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CER SPECIAL NEWS ALERT

For Immediate Release

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IMPORTANT COURT DECISIONS RENDERED THIS WEEK

(Washington, DC 6/30/00) By now you probably have learned that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that private school students are indeed entitled to the benefits of the federal Chapter 2 program. Bolstered by this decision, school districts will continue to distribute computers, software, and other education materials equitably to all schools regardless of their affiliation. The case was originally brought in Louisiana on the grounds that the distribution of federal aid to parochial schools violated the church-state separation.

The importance of this decision is the High Court's affirmation that where a child is educated should not deter public support for the education of that child. School choice fans believe this will positively affect the eventual outcome of course cases currently being litigated in Ohio and Florida. For more information, see Jodi Wilgoren's article, "Court Ruling Fuels Debate on Vouchers for Education," in The New York Times (Thursday, June 29, 2000) or visit the Institute for Justice's Web Site (www.ij.org).

New Jersey Charter schools are constitutional says the Garden State's high court. On June 28, 2000, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in favor of charter schools in a long standing suit that has wound its way from the public tax coffers of angry school boards to appeals courts to finally the state supreme court. In its decision, the court acknowledged that the Commissioner of Education has been and should continue to be mindful of the potential racial and financial impact of charter schools on school districts. In doing so, the court has put to rest the concerns from the original challenge to New Jersey's charter school law. New Jersey charter schools are finally vindicated and may get back to the business of serving the children they are devoted to helping.

This is the ninth such case nationally where school boards have sued the state over whether or not charters are constitutional. All but one high court has upheld the viability of charters as an appropriate extension of public education. That state, South Carolina, saw its law struck down not on the concept of charters but on a unique racial balance requirement in the laws. For more information, see the Center for Education Reform Newswire (Vol. 2, No. 19): May 16, 2000.

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