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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 both a parent of a student and an Advisory Board member at Greenwich Catholic School, I support S.B. No. 318.

Catholic education not only produces academic outcomes that exceed state and national averages in all subjects. It also helps our children build character. Catholic schools provide our children with the tools to become future community and business leaders.

Catholic schools were founded on the principal that all children, regardless of economic status, place of residence, race, or religion, should have access to an excellent education. Greenwich Catholic School is currently the only co-educational Catholic school in our town, and serves not only Greenwich, but also surrounding communities.

Many parents of children who attend Greenwich Catholic School have long commutes, and they rely on bus transportation for their children. At the present time, only 35% of the students at our school are eligible for bus transportation to and from school.

In order for our Catholic Schools to remain viable, it is crucial to maintain current enrollment numbers. This enables our schools to attract and pay quality teachers while keeping tuition at a level that most families can afford. Many families in neighboring Stamford cite availability of bus transportation as a top priority. Availability of bus transportation would encourage more families outside of Greenwich to send their children to Greenwich Catholic School.

Families whose children attend Catholic schools are saving their communities a tremendous amount of money by not attending public schools. By providing inter-district transportation funding, communities will ultimately be saving tax dollars that could be utilized on other crucial services.

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

Sincerely,

Jan Jepsen Montana