



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Mary C. Roberts
Director of CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Mary Roberts and I am the Director of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, *"An Act Concerning School Safety."*

I have the honor of representing the 113 Catholic schools in the state of Connecticut, with 30,000 students in attendance and more than 2,000 dedicated teachers, administrators and employees working at our schools. We also have hundreds of volunteers helping us promote and enhance our educational and community service programs.

As part of my job, I travel across the state to speak with Catholic School Principals, Parents and students regarding the Legislation that could impact their Catholic School communities. In January, at one of my school visits, I learned that a certain town in CT had its public schools go into lockdown because a person with a gun was walking back and forth in front of one of the schools. The Catholic School in this town was not notified and it is across the street from where the person with a gun was spotted. Thankfully, the students were inside at an assembly, but had it been a nicer day, they would have been at recess and at risk for harm. As a parent of future Catholic school students, I want to ensure that my children are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and I believe that supporting HB 5564 does just that.

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you humbly 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 very much for your consideration.

Mary C. Roberts
Director
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents



CT FEDERATION
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts
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Testimony of Amy McKearney
Director of CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Amy McKearney and I currently have two children attending St. Mary Magdalen School. My youngest will follow suit of her sisters, and start school in the fall, when she is old enough. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*."

I grew up in Newtown, Connecticut, and currently live in Thomaston, Connecticut. A few reasons why I am writing to you today are because of the events that unfolded on December 14, 2012, and the funds that have already been distributed to public schools for security improvements because of the events in Newtown. When I grew up, we did not have lock-downs or have to practice them, we did not have school cameras, or police presence either. We did not worry about our safety while in school. Children today should be able to feel safe, secure and protected while attending school.

After December 14, 2012, I was happy to see so many schools react quickly to modify the schools to protect our children. My children's schools made significant progress on building a safer school environment by adding video cameras, bullet proof windows, and improving the entrance to protect the staff and the children.

I am very appreciative of the nursing and transportation services entitlements to all of Connecticut's school children. Those services go a long way in helping our Connecticut schools and families. Now the time has come for safety to be a priority for all Connecticut school children too.

I am humbly asking for you to please support an HB 5564 and allow our Catholic schools access to the security grant funding available to public schools in Connecticut, to have all Connecticut school's safety be a priority as well.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Amy McKearney



CT FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Mary Maloney
Principal, St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown
Committee on Education
March 17, 2014
House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*"

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Mary Maloney and I am the principal of St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown and join the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents in an effort to support House Bill 5564, *An Act Concerning School Safety*.

On December 14, 2012, the St. Rose of Lima School community was directly impacted as a result of the shooting event that occurred at Sandy Hook School. I have been engaged in the Newtown Security Committee meetings, Newtown Prevention Council meetings and with Jo Ann Freiberg, an Educational Consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education to gather information and recommendations with regard to hardening the facilities and creating safety plans.

Due to budget constraints, Newtown will not include St. Rose of Lima School within its provision of an officer onsite for the each of the public schools in our town. A significant portion of our school community finds the presence of the police on campus to be comforting and we are looking into our options pertaining to this service. In addition, Newtown will also not provide provisions for a Security Guard at the non-public schools located in the district. First Selectwoman, Pat Llodra proposed a one time grant of \$50,000 to all non-profit elementary schools in Newtown. The proposal was approved and the non-public schools received \$50,000 to use for security purposes.

St. Rose School is currently benefiting from a SERV grant that was submitted by The Town of Newtown in the spring of 2013. The grant enables the school to provide a full time guidance counselor for our students in Grades K through 8 for the period August 2013-2014. It is hopeful that renewal of services will take place through the SERV grant for the school year 2014-2015. In addition, our school is currently benefiting from a possible grant from the Department of Justice, Victims of Crimes as a result of Newtown agreeing to allow our school to be included in the grant. The decision was made due to the fact that all children in Newtown needed to be provided the same security protection and post-traumatic professional services.

