

**PRESS RELEASE:**

January 8, 2026

## **The Cardinal Newman Society Calls for Fair Treatment of Catholic Families in Trump Scholarship Tax Credits**

As the Trump administration moves to implement federal tax credits for taxpayers who support scholarship programs around the country, The Cardinal Newman Society has expressed joy in the program's potential while urging the Administration to ensure that Catholic families have full access to scholarships for their use in schools and homeschools that fully integrate and uphold the Catholic faith.

"School choice is especially important to Catholic families and Catholic education," The Cardinal Newman Society reminded the Administration in a formal comment submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), just prior to Christmas. "...Public policy has effectively coerced Catholic families into public schools that reject truths of God and the Catholic faith. This is not the religious freedom promised by the First Amendment."

Although the House version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) contained language explicitly designed to protect the religious freedom of schools receiving scholarship funds, that provision was removed from the final law. After taking a deep dive into the new federal program and consulting with attorneys at allied organizations, The Cardinal Newman Society identified several concerns.

The December 23 comment urged the IRS to explicitly state in its regulations that participating programs must make scholarships available for religious education and must accommodate religious schools, even if a scholarship requirement conflicts with a school's "religious beliefs, morals, practices, or heritage." In addition, the Society urged the IRS to prevent states from imposing laws or regulations that interfere with the religious mission of schools receiving scholarship funds.

"It's not just a question of access for the faithful schools recommended in our Newman Guide," said Bob Laird, Senior Counselor to the President and director of The Cardinal Newman Society's Newman Guide Defender program, which monitors and organizes responses to legal and ideological threats to Catholic education. "States also must not be permitted to shut out Catholic

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families, simply because for religious reasons they attend schools that faithfully uphold Catholic moral teaching on gender, sexuality, abortion, contraception, human dignity, etc.”

The Cardinal Newman Society also noted in its comment to the IRS that the OBBBA fails to define what it means by an eligible “public, private, or religious school.” Some states refuse to include homeschooling and innovative hybrid options for families within their definition of “school.” The Society urged the IRS to clearly define “school” to include “any program of formal education that is legally permitted in the State in which it occurs,” consistent with President Trump’s plea for “educational freedom.”

“The money should follow the child—not be trapped in failing government schools,” President Trump said at the OBBBA signing ceremony. The Cardinal Newman Society insists that this principle be upheld for all Catholic families eager to finally receive some share of America’s vast spending in education.

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