

# MAJOR SCHOOL CHOICE POLICY UNVEILED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new school choice program:

Yesterday, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos unveiled an innovative school choice initiative sponsored by Sen. Ted Cruz and Rep. Bradley Byrne. The Education Freedom Scholarships program would funnel \$5 billion into locally controlled scholarship programs. It is designed to offer parents school choice, and to provide competition among schools.

The public school establishment, which reflexively puts the best interests of the teacher unions above the best interests of students, is opposed to this program. JoAnn Bartoletti, who heads the National Association of Secondary School Principals, said the initiative would “further starve public schools.” The public schools are currently starved?

Bartoletti misrepresented the program. Sen. Cruz spoke the truth when he said, “This legislation doesn’t take one penny from any public school in America.” That is because it is entirely voluntary.

Taxpayers can elect to make a contribution to the program; they would then receive a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit. Participation is voluntary for students, schools, and states, and would not require a new bureaucratic entity to run it. Moreover, public schools can also participate in it. The competition with Catholic and other private schools would benefit all students.

Families know what is in the best interests of their children better than anyone, and that is why this program is so promising. When parents are empowered, educational achievement follows.

The Education Freedom Scholarships initiative is another promise kept by President Trump. Catholics should welcome it.