File #: Res 0383-2002, **Version:** *

Res. No. 383

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to adopt and the Governor to sign legislation allowing taxpayer money to fund tuition vouchers for private and parochial schools.

By Council Member Felder

Whereas, On June 27, 2002, the United States Supreme Court held in Zelman, Superintendent of Public Instruction of Ohio, et al. v. Simmons-Harris, et al. that a school voucher program in Cleveland, Ohio that provides public funding for religious school tuition does not violate the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution, thereby enabling states under certain circumstances to create acceptable publicly-funded voucher programs; and

Whereas, President Bush has called voucher programs "a constructive approach to improving public education;" and

Whereas, School choice advocates at the Institute for Justice have declared that vouchers are "an educational lifeline to students trapped in failing public schools;" and

Whereas, The Manhattan Institute has reported that New York City 4th and 5th grade students who were sent to private schools through a privately-funded voucher system improved their reading scores by 4 points and their math scores by 6 points after one year; and

Whereas, The Campaign for Fiscal Equity has found that only 22% of high school graduates in NYC earn a Regents diploma, only 25% of NYC's sixth graders score at the highest level ("Distinction") on the State reading test, and only 41% of NYC's high school students pass the Regents Mathematics I exam; and

Whereas, All parents, regardless of income, should have the ability to send their children to the best possible schools available; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to adopt and the Governor to sign legislation allowing taxpayer money to fund tuition vouchers for private and parochial schools.

DB
LS #826
7/1/02
|1013|

|1013|