



ALLIANCE ACTION ALERT

EITC Program in Jeopardy!

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We want to make you aware of a very real threat to the EITC program and ask for your help in REACH's efforts to protect this truly wonderful program that is changing tens of thousands of children's lives all across the Commonwealth.

As you know, these difficult economic times are forcing businesses, families, and most states to make difficult budgetary decisions.

The PA Senate passed a budget bill, SB850, earlier this month that called for the significant reduction or elimination of many programs in an attempt to bring the upcoming 09-10 state budget into line with projected revenue. REACH has been made aware by the Senate Leadership that under the terms of SB850, they are calling for the EITC program to be reduced by \$35 million. Of this \$35 million reduction, \$23.3 million will come from the elimination of the innovative educational programs for public schools (EIOs) and the remaining \$11.7 million from some combination of the k-12 scholarships and pre-k scholarships.

A reduction in EITC funding will force thousands of students back into a school that will not give them a chance at a successful education. In addition, tens of thousands of worthwhile educational programs in our public schools will be significantly impacted with the loss of EITC funding.

We want to ensure each of you that REACH has been hard at work meeting with our allies in the legislature to make sure that they understand what a positive impact the EITC program is making in both public and private school students' lives around the Commonwealth. Our work is far from over, but now, we are asking for your help to ensure that the interests of students and families will remain front and center during the coming weeks:

Most legislators will receive between 20 to 30 constituent contacts on any given issue that they are being asked to deal with during the legislative session.

In order to have an *immediate* and *powerful* impact on protecting the EITC program this year, we think it is imperative that each and every state senator and representative receive at least 100 emails, phone calls or letters from a parent whose child is receiving an EITC scholarship asking them keep the EITC program at \$75 million. Parents need to understand that if the EITC program's funding is cut, there is a chance that their child may not receive a scholarship in the coming school year.

Over the next two weeks, we hope that REACH can count on you to:

- Have all of your **parents** that are receiving EITC scholarships send a pro-school choice, protect the EITC program message to their state senator and representative by either using REACH's Contact Your Legislator Action Center or sending a letter (instructions are enclosed)
- Send a pro-school choice, protect the EITC program message from **your organization or school** to your state senator and representative by either using REACH's Contact Your Legislator Action Center or sending a letter (instructions are enclosed)
- Ask all of the **businesses** that support your efforts to provide scholarships to children by donating to your organization if they would be willing to send a pro-EITC program message to their state senator and representative.

Now is the critical time to deliver a strong message to our elected officials on how important the EITC program is to the families of Pennsylvania. REACH will be working every day to try and make the EITC program whole in the final budget, but it will take a greater than normal effort by all groups to make this happen.

Please help us protect the EITC Program.

The REACH Alliance

Stay tuned for additional information in the upcoming days and weeks.