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

January 29th, 2016

As a parent of a student at (Name of School), I support S.B. No. 318.

Our family could not be happier with the level of education provided by St Mary School, in Branford, CT. The school has set a solid foundation for their learning path and that they have developed a true love for learning. In addition, teachers approach you about the right book or exercise for your child, the principal knows your kids and cheers them on by name, and the priest offers wise support at just the right time. Our Catholic school is more than just a school, it is a deeply invested community. And in a world grown increasingly cold and harsh, a community of faith and warmth is an immeasurably important springboard in these young kids' lives.

Nowadays, we should face the fact that most families these days cannot afford to have one parent stay home with the kids. This is not about "lifestyle" or "values." This is an economic struggle highlighting yet again the social costs arising from decades of stagnating or declining wages and growing income inequality. In this scenario, the non-public bus transportation gains a critical importance. In addition, many studies have shown that school changes can have negative consequences in children. My family benefits daily from the bus transportation in Branford, CT and without it would be extremely difficult to attend St Mary School.

Furthermore, recently, there was an announcement that two catholic schools in our area, St. Vincent in East Haven and St. Gabriel in Milford, will close by the end of this school year due to fiscal deficits and the downturn in enrollment. So this makes even more crucial to keep our catholic urban schools open and accessible to students whose schools have closed in neighboring towns. Then, it would be of great importance to allow a reimbursement to towns who voluntarily provide inter-district transportation to elementary school students that live out of town. This will help even more the enrollment in our school.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Modesto".