



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE, INC.

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Testimony of Anne LaMonica
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Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
March 8, 2016

SB 336 -- An Act Concerning the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and Members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee:

My name is Anne LaMonica, and I am the Associate Director for Education at the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference.

The students, parents, teachers, and administrators of Connecticut's 110 Catholic schools are grateful to the members of your committee for raising and considering Senate Bill 336.

Our schools wish to educate the whole child regardless of creed or ethnicity. We are doing everything that we can to keep approximately 25,000 children enrolled in our schools. Unfortunately, for many, it is becoming financially more challenging with each passing day.

The purpose of Senate Bill 336 is to allow Connecticut businesses – through the Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) -- to obtain a partial tax credit for contributions to scholarship programs at nonpublic schools. We understand that this type of scholarship program may already be permitted under the NAA; so we would be grateful if your committee would consider additional ways to help our parents continue to pay for nonpublic education. A turnover of enrollment from our schools to public schools would create large increases in educational costs to towns. Currently, our students and families save the state over \$420,000,000.

One possible way to help our families is to allow employers to obtain tax credits for contributions to Coverdell educational savings accounts of their employees' children. This type of proposal may have some cost to the state due to the tax credit. Respectfully, however, the cost to the state for this type of program will be far less than the cost to educate these children in public schools.

Everyone wins if our students can continue at our Catholic schools. Our schools stay open and accessible to children from all backgrounds. The alternative, the closure of more Catholic schools, would distend already stretched public school budgets.

Thank you for your support of SB 336.

Anne LaMonica
Associate Director for Education