

CATHOLICS BENEFIT FROM SPITZER'S BUDGET

Catholic League president Bill Donohue applauded New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer's education budget today:

"In 2002, then-New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer released a 'Report on Non-Public Education' that explored many ways in which public aid to parochial schools could be achieved without violating the First Amendment. Last year, Spitzer endorsed the concept of tuition tax credits, and now as New York State Governor he is making good on his commitment. His budget proposal calls for a \$1,000 tax break for families who elect to send their children to parochial schools. This is good news for Catholics and good news for everyone who is truly interested in academic excellence.

"Already the public school industry is opposing this inclusive approach to education. It prefers the politics of exclusion and is decidedly anti-choice: the public school teachers unions, always threatened by competition, would like to deny any tax relief for parents—many of them poor—who prefer a Catholic school to a public one. In many cases, this is tantamount to condemning the poor to access services no rich person would ever choose.

"It is no secret that Catholic schools in the inner city have proven to be one of the most important causative agents allowing for upward mobility. That those who claim an allegiance to the poor would balk at Governor Spitzer's proposal shows how hypocritical they are.

"The Catholic League applauds Governor Spitzer's education budget and urges the legislature to expand the tax break afforded parochial school families."