



MICHAEL MILLER
Assemblyman 38th District

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June 12, 2017

Nicholas Dimarzio
Bishop
Brooklyn-Queens Diocese
310 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, NY 11215

RE: Middle Village Prep School

Dear Bishop Dimarzio:

As elected official from Queens, and resident in the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, I am well aware of the current dispute between the Diocese and the Board of Trustees at Christ the King High School. Furthermore, I know that the existence of Middle Village Prep School (MVP), an award winning charter school serving grades 6-8, set up by the State University of New York, is imperiled by this dispute.

My concern is for the students and families at MVP, but also for the students and families in our public schools in District 24. Currently this school district is one of the most overcrowded districts in the City of New York. I find it unthinkable that the Diocese would threaten to force MVP out of its rented space at Christ the King, knowing that there is no alternate and suitable space to move the school to, thereby throwing almost 400 students into the District 24 school population. What is more disturbing is that the Diocese's lawyers think nothing of using these students and their families as pawns in what is essentially a real estate dispute. For 40 years the Board of Trustees at Christ the King has operated an independent Catholic high school, without any financial aid from the Diocese. This arrangement was put in place after the Diocese of Brooklyn ordered Christ the King closed. It is only because of the commitment and persistence of the volunteer board members, over four decades that Christ the King not only survives, but thrives.

It is my understanding that there have been discussions on how to resolve this dispute but that the Diocese, through their lawyers especially, insists that the Board reinstate a 'reverter' clause that would give the Diocese control over the property. This fight is due to the failure of the Diocese to renew it during a 3- year period when they had the right to do so. After letting the clause lapse due to the Diocese' intention and desire to deliberately have nothing to do with the

operation and control of Christ the King High school for over 35 years, they then brought a lawsuit to reinstate the clause. It was only after the court ruled, earlier this year, against that reinstatement that their lawyers determined that they could force the Board at Christ the King into giving it back to them by using the families and the students at MVP as leverage. It is understandable that some of the MVP parents and supporters have termed this act as bullying and unworthy. If this is an attempt by the lawyers to use MVP students and parents as props in their legal strategy, the Diocese is being ill advised and very badly served.

I believe that this can and should be resolved outside of the courthouse. In that spirit, I offer to host a meeting based on good will and a common desire to provide the best education for all the children of Middle Village Prep and School District 24.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Miller", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Miller
Member of Assembly
District 38

MGM:jk