Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of graduate and professional students at Yale University, we are submitting testimony in favor of S.B. 151: AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, which seeks to authorize the Department of Transportation to create a program, such as the UPASS program, to provide students in Connecticut access to bus and off-peak rail transportation services.

Graduate and professional students at Yale University support this bill, which aims to expand the UPASS program that has been available to students at Connecticut public colleges since 2017, to students at the state’s independent colleges. UPASS provides affordable access to public transportation in the state.

Graduate and professional students at Yale often attend the university for up to 5-7 years, depending on their program. The vast majority of these students live off-campus in the neighborhoods surrounding Yale, including East Rock, Wooster Square, and downtown New Haven. We are eager to engage in communities beyond this 4-mile radius but have limited transportation options. Access to public transportation will allow students to affordably access areas outside of Yale’s campus to live, conduct research, and further their professional development. Over the course of their programs, students would be able to put down roots in CT, using public transportation to access the wealth of resources the state has to offer, supporting local businesses and communities through commerce and service. Furthermore, this would support public transportation through increased ridership, and minimize the number of students who require cars or who use rideshares, decreasing student environmental impact. Facilitating students’ use of public transit supports the development of environmental habits that can positively impact the surrounding community as well.

Professional Development
Access to a program like UPASS will offer our students greater access to academic, work and internship opportunities in the region. Easy and affordable access to professional development opportunities throughout the state is critical to Graduate and Professional Students’ career and job prospects. For students in clinical fields, being able to affordably use buses within and around the New Haven area will contribute to their completion of clinical and internship requirements. They can gain additional exposure to other opportunities within the state, such as the Hartford VA hospital. Through access to public transportation, law students who wish to pursue state or local internships will more easily access professional opportunities in the state capital and other CT
cities, which could lead to clerkships after graduation. Furthermore, while the cultural opportunities in New Haven are extensive, access to transit would allow students of the arts to experience and contribute to gallery and performance spaces beyond the greater New Haven area. Finally, many graduate research students depend on libraries and other academic institutions for their work, as well as their ability to travel for fieldwork. Access to affordable transportation would significantly expand this access for students of all research fields, from geology and forestry, to cultural studies, to epidemiology, and beyond.

Access to services across Connecticut
Yale Graduate and Professional students frequently have limited financial resources. Professional and Master’s Students are generally attending school with the help of student loans. Ph.D. students receive stipends designed to meet basic living and professional expenses. Thus, many students cannot afford to have cars, and are therefore limited to those resources in the downtown New Haven area. UPASS expansion would greatly improve students’ access to needed services, including health care (such as dental) and mental health care services, and opportunities to support local businesses. For example, many students have voiced that transportation costs limit their options for mental health care professionals to only New Haven providers. Currently, local third-party mental health counseling providers are saturated by appointment requests from Yale students. Anecdotally, the wait time for an appointment in New Haven can be up to six weeks, which means that only students with cars can access the expedient care that they need. In addition, a public transport program would support international student travel to local embassies and consulates. Finally, such a program would augment student support of CT businesses beyond downtown New Haven, including shopping malls, restaurants, grocery stores, and beyond.

Community Engagement and Cultural Involvement
The ability to affordably access regions of the state beyond New Haven will allow students to better explore the plethora of cultural activities and vibrant communities throughout CT. For example, expanded affordable transportation options will give students the option to commute from neighborhoods and towns further from downtown New Haven, such as Westville, Hamden, West Haven, or beyond, particularly if these locations benefit their partners or families. Furthermore, Yale Graduate and Professional students leverage their diverse skills and expertise to engage in public service throughout New Haven, ranging from tutoring and supporting local students through programs like the New Haven Science Fair and New Haven Reads, to teaching at local prisons through the Yale Prison Education Initiative, to serving at local soup kitchens and shelters, to engaging in community events in Greater New Haven. With affordable transportation, students will more easily be able to reach communities beyond those directly in New Haven, allowing for an expansion of student-initiated community service and engagement. Yale G&P students will also have the opportunity to enjoy all that this state has to offer, from beaches to parks to amazing food to local retailers, all of which will support the state’s tourism and increase the students’ investment in the local community.

Therefore, we support this legislation.
CTtransit UPASS: Information & Updates from Yale GSA & GPSS
Meaghan McGeary (GSA Transit & Security Chair), Lucy Armentano (GSA Chair), Hao Xing (GPSS President)

What is the UPASS?
- UPASS CT is a transit pass that allows students at participating universities free access to all CT Transit systems, including:
  - CT Transit buses statewide (including CTtransit express and CT fastrak)
  - CTrail Hartford Line (including Amtrak trains), Shoreline East, and MetroNorth to the CT state border
  - Local transit systems, including Greater Bridgeport, Norwalk, Housatonic, Milford, South East Area, Windham Region, Magic Carpet, Northwestern CT, 9 Town and Middletown Area.
- Students purchase a physical pass from their university and present it on any transit system they use.
- The effective dates are Aug 1, 2019-Dec 31, 2019 (Fall) and Jan 1, 2020- July 31, 2020 (Spring)
- Yale University would be the first private university in the state to participate. Current participants include University of CT (UCONN), Western CT State University, Southern CT State University, Central CT State University and CT Community Colleges.
- Currently, UConn charges students a transportation fee of $20/semester, which covers the cost of the pass. UConn has a special agreement with the state to include graduate students.
- Aside from UCONN, UPASS is only available to undergraduate students at other CT public schools.
- Legislation changes are being proposed in the spring session to include private universities, and graduate and professional students in the program.

