



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

July 29, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Catholic schools and the tuition-paying families that support them are facing enormous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One month ago I shared with you the sad news that due in part to the pandemic, three of our elementary schools would close and not reopen in September. Our Tomorrow's Hope Foundation is expecting and planning for what they forecast to be a dramatic increase in requests for tuition assistance due to the effects of the pandemic.

Many of our elected officials recognize that this pandemic is affecting all schools, including Catholic and other non-government schools. And, now the United States Congress is working on another stimulus bill to provide relief from the COVID-19 pandemic for critical parts of the economy and society, including schools.

Catholic and other religious and independent schools must be included in this relief package!

On behalf of the thousands of our Catholic school parents and students, I am urging you to contact our U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and your local Congressional Representative to insist that Catholic and other religious and independent schools receive their fair share of funds to safely reopen. These funds are needed so that our struggling tuition-paying families can keep their children enrolled in our Catholic schools.

Time is of the essence, so please I urge you to add your voice **today** by sending your message to your legislators.

An easy way to act is by visiting the New York State Catholic Conference Website. There, you can send email messages to your U.S. Senate representatives and your U.S. Representative with only a few mouse clicks. Visit <https://www.nyscatholic.org/nys-catholic-conference-action-center/>

You can also email Senator Schumer by visiting:
<https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck>

Senator Gillibrand can be emailed by visiting:
<https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me>.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. You and your family are remembered in my daily prayers.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre