



# Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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October 12, 2011

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### *Bishop Bartchak Applauds Governor Corbett's Support for School Choice*

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – The Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, issued the following statement in response to Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett's call for school vouchers and an expanded Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.

“The time for school choice in Pennsylvania has come. Governor Corbett's goal of providing vouchers for low-income students in poor-performing schools and expanding tax credits for businesses that fund EITC scholarships is a step in the right direction. When it comes to education, children must be the number one priority. School choice guarantees that parents will be able to provide their child with the educational opportunities that best fit the child's needs.”

Bishop Bartchak, along with the other Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania, recently issued a joint statement in support of school choice. That statement reads, in part, “The Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania see school choice as a defining social justice issue of our society. Legislation currently being considered in Harrisburg could herald a new, more just era for education in Pennsylvania – an era in which we focus on the ideal educational environment for each student, not on a mandatory system in which students are assigned to a school based solely on geographic location. The current treatment of these children, particularly children from low-income families, is unjust and inequitable. Families are often prevented from accessing the educational options that would be best for them because of economic or social barriers. School choice legislation that includes vouchers and an increase to EITC reinforces that parents – not the state – are the primary educators of their children.”

Bishop Bartchak is calling on proponents of school choice to contact their state legislators and urge them to support Governor Corbett's plan.