

## **HOUSE Bill 800 (The EITC Program) Support Letter**

April 26, 2019

Speaker of the House, Honorable Mike Turzai  
139 Main Capitol PO Box 202028  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

Representative Curt Sonney  
Education Committee Chairman  
214 Ryan Office Building  
PO Box 202004  
Harrisburg PA 17120-2004

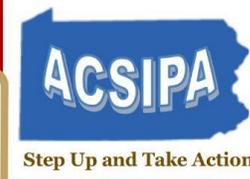
Speaker Turzai, Chairman Sonney, and the Pennsylvania House of Representatives:

As an organization that represents Christian schools, parents, and leaders across the state, the Pennsylvania affiliate of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSIPA) is writing to express its full support for House Bill 800 and the expansion of the EITC Program. As a group made up of hundreds of Christian schools in PA, the vast majority participate in some way in the tax credit scholarship program and utilize these critically needed funds to provide education and services to low- and moderate-income families in the Commonwealth. Most of our schools are on the front end of the distribution of tax credits and see firsthand how the program helps families make their education preferences realized. We stand ready to help in any way to help others see those obvious benefits of this incredible program. You can find some examples on our website at [www.acsipa.org](http://www.acsipa.org) about how schools see this innovative program partnering with families to accomplish great things in the lives of students.

We unequivocally stand as schools across the Commonwealth in support of this bill and any others that increase this program and provide for its continual expansion.

The EITC Program's mission has proven to be a success since its inception in 2001. We believe it is by far one of the most fiscally effective ways to support student achievement in Pennsylvania. The facts are:

1. The Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) has reported that there is currently over \$135 million in eligible business applications that were denied tax credits this year and were placed on a waiting list. This indicates there is widespread interest from the business community in expanding this program.
2. As school communities, we know that there are many more children who could benefit if this program were expanded. There are currently over 63,000 eligible students on the EITC waiting list and the average scholarship is only \$1,500.
3. We also know that the EITC scholarship program represents 0.03 percent of the Governor's proposed spending in education. As schools that see the benefit to students of this program firsthand, we can support not only additional funding but the idea that these funds should be increased automatically. With an automatic escalator, businesses, schools, and families can effectively plan. Although increases in the program now help everyone in the long run, the process



of decision making at the end of session leaves businesses and families, and DCED, scrambling to implement a program and get students what they need in very uncertain ways. The ability to plan, would create an opportunity to accelerate this program in ways that would allow for intentional growth and stability.

In summary, if we can be helpful in sharing the many positive results of this program, and the benefits of expansion for the families of the Commonwealth, please feel free to contact us.

Best Regards,

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