



**New Jersey Catholic Conference
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To: Senate Budget and Assembly Committee

From: George V. Corwell, Ed.D.
Director: Office of Education

Date: June 23, 2016

Re: "Secure Schools for All Children Act" - A-2689/S754

The New Jersey Catholic Conference and the New Jersey Network of Catholic Schools Families strongly support A-2689/S754. The bill would provide an opportunity for equipping nonpublic schools with safety measures to protect nonpublic school children.

The public school community has had a fund labeled "Security Aid" in the State Budget for many years now. We recognize this is a fungible account, although the title is, in fact, "Security Aid." This year's amount is \$199,505,000, an increase of over \$4,000,000 over last year.

The description of the account from the Budget is as follows:

Security Aid - Aid is provided as a base amount for every student plus an additional allocation that varies based on the district's concentration of at-risk designated students. (Page D-85 of Governor Christie's proposed FY 2017 Budget)

No such permanent remedy exists to assist nonpublic school parents in keeping their children safe. Because all children are worthy of health and safety protections, we are most grateful to the sponsor for reintroducing this bill. The bill is written in order to provide assistance to nonpublic school children without violating any Constitutional provisions.

A2689 was unanimously passed by the full Assembly.

I would be happy to answer any questions on the legislation, and we respectfully request that you support this legislation and release it from your Committee today.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

GVC:ac

**Representing the Archdiocese of Newark, Diocese of Camden, Diocese of Metuchen,
Diocese of Paterson, Diocese of Trenton, Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic and
Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese**