. Ricken
Bishop of Green Bay



The Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino
Bishop of Madison



The Most Reverend William P.
Callahan
Bishop of La Crosse



The Most Reverend Peter F. Christensen
Bishop of Superior