



New Hampshire State Senate **NEWS RELEASE**

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Senate Rejects Attempt to Repeal Education Tax Credit Program

One year old program allows more choices for low-income families

CONCORD - Arguing the tax credit program is just getting started and that hundreds of children have already applied for scholarships, Sen. Nancy Stiles, R-Hampton, led the charge against repealing the program on the Senate floor today. HB 370 sought to end the education tax credit the legislature created last year, but a majority of senators voted to table the legislation.

In her floor remarks, Stiles said the tax credit is about increasing the choices parents have when it comes to educating their children and should be given more time to develop. She noted \$140,000 has been raised to date, with almost \$500,000 in additional commitments, for scholarships funded by contributions from businesses. Under the tax credit program, parents may use the scholarship money to send their child to a public school outside of the student's district, a private school, or for homeschooling expenses.

"There are almost 700 children who have applied for these scholarships," said Stiles. "These children come from families with an average household income of less than \$45,000 for a family of five and more than 50% of the applicants qualify for free and reduced school lunch. Our Education Tax Credit Scholarships will help some of our neediest children in New Hampshire get the education they deserve."

Sen. Stiles, a retired educator, added, "We all understand each child learns differently and has different needs. One size does not fit all, and the Education Tax Credit Scholarship program empowers parents to choose the school that is the best fit for their child. Scholarships are 100% means tested and awarded to school-aged children in families with a household income of not more than 300% of the federal poverty level. Family income is verified, and scholarships are awarded to students based on highest need."

Stiles also answered critics who claim the program takes money away from public schools, saying, "Since adequacy dollars are appropriated based on student enrollment in a district, a student leaving the district with a scholarship has no more negative effect on the district than a student leaving the district because they are moving out of state."

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