

**Testimony of Dr. Carolyn Malon
11 Mountain Terrace
West Hartford, CT
Governor's Proposed Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Committee
February 16, 2010**

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. My name is Carolyn Malon and I am a Catholic School Parent. My children attend St. Timothy and St. Brigid Schools in West Hartford.

I am here to express my concerns over Governor Rell's proposed 10% reduction of funds granted to local municipalities to provide nursing and busing services for Connecticut's private and religious schools. I am sure my concerns are shared by many of the parents of the 34,000 children that attend one of Connecticut's Catholic schools.

While both of these services are mandated by state law, I am very concerned about a possible disruption of services to our private and religious school children.

Many of our schools are already dealing with inadequate nursing coverage, and this budget cut could lead to a further erosion of this very vital service.

The proposed reduction of funding might also cause a disruption to our schools, if local municipalities then choose to reduce bus services. This could lead to increased time on buses for our students, new school hours or both. Local municipalities may demand that our schools follow the exact same schedule as public schools, in terms of starting and ending dates for our school year. This could adversely affect the learning process for many of Connecticut's children and also place them at a disadvantage compared to their public school peers.

In the end, this is an unfunded mandate that could lead to an increase in local property taxes. Towns would be required to provide these services with lesser amounts from state funds.

It is my hope the Connecticut General Assembly will reject this proposal and provide the funding to local municipalities so they can continue to provide the services to which our children are entitled.

Thank you.