

Dear Pennsylvania Assembly Member:

Dayspring Christian Academy is a Christian organization that operates a scholarship organization and participates in the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit programs. Our school is an integral part of the religious ministry to children and families in the communities we serve. I am writing to you today in reference to the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) new non-discrimination language in the Scholarship Organization renewal agreement which states:

*No assistance shall be awarded to an Organization under this program unless the Organization certifies that the Organization shall not discriminate against any employee or against any person seeking employment by reason of race, gender, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or in violation of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, handicap or disability, or in violation of any applicable federal laws.*

First, this statement is a violation of conscience and our faith and needs to be removed from the EITC/OSTC guidelines and application.

Second, Pennsylvania statutes do not give DCED the authority to require such assurances from scholarship organizations like Dayspring nor from schools participating in the programs.

Third, donations voluntarily given to a private school or scholarship organization by participating private entities are not a form of government funding or assistance to scholarship organization or the participating schools.

Finally, the new non-discrimination language is self-contradictory. Both federal law and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act have exemptions for religious organizations in employment but the first three lines of the non-discrimination policy do not provide such exemptions.

For these stated reasons, we implore your assistance in working on behalf of your constituents to require DCED to remove this language from the state's tax credit scholarship programs.

Most Sincerely,

(Signature)