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Testimony for Education Committee Public Hearing March 2, 2016

Written Testimony for SB 318-An Act Concerning Private School Transportation

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials (SBOs) throughout the State of Connecticut. SBOs work closely with school boards, administrators, staff, public officials and communities; and are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but not limited to, developing and monitoring school district budgets and the safe and efficient transportation of public school students. It is within this context that we offer the following comments with respect to SB 318.

SB 318 requires boards of education to provide transportation services to certain students who attend a nonpublic school located outside of the school district. We oppose this bill for the following reasons:

1. This bill clearly goes beyond the original intent of General Statute Section 10-280a that specifically stated that a board of education may provide transportation to a student attending a nonpublic school. This allowed the opportunity to provide such transportation if the public school could effectively and efficiently do so without negatively impacting public school transportation. This bill removes the option and makes it a requirement.
2. Our first obligation is to provide public school transportation within the school district where our schools operate. This proposal would require us to go beyond our district lines. Not only would this result in added cost, it would require extra time for bus schedules that are already very tight. This would entail longer time on the bus for elementary and middle school students.
3. This is another mandate forced upon public schools at a time when finances are extremely tight and staffs are already stretched.

In summary, we strongly oppose this SB 318 for the reasons stated above and urge the Education Committee to reject this bill.

CASBO appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Education Committee on this important matter.