



**Written Comments of P. George Tryfiates  
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Strengthening Christian Schools

Equipping Christian Educators

Worldwide

**February 28, 2013  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Hearing on Tax Reform and Charitable Contributions**

Chairman Camp, Ranking Member Levin and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) is a nonprofit, non-denominational, religious association providing support services to nearly 24,000 Christian schools in over 100 countries. ACSI serves nearly 3,800 Christian preschools, elementary, and secondary schools and over 100 post-secondary institutions in the United States. We are a leader in strengthening Christian schools and equipping Christian educators worldwide, providing services through a network of 28 regional offices. ACSI accredits Protestant pre-K – 12 schools, provides professional development and teacher certification, and offers its member-schools high-quality curricula, student testing and a wide range of student activities. Member-schools educate some 5.5 million children around the world.

ACSI takes this opportunity to alert Members that Christian schooling, like many other worthy causes, relies upon charitable giving to do its good work. Our member-schools play a unique role in advancing the common good by providing quality education and spiritual formation to their students. As a result, member-school graduates attend college at a significantly higher rate than the national average (86% versus 68%). Since 1974, ACSI schools have scored significantly higher than the national norm in every grade level on a national achievement test. Many of our schools achieve these results with modest budgets: Christian school teachers and administrators are called to their vocation and motivated by their faith. Taxpayers can appreciate that, according to the Council on American Private Education (CAPE), private schools, of which Christian schools are a subset, provide a savings of some \$48 billion.

Charitable giving is a key part of making a strong educational program possible for ACSI-member schools. Tuition and fees typically do not cover the costs of a quality program; charitable giving makes the difference. In addition, many member-schools have scholarship funds which make it possible for those who cannot afford tuition or who fall on hard times to benefit from a quality Christian education. To that end, ACSI adds its voice to that of many others to urge that Congress protect the current charitable deduction. We would urge you to consider ways to incentivize even greater charitable giving for donors large or small.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns. Please know you have our respect and prayerful consideration as you engage in your public service and discern the way forward.