

LB295 ADVOCACY

What You Can Do to Enact Education Freedom in Nebraska

The Nebraska Catholic Conference strongly supports the Opportunity Scholarship Act (LB 295), which has advanced from the Revenue Committee by a 5-3 vote. The Act would create a tax credit to incentivize donations to non-profit “scholarship granting organizations,” which turn nearly all their revenue into private-school scholarships for low- and middle-income families. Private education choice is growing in popularity. But we need your help to get the bill across the finish line.

For Parents, Students, and Supporters

Share your story

If you have a personal story about a positive experience with Catholic schools, you can have a powerful impact by sharing it with others. Maybe you wanted a faith-based environment for your child. Maybe Catholic school better met your child’s needs. Maybe you or your child have benefited from a privately-funded scholarship and you want others to have the same opportunity.

Call, email, or write your senator and the Governor

Contact your senator and Governor Ricketts to personally convey why Catholic school was best for your child, or to simply encourage them to support Opportunity Scholarships (LB 295). You can find your senator’s information by visiting nebraskalegislature.gov.

Meet with your senator

Senators appreciate hearing directly from constituents, especially about how public policy can personally change lives. Call your senator’s office and set up a meeting, or talk to them in the Capitol Rotunda during floor debates. Contact the Nebraska Catholic Conference for more information.

Write a letter-to-the-editor

Writing a letter-to-the-editor can be a powerful, easy way of demonstrating public support. The NCC can help share it with others on social media and on our website. Here are some talking points to consider, beyond your personal story:

- Different children have different needs.
- Every child has the right to an education that best meets their unique needs.
- LB 295 simply helps incentivize more private donations to help fund scholarships for low- and middle-income children.
- Tax-credit scholarships are not vouchers. They are funded purely by private donations, not public school funds.
- Tax-credit scholarships exist in 18 states, including Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas.
- LB 295 saves taxpayer dollars. Nebraska’s private schools already save \$450 million in public funds every year. LB 295 will help more children enroll in these schools, saving even more money.
- Successful private schools promote successful public schools, and vice versa.

Visit necatholic.org or call us at 402.477.7517.

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What You Can Do to Enact Education Freedom in Nebraska (cont.)

For Schools

Letters from students

*“I love my school because _____ .
Please support LB295 to help more kids like me!”*

Students of all ages can write short letters to their senators explaining why they love their Catholic school.

A sample letter for young students could be as simple as the sample above.

For older students, relating their personal experience and explaining the policy benefits would be appropriate. Feel free to use the talking points on the first page and/or contact the Nebraska Catholic Conference for more information. You can share your story with senators, local newspapers, social media, and the Nebraska Catholic Conference, as provided below.

Student projects

Young students can illustrate a day in the life of their Catholic school and mail their picture to senators, or personally drop them off at their offices on a field trip to the Nebraska State Capitol.

Teacher and administrator outreach

Teachers and administrators can reach out to their senators, and/or write public letters, explaining the quality of education in Catholic schools, the diverse demographics of the student body, and the need for more financial assistance to low- and middle-income families who want to enroll in their schools.

Teachers and administrators bring an important, informed perspective to bear regarding the effectiveness of their schools and the financial barriers that prevent many parents from having true education choice.

Parent education sessions

Host a session for parents to learn more about “education choice” laws in general and LB 295 in particular. The Church clearly teaches that government must pass laws that further a parent’s right to choose the education best suited for their child – including Catholic education.

Many states already have laws that further this right, but Nebraska lags far behind. The NCC is happy to provide more information and to speak at such a session.

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER...

Keep it positive! Personal stories and compelling information about Catholic education are key. Our belief is not that Catholic schools are against, but rather partners with, public schools.

Show uniqueness. Private, religious schools can best respond to families who desire a faith-based education for their children and can form young people into engaged and generous citizens.

Engage others. Talk to friends and family about the importance of education choice, and the opportunity in Nebraska to help more low- and middle-income students attend nonpublic schools.