



## United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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August 5, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented, challenging time. We are tremendously grateful for the aid that has been provided thus far to help sustain our country during this pandemic.

As you come together to consider additional aid to help Americans through the crisis, we implore you to ensure that the education needs of *all* children are met, including children in Catholic and other non-public schools.

For nearly two centuries, Catholic schools have provided an enormous public benefit by educating Americans from every walk of life, from diverse religious backgrounds, from every income class, and especially from poor and immigrant communities. For countless Americans, a Catholic education has been, and continues to be, the surest path from poverty to the middle class.

The economic devastation that has hit so many of America's families has made it impossible for many struggling families to continue paying tuition. As a result, already 140 Catholic schools have permanently closed their doors, and hundreds more are in danger of being unable to open in the fall. The closure of schools that serve urban areas are disproportionately harmful to low-income and black children served by these schools.

Not only is this devastating to each of those school communities, their staff and business partners, but it has a detrimental impact on local taxpayers. For every student educated in a Catholic or non-public school, taxpayers save thousands of dollars. Nationwide, Catholic schools save state and local governments more than \$20 billion annually.

All schools and all children have been severely impacted by this pandemic, and we strongly agree that education aid in the next package should be robust. It should also ensure that non-public school children are given equal consideration during this pandemic emergency. Therefore, we ask for your support and leadership to provide assistance that specifically includes the non-public school community in the next COVID aid package.

Given that Catholic and non-public schools educate ten percent of K-12 children nationwide, we request funding for the non-public school community at ten percent of what is provided to the public schools.

This aid is essential for ensuring that Catholic and non-public schools that want to open for instruction have the means to do so, because families have the *ability* to send their children to those schools.

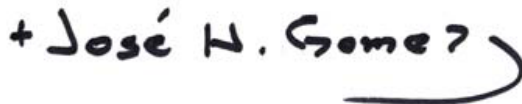
The most effective way to help struggling families stay attached to their schools is to fund emergency tuition scholarships for low-income families to use at Catholic or other non-public schools. We believe this is good policy, by providing aid directly to families to support the education that is best suited to the needs of their children.

Any direct aid to support the non-public school community should allow for schools to meet the unique needs of low-income families that they serve, including those families who need tuition assistance.

By equally supporting children in the non-public school community, you will maintain the integrity of those strong communities, while helping sustain the positive legacy of Catholic schools and their benefit to the common good for generations to come. Moreover, you will prevent the additional financial burdens on already strained state and local governments caused by the sudden enrollment of thousands of students whose Catholic schools had closed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for all you are doing to support our nation during this difficult time. Be assured of our prayers for each of you, especially as you make these important decisions.

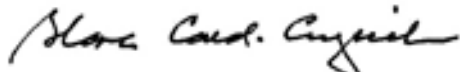
Sincerely,



Most Rev. José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles  
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops



Timothy Cardinal Dolan  
Archbishop of New York



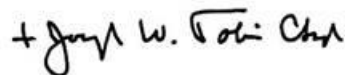
Cardinal Blase J. Cupich  
Archbishop of Chicago



Daniel Cardinal DiNardo  
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston



Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM, Cap.  
Archbishop of Boston



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark



Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, SJ  
Bishop of Oakland  
Chairman, Committee on Catholic Education