
CAMPAIGN OUTLINES WHY SENATORS MUST VOTE DOWN BAD POLICY

National Catholic Education Commission executive director Christian Zahra says with the education of Australian children about to be decided upon in the Senate, Catholic schools and families will continue to speak out about why the Turnbull Government's flawed policy must be defeated.

"We know time is running out before the vote, but we also know that Minister Birmingham's support within his party is fading," Mr Zahra said.

"New social media and video collateral is being rolled out today to underline why Coalition and cross-bench Senators must push back against an attempt to pass legislation that locks in a failed school funding model. Parents and school communities are concerned about what this flawed model means for them – and new independent data released over the weekend shows that it means cuts to Catholic schools.

"Our campaign is calling on the Government to keep the funding fair."

Mr Zahra said the campaign also serves as a reminder to Education Minister Simon Birmingham that he should be thinking more about students and families and educators.

Speaking on ABC Radio National this morning, Minister Birmingham offered a laundry list of people he's been in discussions with about his school funding plan. He didn't once mention educators or school system leaders.

"On the one hand, that's a shocking admission from an Education Minister. On the other, it's not surprising, given the Minister has shown no respect for education leaders for the past several months," Mr Zahra said.

"We have seen multiple reports over the weekend about the damaging impact of Minister Birmingham's funding model. He struggled to answer questions this morning about the \$4.6 billion of cuts to Catholic schools revealed by his own department, but easily explained his campaign to secure 'special deals' with the Greens and cross-bench Senators to get his legislation passed."

Mr Zahra said long-time political observer Michelle Grattan made an astute observation about how this school funding debate should have been run.

"As Michelle explained this morning, this process should have been about considering the school funding model and how it allocates funding to Australian schools," he explained.

"Instead, the focus has been on the quantum of funding to school sectors and there's been little consideration about the implications of the model for Australian families and for school choice, which we know families and parents value.

"Months ago, the Government's mantra was 'it's not about the money' when it comes to education. The new mantra seems to be 'it's all about the votes'.

"Rather than look at the significant flaws in the current model and try to fix them, the Minister is trying to get his colleagues and cross-benchers to lock in that model.

"Poor policy planning, especially by ignoring educators in the development of a 10-year school education policy, has led to a shambolic political process.

"The Minister is reaping what he sowed – which now includes colleagues rightly considering crossing the floor, lest they be remembered as part of a Coalition Government that ripped billions off Catholic schools."

Access the new videos and other material at SchoolFundingFacts.com