It is without a doubt that the grant funding and town allocations have been a tremendous asset to the social-emotional and building safety needs of our school. Knowing the important impact that these grant funds have on our school, the efforts to improve communication with Town of Newtown officials, and the collaborative efforts of the public and non-public schools has had in Newtown, I applaud the Education Committee and appreciate that Bill 5564 is being proposed.

I respectfully request that the Education Committee support HB 5564 and allow non-public and Catholics schools be allowed to access the grant funding.

Thank you very much for your consideration.
Respectfully submitted,

Mary Maloney
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents
St. Rose of Lima School, Principal



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Diane R. Lipari
Parent, Northwest Catholic High School
Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Mary Roberts and I am the Director of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety.*"

I am a taxpayer and a parent of a Catholic High School student. I am grateful for the work the Education Committee has done to include non-public schools in HB 5564. I am supportive of allowing our Catholic schools to also access funding for school safety and upgraded security measures.

I believe that improved safety of **all** school students, regardless of where they may go to school in Connecticut, should be our collective goal in the state. I applaud the effort to give our schools the assistance they need to ensure that every student, staff, faculty member and visitor is in a safe space, where learning not fear is the main objective.

Please support HB 5564 to allow Catholic and Private schools access to the school security grant funds available to the state's public school systems.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane R. Lipari



Anthony J. Bosco, Jr.
Trustee, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

Testimony of Anthony J. Bosco, Jr.
Chairman, Stamford Catholic Schools Advisory Board
Trustee, CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

House Bill 5564, "An Act Concerning School Safety"

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Anthony J. Bosco, Jr. and I am proud to be a Trustee of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents and equally as proud to be serving as Chairman of the Stamford Catholic Schools Advisory Board, representing a system that serves over 1,200 students and their families who are part of our Elementary, Middle, and High School communities in one of the most important cities in Connecticut. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "An Act Concerning School Safety."

It is unfortunate that we live in a world today where no school system is immune to the unfortunate and unexpected challenges to school security that we have recently and repeatedly witnessed. In our opinion, in order to rise up against these challenges, we firmly believe that ALL schools should be afforded equal access to resources, to allow them to effectively diffuse this unfortunate and constant threat.

It is important to note that most Parochial schools do not enjoy the free flow of funding that Public Schools receive, nor do they necessarily have the donor communities higher end Private Schools enjoy. Despite this, they educate more efficiently and effectively and work closely with local communities to succeed by the same standards and to serve their students.

Over the course of the last year we have learned a lot about what is needed to maintain school safety and security. We to continue to evolve our systems, to stay on top of new solutions, to implement new practices and processes that help us develop a stronger partnership with State and City Government Agencies (especially First Responders), and to embrace new solutions in technology to help us address our goals. All of this requires new investments and incremental resources to achieve.

While we continue our active pursuit of opportunities to increase our partnership with the City of Stamford, we keep in mind many of the great examples of partnership between City and State Government, Public Boards of Education, and Catholic Schools displayed daily all across our nation, in states such as Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Wisconsin, and in Washington, D.C.



Anthony J. Bosco, Jr.
Trustee, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

Unfortunately, Catholic Schools historically continue to get shortchanged in many circumstances by extreme interpretation of the law at the local levels by municipal leaders for political gain, resulting in our Catholic Schools getting strong-armed by localities who manipulate what is considered to be a fair amount of allocation, and who instead divert the funding that should have been effectively directed to our schools.

And yet our families are taxpayers, who support the public school system while also investing in a separate, faith-based education for our kids. Our tax dollars fuel opportunities in the public schools, while our Parochial schools continue to fight for basic services that our students should have equal access to under a straightforward interpretation of the law - including a fully funded nursing staff for the entire school year, busing & transportation, and ESPECIALLY the right for every student to be protected in a secure environment, regardless of what school they attend.

