



St. Cecilia Catholic Church

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Fr. Rick Kotrba

St. Cecilia Catholic Church and School

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Bill No. 2136: Regarding Tax Credit for low income scholarship program

Hearing Date February 5, 2025

To whom it may concern:

My name is Fr. Rick Kotrba, I'm the pastor of St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Haysville, KS where we have a Catholic school of just over 100 students in grades Pre-K- 8. I first want to express my gratitude for the assistance we've received from Support For Catholic Schools, one of the state's Scholarship Granting Organizations, to help us provide education to our families and children qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

Because of the scholarships we have received, this has assisted our families within our parish as well as other families who were looking for a different education option than the school they were attending. I'd like to share the story of one of our students who has been here for three years now and came to our school in 3rd grade. His mom inquired about our school and met with the principal and myself about her desire for a different education for her son. In his previous school, he was involved and blamed for being disruptive in his classroom and was falling behind academically. I asked both his mom and the young man if he would accept discipline and cooperate with both his teacher and his students if he was to come here, and they both agreed he would. Thankfully, he has had no problems since being here and his academic performance has improved drastically.

This would not have been possible if this single mother was expected to pay full tuition for her son's education here at our school as she could not afford it. She came on her own desiring a different possibility and hope for her son, and the scholarship he qualified for made it possible for us to help with his education.

This is one great success story of many. In my 4 years here, it has been very encouraging as our school receives new families and students, and to hear from them how excited they are and grateful they're now at our small school. We are very blessed to be able to provide this opportunity for those who do not have the financial means to pursue this for themselves.

I also recognize that the number of children qualifying for these scholarships is increasing each year as more grades become eligible for the scholarship. Because of the growing number of scholarships granted, I'd ask that the state legislation would consider increasing the total amount available for tax credit by changing from 75% to 100% tax credit and increasing the total available for tax credit.

Thanks for your consideration,

Father Rick Kotrba

St. Cecilia, help us to sing God's praises!