

**House K-12 Education Finance Division**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2010**

**8:30 A.M.**

**Basement State Office Bldg.**

*Good morning Chair Greiling and Members,*

*My name is Pete Noll, Education Director for the Minnesota Catholic Conference.*

*The purpose of my testimony today is to ask you to oppose House File 2867, 1<sup>ST</sup> Engrossment, a bill that would seek to deprive nonpublic school students of certain special education benefits that they now receive.*

*Any diminishment or elimination of equitable special education benefits to children attending nonpublic schools, specifically the elimination of state and local funding, clearly establishes more constraints and barriers to parents of learning disabled children who choose to exercise their right to send their children to any school which fulfills their obligations under Minnesota's compulsory instruction law [MN Statute 120A.22.].*

*These nonpublic school families pay taxes like traditional public and charter school families, yet pay for the preponderance of the cost to education their children from their own income, thus saving the state of Minnesota hundreds of millions of dollar which can be parlayed into supporting public education. Now to seek to eliminate these 80% of the special education services accorded to nonpublic school children is double jeopardy for the families that would be adversely impacted by this bill.*

Finally, the diminishment or elimination of equitable special education benefits to nonpublic school students qualifying as learning disabled under IDEA could be the **tipping point** for many parents, causing them to have to pull their children from the nonpublic school to **enroll them in a public school**. While this inevitability would be celebrated by those who stand to profit, the **cost to the state of Minnesota** for each child that moves from nonpublic to public school would seem to be approximately \$10,000, thus **adding to the burgeoning state deficit**.

**Rather than thanking** nonpublic school families for saving the state of Minnesota hundreds of millions of dollars each year, this bill would seek to **punish** the parents of learning disabled children for their decision to send their children in their school-of-choice.

Therefore, I implore you to vote this bill down today. Thank you! Madame Chair, I stand for any questions you or members of the committee may have for me.