Attachment D

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

February 13, 2013

Re: HB 13-1176 and SB 13-069

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to strongly endorse HB 13-1176 and SB 13-069, "Concerning the Creation of an Income Tax Credits for Nonpublic Education." The reasons for my endorsement are as follows:

- Research clearly indicates the success that private and Catholic schools have in serving inner city children who have few choices in education. High expectations, community, strong parent involvement, rigorous instruction, uniforms, orderly and nurturing environment, and over 100 years of experience in serving marginalized children all lead to student success.

- Findings from *High School* and *Beyond* demonstrated that Catholic schools had substantially lower dropout rates and higher holding power than did public schools for students typically at a higher risk of dropping out: students from single-parent families, minority students, or students from low-income families.

- On average, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Denver have a 97% graduation rate, including the inner-city schools.

- Research findings reveal that minority students in Catholic schools score significantly higher on achievement tests than their counterparts in public schools, with the differences in test performance increasing in higher grades.

- Research confirms that minority parents choose Catholic school for their children not only for academic reasons, but also because of the schools caring environment and discipline. Minority parents also seek an environment that reinforces the values they stress at home. Incorporation into peer group for which achievement is expected and rewarded is a major reason why many minority parents enroll their children in Catholic schools.

- The Archdiocese of Denver was featured in a national study titled, "Who Will Save America's Urban Catholic Schools?" conducted by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and published in 2007. They state, "Visits in several (inner-city) schools show they are succeeding and finding ways to overcome many economic and social barriers to education.

- The Archdiocese of Denver was featured in a national study conducted by The Notre Dame Task Force titled, "To Nurture the Soul of a Nation: Latino Families, Catholic Schools, and Educational Opportunity" and published in 2009.

- The Hoover Foundation from Stanford University recently cited the following research: "Our results show that private school competition, in addition to raising student achievement, substantially reduced the average spending level of the educational system...Our findings from an international study of 29 countries speak quite clearly. Competitions from private schools improves student achievement and appears to do so for public school as well as private school students. And it produces these benefits while decreasing the total resources devoted to education, as measured by cumulative educational spending per pupil. Under competitive pressure from private school, the productivity of the school system measured as the ratio between output and input increases by even more than is suggested by looking at educational outcomes alone."

- States receive enormous financial benefits and a substantial contribution to society by Catholic schools' serving the common good; therefore they should help find ways to allow families to have this option in education.

- In no way would such assistance compromise the constitutional separation of Church and state. Rather it guarantees the fundamental right of parents to choose a school that best meets the needs of their children.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Richard Thompson
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