

SCHOOL CHOICE IS KEY ISSUE FOR CANDIDATES



Bill Donohue comments on school choice as a key electoral issue:

The embarrassing record of many public schools, especially in the inner city, is responsible for the growth of charter schools. While charter schools are a good alternative to traditional public schools, they are no substitute for Catholic schools. And nothing would benefit Catholic schools more than school vouchers. In New York State, vouchers are not even discussed anymore. Instead, an Education Tax Credit (ETC) is seen as the favored alternative to public schools, and its fate appears doomed.

Today's editorial in the *New York Times* is classic: it opposes the ETC because it might benefit parochial schools, but it supports the Dream Act because it benefits "undocumented students," meaning those who are here illegally.

I say the ETC "might" benefit parochial schools because it is not certain whether they would (it is not the same as a tuition-tax credit which would benefit parents). It appears that the big beneficiaries would be super-rich individuals and corporations: they would get a rebate of 75% to 95% on their state income tax for gifts, and they would effectively decide where the money goes (public schools can be selected, as well as parochial ones). Poor Catholic schools would hardly benefit, which is why a voucher program is still needed.

Presidential candidates need to be explicit about this issue.

Common Core has nothing to do with school choice, charters have nothing to do with helping Catholic schools, and ETC-type policies do not accomplish what vouchers do. Hillary Clinton, who is vague on Common Core, charters, and ETC options, is not vague on vouchers: she opposes them.

In 2006, Clinton, then a New York Senator, explained her position: Vouchers would allow parents to send their children to the “Church of White Supremacist” or the “School of the Jihad.” I’m not making this up (click [here](#) for the evidence). No candidate should be allowed to skirt this issue, never mind demagogue it.