



Archdiocese of Hartford

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Testimony of Dale R. Hoyt, Ed.D.
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Education Committee
March 2, 2016
Legislative Office Building, Room 2C

S.B. No. 318, *An Act Concerning Private School Transportation*

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischman and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Dale Hoyt and I am here representing the network of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford in my position as Superintendent of Catholic Schools. There are 59 Catholic schools located in the Hartford, Litchfield, New Haven Counties with 24% of these schools' residing in urban and inner city communities. The rate of racial diversity in the Catholic schools is 20% with an overall student population of 13,459. I am submitting this testimony in support of S.B. No. 318, which concerns nonpublic school transportation that affects these students, parents, teachers, and school communities.

On behalf of the network of Catholic Schools, I urge the Education Committee to approve and the Connecticut General Assembly to enact legislation that would allow funding for voluntary inter-

district nonpublic school student transportation. Subsection (b) mandates inter-district transportation for what I hope will only be a few cases.

Let me explain a recent example of where this might apply. One of our parish schools will close at the end of this school year, St. Vincent De Paul, in East Haven. About 70% of the 89 students at St. Vincent De Paul currently rely on bus transportation. St. Vincent de Paul School administration consulted with the board of education in East Haven, and we were unable come to a creative resolution to work with other Catholic schools in neighboring towns because of the lack of student transportation out of district. This will now cause Catholic school parents a great deal of inconvenience and hardship for not having the opportunity to use student transportation across municipalities.

Over the last two decades, Catholic schools have transformed yet still maintain decades of time-tested academic excellence. Demographics of school age children and the majority of non-religious lay teachers have led to increased costs for fewer children. The Catholic Church strives for the dignity of the worker, and schools offer their teachers the most competitive benefits and salaries as possible. At the same time, Catholic school students still save state and town taxpayers over \$420,000,000. Education is one of the most important ways by which the Catholic Church fulfils its commitment to the dignity of the person and the building of community. The Supreme Court of the United States has declared constitutional several forms of financial and other assistance to parents and students in non-public schools, including schools with religious sponsorship. It would be quite helpful if Connecticut would implement more of these programs such as S.B. No. 318.

Finally, I would like to emphasize our schools' willingness to share current bus routes of local and regional boards of education and other nonpublic schools as a way to create more efficient models of student transportation in Connecticut.

On behalf my teachers, my students, and their parents, I appreciate the Committee's attention to this important issue and urge your support of S.B. No. 318.



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