



News Release

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Legislation Seeks to Affirm Parental Rights in Education

January 21, 2011, JEFFERSON CITY, MO - State Representative Jay Barnes (R-Jefferson City) wants to amend the Missouri Constitution to offer parents a stipend for educating their children at an accredited K-12 school of their choice.

The proposed amendment (HJR 10) would also repeal current language in the state constitution that prohibits assistance to activities that support a religious creed or religious school.

Rep. Barnes said it is important for parents to have the option to choose the best education for their child. "By repealing the Blaine Amendment and replacing it with a constitutional mandate for parental freedom, we would ensure that every child would have the financial means to attend the school of their own choosing regardless of their parent's income, race or economic class," Barnes said.

Barnes also noted how the repeal would help Missouri's Catholic schools. "In addition, it would give Missouri's great Catholic schools the opportunity to compete for more students and better serve their missions.

Mike Hoey, the executive director of the Missouri Catholic Conference, said, "The legislation represents a first step toward affirming the rights of parents to direct their children's education in accordance with their moral and religious convictions."

Hoey noted that the Catechism of the Catholic Church strongly affirms parental rights in education and calls on public officials to ensure parents can feasibly exercise this right.