
**HARD COPY EDITION
DECEMBER 2011**

**The State of School Choice
in Ohio**

Pending School-Choice Legislation:

**Parental Choice and Taxpayer Savings
Scholarship (PACT): [HB 136](#)**

HB 136 (Huffman), as currently proposed, would allow students whose families earn up to \$95,000 in annual household income to receive a scholarship to attend a Catholic school.

Unlike existing voucher programs, HB 136 allows funding to truly follow children into the schools of their parents' choice. The income requirement is the determining factor for a scholarship, regardless of the rating for the student's public school, or whether the student has a disability.

In the present form of the bill, public school students would be eligible for a scholarship initially, and students already enrolled in a Catholic and other chartered nonpublic school would be phased-in.

The Bishops of the Catholic Conference of Ohio support HB 136. The Conference has publicly testified in support of the legislation.

HB136 is beneficial for Catholic schools and students because:

- It creates ways for parents' tax dollars to follow the education of their children, regardless whether they have attended public or chartered nonpublic schools;

- It reaches out to working poor and lower-middle income families;
- It provides for Catholic school families to be phased into the program if their families meet the bill's household income levels;
- It complements Ohio's other school-choice programs.

Tax Credits: [HB 242](#)

HB 242 (Brenner, Patmon), as currently proposed, would allow students in low-middle income families to receive a scholarship to attend a Catholic school.

Tax credit scholarships would be awarded to students whose household income is 150 percent of the level that would make them eligible for the federal school lunch program. (For example, a family of four with an income of \$62,000 would be eligible).

A student in grades K-8 could receive a scholarship of \$4,250 or the school's tuition, whichever is less. A student in grades 9-12 could receive a scholarship of \$7,000 or the school's tuition, whichever is less.

Under HB242, scholarships would be awarded by educational scholarship organizations (ESOs) established to receive donations. Individuals and corporations who contribute to ESOs receive a one-dollar tax credit for every dollar they contribute, up to maximum amounts (\$1,000 for individuals, \$2,500 for married couples filing a joint return, and \$300,000 for corporations).

HB242 has bi-partisan support. The Conference has publicly testified before legislative committees in support of the tax credit scholarship bill and continues to advocate for moving the legislation forward.

Special Needs Scholarship

Ohio is the only state in the nation with two school-choice programs for special needs students. The Autism Scholarship Program, now in its fourth year of implementation, will be joined by the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program (JPSNSP) in 2012-2013.

The JPSNSP provides opportunities for students based on their needs, regardless whether they attend a public or nonpublic school. Parents of students who are suspected of having a disability are encouraged to contact their school district for students to be identified and referred for an initial evaluation.

In order for schools to participate in the JPSNSP, they must register with and be approved by the Ohio Department of Education. This registration begins in February 2012. Students must apply by or before April 15, 2012 to be awarded a scholarship for the opening of the 2012-2013 school year. The application deadline is Nov. 15, 2012 for students to be awarded a scholarship, effective January 2013. [[More](#)]

SCHOOL CHOICE ACTION ALERT!!

**Legislative action on school choice
legislation is pending in the
Ohio House.**

**PLEASE IMMEDIATELY CONTACT YOUR
HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE**

**URGE SUPPORT FOR
BOTH HB 136 & HB 242**

[Contact information](#)
[PDF Version of the Action Alert](#)

Life Issues

The Governor signed [HB 63](#) on November 4, 2011. It will go into effect on February 3, 2012. HB 63 revises Ohio's Judicial Bypass for Parental Consent law. It provides further guidance to judges in determining a minor's maturity to bypass parental consent prior to an abortion.

[HB 79](#) prohibits coverage of abortion in state health insurance exchanges established under the federal healthcare reform bill. Hearings are underway in the Senate Insurance Committee. The Catholic Conference of Ohio has testified in support of this bill. HB 79 passed the House on March 9, 2011.

The Heartbeat Bill: [HB 125](#) prohibits an abortion of an unborn human individual with a detectable fetal heartbeat. This bill passed the House on June 28, 2011. Hearings are expected to occur in the Senate by early next year.

The Conference is working to help resolve concerns and differences regarding specific language and constitutional interpretations.

There has been considerable debate, both within the legislature and among well-intentioned pro-life advocates, whether such legislation will be found constitutional and able to be implemented. Some legal experts fear that court rulings on this bill may make it more difficult to protect unborn babies. Changes continue to be discussed to help unify pro-life advocates around this legislation.

[HB 298](#): This legislation was recently introduced in the House. It will redirect millions of taxpayer dollars away from abortion-providing groups like Planned Parenthood and towards the hundreds of health centers that provide responsible health care for women, their children and unborn children.

For additional legislation and further information link to the [Catholic Conference of Ohio's page on ending abortion](#).

Death Penalty

The Death Penalty Study Committee established by Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice, Maureen O'Connor, held its first meeting on November 3, 2011. Their report is due by the end of 2012.

[HB 160](#) (Celeste, Antonio) is scheduled for proponent testimony in the House Criminal Justice Committee on December 14, 2011. HB 160 will replace the death penalty with life without parole.

Executions continue in Ohio. There are currently seven executions scheduled for 2012 and five scheduled for 2013.

For further information link to the [Catholic Conference of Ohio's death penalty page](#).

Concern for the Poor

The Catholic Conference of Ohio's Department on Social Concerns developed a [Poverty Report](#), providing information regarding poverty in Ohio and throughout the United States.

For further information link to the [Catholic Conference of Ohio's page on poverty](#).

Action Alerts

Please link to the Catholic Conference of Ohio's web page on [Action Alerts](#) to be updated on current statewide and national legislative issues of concern.



ADVENT 2011: PREPARE FOR THE LORD!



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