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MEMORANDUM ON

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW YORK STATE

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State is a statewide advocacy organization representing Protestant, Unitarian Universalist and Reform Jewish congregations, clergy and individuals. Our shared faith traditions call upon all people to participate in the ongoing work of perfecting the world.

The New York State Constitution obligates the state to provide a sound basic education for each child, and our faith perspectives affirm the value and potential of every child in New York. A strong public school system in which academic freedom, diversity and multi-cultural educational opportunities are protected is fundamental to the democratic form of government and the development of good citizenship.

The gap between the resources available in wealthy school districts and those available in high-poverty urban and rural districts is greater in New York State than in any other state in the nation. Inequities in funding lead to inequalities of educational opportunity. This is a disgraceful situation. Poor education has serious and lasting negative effects on individuals and communities.

We call on the New York State legislature to develop equitable state funding formulas to rectify imbalances across the state and give every child an equal educational opportunity through public schools.

We emphasize that this should be done through adequate and equitable funding of public schools. IINYS is committed to the separation of church and state, and opposed to any form of voucher or tax credit for religious schools, which could lead to excessive entanglement of government and religion.

And you shall teach them diligently to your children. Deuteronomy 6:7

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