

SUPREME COURT AFFIRMS SCHOOL CHOICE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a high court decision today on school choice:

The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision written by Chief Justice John Roberts, ruled that a Montana school choice initiative that allows a tax-credit scholarship program to benefit religious schools is constitutional. The state program is voluntary and is funded through private donations. It allows a dollar-for-dollar tax credit to those who participate.

Chief Justice Roberts concluded that although no state is required to subsidize private schools, once it does “it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious.”

The Montana law was challenged because it violated its Blaine Amendment; it denies state funding of religious schools. The original Blaine Amendment, named after Rep. James Blaine of Maine, was proposed in 1876, but was never passed at the federal level. It did, however, prevail in the states. Montana is one of 37 states that has this amendment in its constitution.

The Blaine Amendment was rooted in anti-Catholic bigotry. It was designed to force Catholic students to attend public schools, which at the time required students to embrace Protestant teachings and practices.

This decision does not resolve all school choice issues, but it finally breaks the lock that the public school monopoly has had on education. It will be denounced by the public school establishment and its unions: they reject all competition, including charter public schools.

The Democratic Party, and its new allies, [Black Lives Matter](#), are strongly opposed to giving minority children from poor families the same options for school choice afforded rich white folks. So is the Ku Klux Klan.

In 1922, the Klan succeeded in pushing for an Oregon law that forced every child to attend a public school. Three years later, in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, it lost, in a unanimous decision, in the Supreme Court.

This may be a bad day for the Democrats, Black Lives Matter, and the Ku Klux Klan, but it is a good day for Catholics, and indeed people of every faith. It is a particularly good day for the Catholic League. Fr. Virgil Blum made school choice his number one issue when he founded the organization in 1973.