



October 2011

Dear Parents, Staff and Members of the Catholic School Community,

To help keep our Catholic schools viable and tuitions affordable, we need many people to contact their legislators. To help with this task of enabling our legislative agenda to be heard while not consuming much of our time, the New York State Catholic Conference of Bishops has devised a method of advocacy known as the *Catholic Advocacy Network (CAN)*. To join this network you only need to have access to the internet and about three minutes of time that you can devote to filling out the registration form online.

What does this free membership allow you to do? It sends you occasional action alerts when we need you to contact your legislators about important legislative issues. It provides you with relevant letters that will be signed with your name and when you **click** on "*submit*" these letters will be sent automatically to your elected officials.

As I have stated, it is very easy to join. You first go to the web page of the New York State Catholic Conference: www.nyscatholic.org. Then **click** on "*Join The Network*" then follow the prompts to give them your contact information and which issues you are concerned with - for school issues choose education. This information is extremely confidential; they do not even allow me to see the information. They only will tell me how many people in our Diocese have joined the CAN. After you click on "*submit*" you are all set to access an easy way to notify your elected officials about your concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to join the Catholic Advocacy Network. This is a great way to make a difference. Please remember that politicians are as concerned with job security as we are. Therefore if 1,000 people contact them and ask them to vote for an educational issue while another 1,000 are opposed to this issue but only 100 people contact them, of course they will vote the way the majority opinion seems to be running. A conservative count of our Diocese shows that about 20,000 possible voters should support our issues. At the present time we only have 4,885 people that are part of the Catholic Advocacy Network from our Diocese. Let's see if together we can make this number and our political influence grow.

Sincerely,

Christian V. Riso
Assistant Superintendent of Government Services
and Special Projects