

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 15, 1983

Dear Bob:

Parents have a fundamental right to send their children to schools that reflect their own moral values and educational preferences. The rising costs of education, however, threaten to put this freedom of choice beyond the reach of many low and middle income families who cannot afford the "double burden" of paying private school tuition and state and local taxes that support public school systems. I write to you this morning to assure you of my concern for the continued vitality, diversity, and pluralism of our Nation's educational system and to remind you of the importance I place on the success of S. 528, the Educational Opportunity Equity Act.

As the Senate proceeds with floor debate on the tuition tax credit proposal, I want to highlight some fundamental points of this legislation.

First, our proposal will help preserve educational freedom and provide the greatest benefit to those who need it most: low and middle income families. We do not seek to aid the rich. I urge you to consider, in particular, the plight of hundreds of thousands of minority families currently making heroic sacrifices to send their children to private inner-city schools; our bill will provide sorely needed relief to those families and bring to other families real freedom of choice in education.

Second, our proposal strikes a balance, ensuring that parents who send their children to schools that discriminate on the basis of race do not benefit, and that those schools with a clear record of nondiscrimination do not suffer from unnecessary Federal intrusion. I would not support, nor ask you to support, any legislation that would provide Federal assistance to parents for the purpose of sending their children to racially discriminatory schools.

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Finally, our proposal poses no divisive threat to public education. History has shown that competition breeds excellence; alternatives to public education tend to strengthen public education. I firmly believe that our tuition tax credit proposal, by providing diversity and healthy competition, will encourage our schools to provide higher quality education.

Together we must restore the pluralism that has made our culture rich and our Nation strong. I personally ask you to support the Educational Opportunity Equity Act.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

The Honorable Robert Dole
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510