

CARDINAL DOLAN CHAMPIONS SCHOOL REFORM



Bill Donohue comments on a statement given yesterday by New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan on education reform:

In an ideal world, school vouchers, or a tuition-tax-credit, would be available to parents across the nation. However, given the vested interests of the teachers' unions, we have to settle for what we can get. In New York State, that means the Education Tax Credit (ETC).

While not ideal, the ETC would allow funding of schools other than traditional public schools (charter schools), as well as private ones. No one has been more persistent in promoting this reform than Cardinal Dolan. ETC came close to being passed last year, and has the support of Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The time has come to pass it.

Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers, opposes the ETC because it would allegedly "drain money from public schools to give huge tax credits to the very rich." While the rich would benefit the most, this hardly outweighs the benefits to poor families: their children would be given the chance to escape from schools that no rich person, or union member, would choose for his own children. Moreover, concerns about the rich benefiting are a canard: vouchers and tuition-tax-credits don't disproportionately help the rich, and they are still resisted.

This business about "draining money from the public schools"

doesn't fly: for every student who leaves the public schools for a private one, there is that much more money available for remaining public school students. Besides, as a study by the Manhattan Institute found, reforms that create competition improve public school performance.

Let's also not forget what school reformer [Campbell Brown](#) found. In New York, tenure laws ensure that charges of wrongdoing against a teacher must first be evaluated by an independent investigator. Then it goes to an arbitrator (the teachers' union is involved in the selection process) who is paid an exorbitant fee. In the end, penalties—even for sexual misconduct—are typically minor. This is not the best we can do, and everyone knows it.