

HOUSE PASSES VOUCHER PLAN FOR D.C.

By a narrow margin, 205-203, the House of Representatives passed legislation today that permits vouchers for poor District of Columbia students; four Democrats joined 201 Republicans in approving the bill. The Senate will now consider similar legislation.

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

“This is a significant victory for those who truly seek to champion the interests of the poor. The social science evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that nothing allows the children of the poor to succeed more than having access to private and parochial schools. This is exactly what voucher plans provide, and nowhere are they more needed than in D.C. After all, D.C. has long spent more money per pupil, with less bang for the buck, than any state in the union. It’s time for a change.

“The professed allies of the poor—teachers’ unions and many prominent African American leaders—have done more to retard progress in the black community than any organized effort of bigots. By constantly seeking to deny school choice to those most in need of it, they have made upward mobility extremely difficult. Their reliance on affirmative action as an engine of progress is similarly tainted: affirmative action can only help quicken the pace of progress for those who already possess an adequate education.

“In addition to those wedded to government programs, there is another segment of the population that stands in the way of progress for the poor: civil libertarians and church-and-state activists. If these people were given the choice of seeing

indigent kids graduate as illiterates from a public school, or seeing them graduate with honors from a Catholic school, they would choose the former. Indeed, it wouldn't even be a tough decision, so strong is their animus against all things Catholic.

"We look forward to the Senate acting as courageously as the House."