Security should not be subject to this type of political game play. It is too important. No one knows when or where the next tragedy will strike. No school is immune. No family should have to suffer from catastrophe if there is something we can all do right now that will help us prepare and avoid another devastating event.

Today, you can do something to take a step to ensure the safety of all of our students. Today, our 1,200+ families in Stamford, CT are asking each of you to stand with us, to ensure safety and security for ALL. It starts with you, upholding a high standard of equal opportunity, allowing for Catholic and Private schools to receive EQUAL consideration and FAIR evaluation in a process that opens up and provides access to security grant funding to ALL schools.

In my opinion, it would be unconscionable in this day and age for anyone to refute the fact that every student deserves to have the most effective security plan possible implemented at their school. In my opinion, every school deserves some assistance so they can implement a plan without the need to completely or repeatedly sacrifice other necessary and needed resources.

To this end, we respectfully request that you support HB 5564, that you support improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– and establish a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We ask that you demonstrate today, that when it comes to safety every student is EQUALLY important, and every school system deserves an EQUAL opportunity to receive support and improve the security of their school environment.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Anthony J. Bosco, Jr.
Chairman, Stamford Catholic Schools Advisory Board
Trustee, CT Federation of Catholic School Parents



CT FEDERATION
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Marty Tristine
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Dear Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Martin Tristine and I am the Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. I am writing in support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety.*"

In the Diocese of Bridgeport we have 36 schools serving 10,000 students, 5 of which are located in the City of Bridgeport. We employ over 600 people as teachers, aides, custodians, and administrators working at our schools. We also have hundreds of volunteers helping us promote and enhance our educational and community service programs.

Most of our schools have invested in increased security, but due to our limited resources, we have been unable to achieve the level of security we want for our students. Our parents pay the same taxes that public school children's families pay, so they have every reason to expect their taxes will be used to provide the same support the public schools receive to upgrade their school security

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. Please support HB 5564 and make the safety of every student in Connecticut a priority, regardless of where they may go to school.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Martin P. Tristine
Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Bridgeport



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Hamza Naqvi
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Hamza Naqvi and I am a member of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, *"An Act Concerning School Safety."*

As a parent of Catholic school students, I want to ensure that my children are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and I believe that supporting HB 5564 does just that.

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you humbly 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 very much for your consideration.

Hamza Naqvi
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents



CT FEDERATION
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Tracy Heim
Parent and Development Consultant, St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown
Committee on Education
March 17, 2014
House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*"

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Tracy Heim and I am the parent of three students at of St. Rose of Lima School, Newtown and I also act as Development Coordinator for the school and I join the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents in an effort to support House Bill 5564, *An Act Concerning School Safety*.

On December 14, 2012, the St. Rose of Lima School community was directly impacted as a result of the shooting event that occurred at Sandy Hook School. I happen to be one of three parents present in our school that day, and my experiences of the events as they unfolded are still quite present in my mind today. I have watched with heartache what the continuing effects have been on my children, their school mates, and our community.

Due to budget constraints, Newtown will not include St. Rose of Lima School within its provision of an officer onsite for the each of the public schools in our town. A significant portion of our school community finds the presence of the police on campus to be comforting. And while in the months immediately following 12/14 we were provided police presence on our campus, this concluded with the end of the school year in June of 2013. Since that time, it is only through parent and other constituent generosity that we have been able to cover the cost of having an officer on our campus for four hours on Friday, which is when the students are walked from our main school to our parish so that they may attend mass.

I am here today on behalf of all the parents and students at St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown, to share my support of the Education Committee and appreciate that Bill 5564 is being proposed. All students, whether public or non-public school educated should and must be afforded the same access to funding for security enhancements at their school. Each Connecticut child is equal, their safety and security while at school should be equal as well and the paying field should be level.

I respectfully request that the Education Committee support HB 5564 and allow non-public and Catholics schools be allowed to access the grant funding.

