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New rules clear the way for Governor Pritzker to opt in to the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit Program in Illinois

The Catholic Conference of Illinois urges the Governor to act swiftly to benefit nearly every student in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD, IL -- With U.S. Treasury's announcement yesterday that it has filed the necessary rules to implement the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC) program, the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) urges Governor JB Pritzker to opt into the program immediately.

By choosing to opt-in, Governor Pritzker's action will permit Illinois taxpayers to donate funds to benefit Illinois students starting in 2027. If Governor Pritzker does not opt in, Illinois taxpayers can still take advantage of the federal tax credit, but will only be able to direct funds to students in 30 other states that have already opted-in.

Federal law requires each Governor to decide if their respective state will participate in the program. Governor Pritzker has stated that he has been waiting to make his decision until the federal rules were finalized. With yesterday's announcement, it is now time for Governor Pritzker to opt Illinois into the program to provide new resources to our students in Illinois.

The Federal Scholarship Tax Credit Program allows funding for both public and non-public school children. Robert Gilligan, Executive Director of CCI said, "This is a win-win for nearly all Illinois children. Eighty percent of Catholic families send their children to public schools, and this program could help fund existing shortfalls in public schools, such as transportation, tutoring assistance, educational supplies, and special education services. In addition, Catholic school students could also benefit with much needed scholarships for tuition."

A poll conducted in the Spring of this year shows strong support for the program among every demographic in Illinois. Nearly \$2 billion could be generated for Illinois school children by poll estimates with an opt-in, while polled participants also stated they would still choose to donate \$1 billion to other states even if Governor Pritzker does not opt-in.

The program is effective on January 1, 2027, so CCI urges the Governor to act immediately to provide certainty to Illinois taxpayers and hope for schools and students in the state.