

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *of* RHODE ISLAND



## **Advocacy Toolkit**

Proposed 2012 Budget Cuts Affecting the Parents and Students of Rhode Island Catholic Schools

Thank you for your commitment to your child's education and Rhode Island's Catholic schools. The following advocacy toolkit provides the information and tools needed to effectively communicate with your elected officials to advocate on behalf of important issues impacting your child's Catholic education in Rhode Island.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Chris Hunter at Advocacy Solutions, our grassroots advocacy consultant (401-831-3700, [chunter@advocacysolutionsllc.com](mailto:chunter@advocacysolutionsllc.com)).

Once again, thank you for your enthusiasm and dedication!

## Background and Goals

Rhode Island's Catholic schools have come together to mobilize parents, faculty, staff, students, and community leaders to:

- **Oppose** Governor Chafee's proposal to defund state assistance for the textbook loan program, which provides monetary assistance to Catholic school parents for costly textbooks, which can easily cost more than \$300 per year.
- **Support** continued state funding for student transportation to your child's Catholic school.
- **Support** the Rhode Island Scholarship Tax Credit program, which allows businesses to receive a tax credit for making contributions that provide economically disadvantaged children with private school tuition scholarships.

To achieve these goals, we need to raise awareness at the General Assembly about the success of the students of Rhode Island's Catholic schools. Lawmakers must know that:

- Catholic schools strive to provide academic excellence and are a critical component of the overall education system in Rhode Island.
- Catholic schools cannot maintain affordable tuition rates and provide financial assistance to low income families without continued support for the Scholarship Tax Credit, state funding for the textbook loan program and student transportation.



## Why Your Voice Should be Heard

There is strength in numbers. Adding your voice to the chorus of support for students of Rhode Island's Catholic schools will help to share our concerns with leading decision makers on Smith Hill.

Lawmakers hear from lobbyists all the time, but they need to hear from you, the people they represent!

Elected representatives will take notice if families, faculty, staff, and community members make phone calls, send emails, sign petitions, and testify at the State House about their personal experience with, and support for, the families of Rhode Island's Catholic schools.

## What Can You Do?

### Contact Your Legislators Today Using Our Electronic Advocacy Tool!

1. Visit <http://capwiz.com/faithfulcitizenri/>
2. Click on the "Restore Critical Funding for Textbooks and Transportation" action alert.
3. Read the action alert.
4. Personalize the sample letter with details about why you support Catholic education in Rhode Island.
5. Fill in your name and address so the tool can automatically match you with your elected officials.
6. Click on the "Send Message" button to send your email to your elected officials.

### Call Speaker Gordon Fox and Senate President Teresa Paiva-Weed!

House Speaker Gordon Fox (401-222-2466) and Senate President Teresa Paiva-Weed (401-222-6655) are very influential members of the General Assembly. Call them today and ask them to:

- **Oppose** Governor Chafee's proposal to defund state assistance for the textbook loan program, which provides monetary assistance to Catholic school parents for costly textbooks, which can easily cost more than \$300 per year.
- **Support** continued state funding for your child's transportation to Catholic schools.
- **Support** the Rhode Island Scholarship Tax Credit program for low income families.

**Send a Letter to the Editor to your local newspaper!**

Here are some samples you can use, or even better, write your own message about why you support Rhode Island's Catholic schools.

**SAMPLE 1**

*Rhode Island's Catholic schools are an important part of the overall education system in our state. They provide a quality and affordable school choice option for thousands of Rhode Island families. Unfortunately, proposed cuts to state assistance for textbook purchases and student transportation could force schools to raise their tuitions. Significant increases could force parents to enroll their children in public schools which would add to class sizes and place other burdens on the state's financially strapped public education system. For every child that attends a private school, more financial resources are made available for public school students and teachers. This is not the time to be adding to the burden of Rhode Island's families and taking away an important school choice option. Governor Chafee and the legislature should ensure funding for these programs which are so critical to Catholic education in Rhode Island.*

**SAMPLE 2**

*Rhode Island's Catholic schools strive to provide academic excellence and are an important component of our state's overall education system. But our Catholic schools will not be able to continue to offer affordable tuition rates and financial assistance for low income families without continued state assistance. Unfortunately, Governor Chafee's budget calls for defunding the textbook loan program which helps families afford the high cost of textbooks. Further, funding for student transportation to Rhode Island Catholic schools is also threatened. These cuts would force schools to raise their tuitions, thus making a quality Catholic school education out of reach for many families. Significant increases could force parents to enroll their children in public schools which would add to class sizes and place other burdens on the state's financially strapped public education system. For every child that attends a private school, more financial resources are made available for public school students and teachers, that's not fair. Governor Chafee and the General Assembly should restore funding for these important programs.*

Submit your letter to:

The Providence Journal

Include your name and address and email to [letters@projo.com](mailto:letters@projo.com) or mail to:

Letters to the Editor

The Providence Journal

75 Fountain St.

Providence, RI 02902

**Show up when it's time!**

Come to the State House and show your support for the students of Rhode Island's Catholic schools! There will be Finance Committee and other hearings at the State House where you can personally communicate with your legislators and share why Catholic School students and families deserve support. We will be mailing and emailing Catholic school supporters in the near future to let you know when to come to the State House to voice your support.

**Average Textbook Costs**

**Science Books**

Biology	\$75-\$85
Chemistry	\$75- \$85
Physiology	\$100

**Math Books**

Algebra I	\$70
Geometry	\$75
Algebra II	\$75 - \$80
Pre-Calculus/Trig	\$100- \$120

**Social Studies**

United States History	\$85-\$90
World History	\$85 - \$90
Psychology	\$80
Sociology	\$80

**Foreign Language**

Foreign language first year	\$60
Foreign language second year	\$60
Foreign language third year	\$60

**Language Arts**

Literature (grades 9 – 12)	\$80 per year
Language Arts (grades 9 – 12)	\$50 per year