Thank you very much for your consideration.
Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Heim
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents
St. Rose of Lima School, Parent
Marketing & Development Consultant



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Daniel P. Murphy
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Daniel P. Murphy and I am a member of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, *"An Act Concerning School Safety."*

As a parent of Catholic school students, I want to ensure that my children are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and I believe that supporting HB 5564 does just that.

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you humbly 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 very much for your consideration.

Daniel P. Murphy
97 Deer Run Drive
Trumbull CT 06611



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Ed and Mary Turbert
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, our names are Ed and Mary Turbert and we are members of the CT Federation of Catholic School Parents. We appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*."

As grandparents of Catholic school students, I want to ensure that my grandchildren are able to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, and I believe that supporting HB 5564 does just that. The Catholic schools assist the state of Connecticut in fulfilling its constitutional obligation by educating tens of thousands of our young people every year. The history of good academic performance and sound character among catholic school students is a well-known fact, and many go on to be productive citizens, even leaders, even holding office as state legislators, governors and judges in the state of Connecticut.

So it has been viewed as only fair in the laws, for the same Catholic schools to have access to the same support as public schools, for nursing and transportation. And it follows these Catholic schools should also be able to receive the same assistance to provide security and reduction of the risk of harm, as a public school may have.

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you humbly 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 very much for your consideration.

Ed and Mary Turbert
West Hartford, CT
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Sister Christina Joseph, I.H.M.
Principal of Saint Matthew School
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, I appreciate your serious consideration of the inclusion of the Catholic Schools in the State of Connecticut as you deliberate on Bill 5564, "An Act Concerning School Safety."

I am appealing to you on behalf of some of our youngest citizens of the State of Connecticut, who receive their education at a Catholic School. I believe that you are well aware of the magnitude of the quality education that our schools work for and achieve each day working with and serving the children and their families who are in our care.

The tragedy at Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012 is the impetus and "wake up" call to us as parents, legislators, educators and guardians to protect all our children regardless of how they are educated.

Catholic Schools receive very little Federal or State Financial assistance with providing for their students. It is through the financial sacrifice of parents and teachers that our children's basic educational needs are met.

I implore you to be mindful of our families and the safety of all children in the State of Connecticut by supporting House Bill 5564 with the inclusion of the Catholic Schools.

Thank you for honoring our input and request of the Catholic School communities.

Sincerely,

Sister Christina Joseph, I.H.M., Principal
Saint Matthew School, Forestville, Connecticut



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Tonia Roy
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Tonia Roy and I am a parent of two children who attend private school. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "An Act Concerning School Safety."

As a parent of two children attending private school I am respectfully support HB 5564. My two children currently attend a catholic school. When I went to school I never had to worry about people with fire arms walking around the area. The only "safety" issue I remember having to worry about it making sure my knees didn't get scraped on the playground from running around!

All children deserve to have the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment. Public or private, school is school and I want to know that my children will have the same opportunity to feel safe like all children should. I believe the same kind of funding offered to public schools to ensure the safety of those children should also be offered to private schools as well. I want to know that when I go to work every day everything is being done to make sure that my children are coming home to me safe and sound like every parent wants for their child and to be included in the security grant will help allow our children to do just that...for them to feel safe so that they can focus on learning and bringing our children home to us, their parents, safe and sound.

I truly believe that private schools should be offered the same opportunity to protect their students as public schools. Please support HB 5564 and make the safety of all children in private school just as important as those who attend public school. All children want to do the same thing, to learn and grow. Please allow them to do just that...safely.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Tonia Roy
Concerned Parent



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Barbara Skopp
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Education
March 17, 2014

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

My name is Barbara Skopp, a school board member at St. Mary's school in Milford. My main concern, as a grandmother of two children in that school, is that ALL of the children are kept safe while at school. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, *"An Act Concerning School Safety."*

The safety of ALL children in any school should be taken into consideration when allocating funding for security and safety. My grandchildren are just as deserving of being safe as the public school kids.

