Margaret Williamson, Principal, Northwest Catholic High School, West Hartford
Christian Cashman, Principal, East Catholic High School, Manchester
Raised Bill 5421 – An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators
Education Committee
March 8, 2010

Good evening Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Margaret Williamson and I am the Principal of Northwest Catholic High School in West Hartford and I am Christian Cashman, Principal of East Catholic High School in Manchester.

We are here tonight to speak in favor of two provisions contained in Raised Bill 5421 - An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators.

We request the Education Committee support the repeal of the language that eliminated experienced teaching in nonpublic schools as a means of obtaining Professional Educator Certification and permitting college students to obtain state certification by student teaching in a private or religious school.

As principals, we can attest to the training received by our teachers. Currently all of our teachers have or are seeking their professional teacher certificate. In addition, they are required by the Archdiocese of Hartford school office obtain 90 CEUs during a five-year period.

We also have professional development days at both of our schools and last year alone received over $37,000 in Title II-D funds to conduct teacher training.

Our teachers and we believe it is unreasonable to disqualify a group of teachers to obtain this level of certification, especially since this exemption was originally contained in a bill that was supposed to make it easier for people to become certified teachers. The provision also discriminates against non-public school teachers, since it exempts them on where they teach, not on any continuing education requirements.

As principals, we strongly believe the state of Connecticut should allow college students to student teach at a private or religious school. This should be voluntary as it is in most states for the University and student. We also support following all of the current state statutes, including having certified mentors and principals or a staff person certified with a 092.

We consider both of these provisions important for the entire teaching profession in Connecticut. As principals, we want to ensure parents that we have the ability to retain and recruit highly qualified teachers and that we can provide a quality education for their children.