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**Testimony in Support of
S.B. No. 318, 'An Act Concerning Private School Transportation'**

Before the Education Committee

March 2, 2016

As a parent of a student at St Mary School, Ridgefield CT, I support S.B. No. 318.

Not only does our school provide a competitive and wonderful education for our children, but they teach the invaluable lessons of being model citizens, respectful, gracious and all around well rounded individuals who will give back to our society through faith based teaching.

It is critical to maintain easy access to Catholic Schools and have that access available to all children, regardless of any declining demographics in our state and recent school closures.

Catholic schools should not be penalized in any way and are very much thriving rich environments which many in our community depend on and lean on for the education of our children. Bus transportation should be maintained and encouraged.

It is also important to stress that allowing a reimbursement to towns that voluntarily provide inter-district transportation to elementary school students that live out of town helps our school as well as our families. There are many of us who live in neighboring towns who depend on the transportation to take our children back and forth to school. That is how important our Catholic schools are to us. Therefore, it is crucial to keep our urban schools open and accessible to students whose schools may have closed in neighboring towns.

Please keep access to our schools alive and viable for all children by allowing state reimbursements for inter-district transportation for K-8 nonpublic schools.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to support S.B. No. 318.

Sincerely,

Joanne Chapleau