

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

March 26, 2013 at 4:29pm

School vouchers upheld in Indiana

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NCR Today

The Indiana Supreme Court ruled constitutional Tuesday the state's school voucher program, which allows usage of public tax dollars for private school tuition. The judgment came in a 5-0 decision.

From the *Indianapolis Star*:

"The ruling, on a teachers union-supported lawsuit from 2011, ends the legal challenge to the program at the state level. The case could be made again in federal court. But in 2002 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a similar program in Ohio, making any further appeal a long shot.

"The Indiana case began shortly after the program was created in 2011 when a group of teachers, school officials and parents who oppose vouchers sued the state, arguing the program was unconstitutional."

The vouchers allow low income families to redirect tax dollars intended for the local public school district toward tuition payments to the private school where their child transferred, according to the *Star*. For the current school year, the program has issued vouchers to more than 9,000 students, and redirected more than \$38 million to private schools.

Ongoing debates in the state Legislature are seeking to further expand the program.

The Indiana Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic church in the state, has pushed for vouchers in the past as part of education reform.

Earlier this month, more than 2,000 supporters of the voucher program and education reform assembled at a rally in the Indianapolis statehouse. The *Criterion*, the Indianapolis archdiocesan newspaper, reported

that speakers included a wide range, from Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, to a former NBA basketball player, to current Catholic school teachers.

?Parents have a duty and right to educate their children in schools they feel best meets their needs ? that includes Catholic schools,? Mike Obergfell, a teacher at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, told the *Criterion*.

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