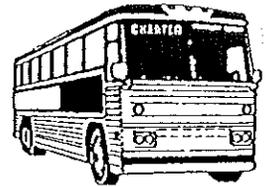


# CONNECTICUT BUS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Statement before  
The Transportation Committee  
Monday, February 28, 2011

## **RE: SB 1061 AAC The Use of Off-Duty School Buses to Provide Public Transportation**

Sen. Maynard, Rep. Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Jean Cronin and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Bus Association, a statewide trade organization representing Connecticut's charter bus companies. I am here today to speak in strong opposition of SB 1061, "AAC the Use of Off-Duty School Buses to Provide Public Transportation.

This bill would circumvent both Department of Transportation regulations and Department of Motor Vehicle regulations governing the transportation of passengers.

School buses, by law, are not allowed to transport passengers over the age of 21. There was a narrowly-drafted exception added several years ago for "special events," which are defined as events that cannot exceed more than three days. This was done purely for the purpose of providing parking lot shuttles for events such as the Southington Apple Festival and Durham Fair. Charter bus operators were opposed to opening up any other transportation for school buses, but agreed to allow the very narrow exemption.

The Department of Transportation regulates the transportation of public passengers, with strict insurance, equipment and safety specifications for vehicles and their owners, as well as regulating the proper operating authority and permits to be obtained for transporting these passengers.

Even the federal government has strict regulations prohibiting publicly funded vehicles (transit buses) from being used to provide charter trips, which are the types of trips described in this bill. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) does not allow government subsidized transit vehicles to compete against private operators in providing charter services.

Charter service, which is the type of transportation described in this bill, is the business that our members provide. Connecticut has a number of charter bus companies which are ready, willing and able to provide this service to Connecticut residents, so availability should not be a problem. Most of these companies have been in business for many years, and collectively employ thousands of workers. Their prices are very competitive, especially in today's economy.

The Connecticut Bus Association strongly objects to SB 1061, which would allow a Board of Education or school district to rent or lease its school buses to certain types of groups, effectively acting as a transportation broker. This bill allows a certain group of vehicles to circumvent the DOT and DMV regulations for a certain group of people to unfairly compete against an entire industry which is abiding by the laws and regulations

The Connecticut Bus Association respectfully asks the Transportation Committee to reject this unnecessary and unfair legislation.