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**MEMORANDUM OF OPPOSITION TO**

**TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR PRIVATE AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TUITION**

Interfaith Impact of New York State is opposed to the plan outlined by Governor Eliot Spitzer to give New York State tuition tax deductions to parents of children who attend private and parochial schools.

The separation of church and state is a bedrock principle of our constitutional government and protects us all. This proposal opens the door to an entanglement of church and state that the Legislature should avoid.

The New York State Constitution explicitly prohibits the use of tax dollars to support private and parochial schools. While the state does provide financial assistance such as transportation and textbooks to religious schools, funding tuition through state tax deductions crosses a dangerous line. This is a step the Legislature has not been willing to take in the past and should not take in the future.

We urge the members of the New York State Assembly and Senate to oppose any legislation that would provide tax deductions or tax credits for private or parochial school tuition.

Interfaith Impact of New York State is a statewide coalition of congregations and individuals from Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Reform Jewish and other faith traditions advocating from progressive and liberal religious points of view for compassion, reason and social justice in New York State public policies. Our shared faith traditions call upon all people to participate in the ongoing work of perfecting the world.

April 23, 2007