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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 at Saint Bridget School in Manchester, CT, I support S.B. No. 318.

I am committed to providing my children a faith based education but the additional time needing to transport back and forth each day can become a challenge for many families out of town with complicated arrangements and schedules. Offering transportation would alleviate one of the many burdens families can face when trying to choose the best place to have their children thrive academically and within their faith.

Our children were students within the Norwich diocese for many years in Vernon until the closing of those schools. It was a priority to our family to find another school that could continue to instill the importance of our faith and challenge them academically, but it was difficult to agree to go out of town without transportation being provided. While we have been able to make it work thus far, I know that it has not been an option to some because of the lack of busing. I can only imagine that this could be considered a trend if Catholic schools are inaccessible, which would prove to be a challenge for declining enrollment.

Allowing reimbursement for inter district transportation to elementary schools that live out of town will help our school align better with what is being offered for the competitive magnet schools that currently do offer transportation when a child is enrolled.

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

Sincerely,

Emily E. Johnson