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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 two students at Our Lady of Mercy School, I support S.B. No. 318.

Our Lady of Mercy School is a great educational institution that is not only Blue-Ribbon Accredited, but also a guide for my children to have an authentic understanding of empathy, compassion, and self-awareness. It is a priority for our family to instill a moral foundation for a successful future on every level. Our Lady of Mercy assists our family tremendously with that goal.

I am grateful to have Our Lady of Mercy along the Connecticut Shoreline. I understand the public schools in Connecticut have a reputation as a source for a great academic education. However, I appreciate the family feel of the faculty and staff, and the amazing, energized families who are passionate to lead their children to an understanding of righteous leadership within my children’s school community. One of my favorite experiences of Our Lady of Mercy School is to witness how the faculty and staff prepare children for public speaking through prayer services. Children as young as Pre-K3 stand before the school and speak and sing with such awareness and trust in their peers and educators. This always gives me the opportunity to see the unified approach and love the leadership within the school provides for its students. This is one of many beautiful, unique experiences Our Lady of Mercy provides for its families.

With local Catholic schools closing, I am confident Our Lady of Mercy will continue to thrive and grow in enrollment, as the secret of our treasured experiences become more well-known. For those who have a Catholic school education understand there is no greater experience to prepare their children for a future of great competition. Our world not only needs academically driven leadership, but most importantly, a socio-emotionally-precidence for a successful future

for our world. Connecticut is privileged to house Our Lady of Mercy, but the progression of our country will be grateful for the leadership of the school's future generations.

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,

Mary Hally