Testimony of John L. Cattelan
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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 John Cattelan and I am the Director of the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents. I am here tonight on behalf of the parents of the 34,000 children that attend one of Connecticut's Catholic schools.

I am here to discuss Governor Rell's proposed 10% reduction in aid to towns for nursing and busing services for Connecticut's private and religious schools. Municipalities are required by state law to provide these services.

Currently our Catholic schools are provided full-time nursing coverage in only 32 out of the 64 municipalities where Catholic schools are located, which clearly violates state law. Many of our students have been diagnosed with juvenile diabetes, allergies and other illnesses that require full-time medical care and I am extremely concerned that many municipalities will continue to further reduce these services.

Last year, due to budget concerns, the town of East Hartford required one of our schools to move their school starting time from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. As a result of this, enrollment at this school decreased by 46 students, or almost 33%.

The Governor and many members of the legislature have clearly stated they support providing mandate relief for municipalities, while preserving municipal aid so that tax increases are not passed on to local taxpayers.. This proposal flies in the face of this belief.

Connecticut's Catholic schools already save the taxpayers of our state over $400 million a year. It would be shame if students left one of our fine schools because of inadequate transportation or nursing coverage.

As budget negotiations between the Governor and legislative leaders continue, I hope you are willing to support our Catholic schools.

Thank you.