Respectfully, we believe that improved safety for all school students –regardless of where they may go to school– should be a collective goal for the state of Connecticut. We applaud the Education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the school security funding available and ask you humbly 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 very much for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted
Barbara Skopp
Board member
St. Mary's school
Milford, CT



CT FEDERATION
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents
Committee on Education
March 17, 2014
House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*"

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Marge McDonald and I am the Principal of St. Mary's School in Newington. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments in support of House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*."

In the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, much has been done to secure schools throughout our state and our nation. While some Catholic Schools may be in a position to reallocate funds, most of us are on a shoe-string budget and do not have the money to add security measures. Last year, Saint Mary School changed the locks on all exterior doors so that they cannot be left unlocked accidentally, in an effort to improve our security. However, there is so much more that should be done, but the little money that we have available will not do much to increase the security of our schools. We need help; we, your constituents, need **your** help!

The state has recognized that transportation and nursing services are entitlements to all of Connecticut's school children; their safety is of equal, if not greater, importance. Given the location of my school on a main street that is in close proximity to several major highways and a Veteran's hospital that is used by men and women who suffer from the mental effects of combat, I sometimes feel that we are in an especially vulnerable location.

Last year, my students looked out their classroom windows to see a house across the street surrounded by the Newington Police SWAT team. Alarmed parents arriving for a scheduled event asked why police were surrounding the house with assault weapons. I had no answer; I had not been notified, but based on what I was being told by students and parents, I decided to go into lockdown. Just as I was about to call the code, I received a call advising me to do so. That call should have come in much sooner than it had!

It is my belief that regardless where a child attends school they are entitled to monies that will provide greater security for them. The parents of my students pay their fair share of taxes to the state and their children should be recipients of the benefits derived from those taxes, especially when one of those benefits is their safety. Connecticut's Catholic school students or, for that matter, all students deserve a safer place to learn.

I humbly ask for you to support HB 5564 and allow our Catholic schools access to the security grant funding available to public schools in Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret McDonald
Newington, CT 06111
mmcdonald@stmarynewington.com



Mary C. Roberts
Director

Testimony of Sr. Deborah Lopez
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents
Committee on Education
March 17, 2014
House Bill 5564, "*An Act Concerning School Safety*"

Good Morning, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Sr. Deborah Lopez and I am the principal of Cathedral Academy Lower School, St. Raphael Campus, located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments regarding HB 5564.

My school is an inner-city school servicing 285 children in grades pre-K to Gr. 3. Our school building is over 50 years old and, when constructed, did not have any of the safety features so important and necessary in this current age. In order to ensure the safety of the children entrusted to me, we have installed new equipment and have updated our existing security measures as best as we are able. We have worked with the Bridgeport police department and have tried to impress on that entity the importance of being notified whenever there is a crisis situation in the surrounding neighborhood. However, it is difficult for us to raise the funds necessary to maximize our security systems and the Bridgeport police, while cooperative, do not have the means to notify us every time something goes wrong in the neighborhood.

In the Spring, someone escaped from the Juvenile Detention Center located only three blocks from us; we were never notified. Two weeks later, there was an incident with an armed intruder at a bodega located a little more than a block from our school; again, we were not notified. In addition, we are concerned about the front entrance to our school which is glass. We have looked into covering the glass with a protective film but the cost of this is beyond our means at present.

It is my belief that passage of HB5564 would provide funds dedicated to securing our school to the maximum degree possible. Our students and their parents need to have confidence that Cathedral Academy is a safe place to be at all times.

Respectfully, I believe that improved safety for all school students, regardless of where they go to school- should be a collective goal for the State of Connecticut. I applaud the education Committee's efforts to include non-public schools in the security funding available and ask you to continue your support for HB5564.

Sincerely,

Sr. Deborah Lopez
Principal
Cathedral Academy Lower School
Bridgeport, Connecticut