

*Academic excellence through the light of faith*

## **Saint Timothy Middle School**

*A NEASC Accredited School*

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### **Mission Statement**

*Saint Timothy Middle School is committed to meeting the needs of early adolescents, grades six through eight in the greater West Hartford area. We seek to provide a challenging curriculum which fosters academic excellence and to promote harmony with self, with others and with God in a caring environment centered on the gospel values of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Committee on Education

March 17, 2014

House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*"

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Tara Bellefleur and I am the principal of Saint Timothy Middle School in West Hartford, Connecticut. I am writing to express my support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*."

I submitted testimony in the Finance Committee hearing, in favor of SB 29. That bill provides funds for grants to school to use for security upgrades. We urged the committee members to support the right of Catholic and other non-public schools to apply for these grants. I believe that all Connecticut students, regardless of which school they attend, deserve to learn in a safe, secure environment.

At Saint Timothy Middle School, over fifty thousand dollars was spent last summer to upgrade security. There are new door locks, a new intercom system, security cameras and monitors, and a new communication system at the school. The difficult decision was made to spend precious resources on these items, which meant that the replacement of some text books had to be put off until next year. HB 5564 would allow Saint Timothy Middle School, and other schools like it, to apply for funding to reimburse some of those expenses which occurred after January 1, 2013.

In the wake of the tragedy at Sandy Hook School, many school administrators took a close look at the safety of their own students, and made the decision to spend funds to make necessary changes. HB5564 will help those schools to keep their students in a safe environment. Many of our Catholic schools are struggling financially. A number of Connecticut's Catholic schools are located in inner city areas, and they need this funding just as much as the public schools do.

I believe that improved safety for all of our schools should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. I applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you to please continue to support HB 5564 and make the safety of every student in Connecticut a priority, regardless of where they may go to school.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Tara Bellefleur, M.Ed., BCBA  
Principal