



**CT FEDERATION**  
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Mary C. Roberts  
Director

Testimony of Martin Tristine  
CT Federation of Catholic School Parents

Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding  
March 13, 2014

Senate Bill 29. *"An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and other Purposes."*

Good Morning, Senator Fonfara, Representative Widlitz and other distinguished members of the Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding, and thank you for providing me the opportunity to express my concerns. My name is Martin Tristine and I am the Assistant to the Superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport. I am testifying in support of the Governor's Bill 29 and specifically Section 9(e) (2) "for the purposes of the school security infrastructure competitive grants program established pursuant to Section 84 of Public Act 13-3".

As a consequence of the terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Connecticut residents are painfully aware of the need to protect our children while they are in the care of our educational institutions. Many towns in Connecticut have made funds available to enhance security at their public schools in an effort to address their citizen's concerns about their children's safety. Unfortunately Catholic Schools have not been included in this public funding. While we have adopted new policies to improve security and have made some investments in improving security, our schools' available resources limit our ability to do all we need to do in light of recent school intrusions and will require several years to achieve the level of security our children deserve.

Considering that there are 113 Catholic Schools in the state, serving almost 30,000 students, this is a major concern. Our Catholic School students are certainly deserving of the same protections that their public school counterparts are receiving. Our school families, many of whom are not Catholic, trust that their tax dollars will be used to provide the same protection to their children that the government has extended to public school students. Our families contribute the same tax dollars to fund public schools as do public school students' families even though our families do not attend public schools. In the past, the Connecticut Legislature recognized the fairness of including private schools for bus transportation and school nursing. The protection of all our citizens is the most important and basic responsibility of government and should not be provided based on a school being public or private. The Catholic Schools of Connecticut are an integral part of the state's education system, saving state boards of education over \$400 million each year. The security of our children should not be determined by where they go to school, it should be determined based on their constitutional right for fairness and the protection of their government.

Thank you,

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