Cost: $40/student/year
- ~$300K to cover all Graduate and Professional students /year
- ~$538K to cover all Yale Students /year (including Yale college)

Student Transit Usage Data:

2017 Traffic & Safety Survey
Would you be interested in using CT transit if any of the following were true?
- 6.06% already use CT Transit
- 64.47% would if Yale provided cheaper/free passes
- 30.23% would use CT transit if Yale provided incentives to use transit instead of a car
- 13.58% would use CT transit if Yale groups hosted off-campus events reachable by transit
- 24.765% would not use CT transit

2019 UPASS Survey
Would you use a UPASS for unlimited access to CT Transit, including Shoreline East train, Metro-North train (free within the border of CT), Hartford line train (including service to Bradley airport) and CT Transit buses?
- 75.49% of responders would use a UPASS
- 24.02% of responders would not use the UPASS

How much would you be willing to pay per year for a UPASS and unlimited access to these transit services?
- On average, responders who answered would pay $24.67/year +/- 17.56 for UPASS
  - Including those who indicated they would not use the UPASS
- Responders who would use the UPASS would be willing to pay $29.32/year +/- $15.62
Benefits to Graduate & Professional Students

- Opportunities for students to access the Yale campus from neighborhoods not currently served by the Yale Shuttle system, and ability for students to live in nearby towns such as Hamden, Orange, and beyond to accommodate family jobs and housing needs. This would improve the inclusivity of Yale students with families and allow them to better integrate with the surrounding community.
- Access to cultural attractions, including libraries and museums, beaches, casinos, concert venues, etc. across CT at a more affordable rate
- Access to activities, public service opportunities, shopping malls and grocery stores in the Greater New Haven area that students without cars cannot affordably reach at this time.
- Improved access to academic and professional opportunities, including interviews, cultural events, clerkships/internships outside the greater New Haven area
- Better transport options for new GSAS students during orientation, including shopping, outings, neighborhood tours.
- Access to Bradley International Airport via Hartford Line and Bradley Flyer shuttle
- Alleviate the financial cost to international students needing to reach consulates and embassies.
- Provides West Campus Community with additional transportation, both from Yale and from western CT.

Benefits to Yale University:

- Ethical commitment to New Haven and the surrounding Connecticut communities. Improving access to Yale's immediate surroundings addresses town-gown tensions and counteracts the forces that turn the university into an inward-looking bubble.
- As a leading voice on the dangers of climate change, Yale should commit itself financially to public transportation, a socially and environmentally crucial public good, including reducing carbon emission through encouraging the use of public transportation
- Opens graduate housing options in Westville, other New Haven neighborhoods, Hamden, towns served by Shoreline East and MetroNorth trains.
- Improves access for commuter students who live outside New Haven get to campus. May help reduce housing pressure and prices if G&P students have other viable neighborhood options due to transit.
- Can be a recruitment strategy for new GSAS and professional students as it would bring up to par with more of our peer institutions (see below).
- Brings together Yale West Campus with the rest of the Yale community.
- Keeps Yale benefits in line with those provided at peer institutions, including those listed below.

Peer Institutions:

Princeton University:
- Princeton Undergraduate and Graduate students are eligible to receive a 25 percent off a regular rail, bus, or light rail monthly pass through NJ Transit Quik-Tik program
- Princeton University graduate students are eligible to participate in the University's Mass Transit Subsidy Program which includes options for a 50 percent reimbursement on monthly transit passes or two 10-packs OR a NJ Transit bus pass for graduate students who commute to campus via public transit (NJ Transit, MTA, SEPTA, CoachUSA). The subsidy is provided to the student through a subsequent paycheck or stipend reimbursement.

University of Pennsylvania:
- Full-time Penn students may purchase a PennPass for specific service zones for semester-long discounted travel on SEPTA. SEPTA buses, trolleys, and trains offer frequent service from the University's campus to virtually all cultural, shopping, and recreational venues throughout Philadelphia, the surrounding suburbs,
Trenton, New Jersey (for connecting service to New York), Wilmington and Newark, Delaware.

- Students are eligible for 25% discount on NJ transit monthly pass.

Brown University:
- Current faculty, staff, and students are able to ride any RIPTA bus or trolley anytime, anywhere in the state at no charge. Brown’s investment in the UPASS program is the latest effort in one of many transportation initiatives benefiting its employees, students, and the broader community.

Cornell University:
- All registered students enrolled in a degree program receive free, unlimited rides on all TCAT buses after 6 p.m. weekdays, and anytime Saturday and Sunday.
- New-to-Cornell students automatically receive OmniRide (unlimited pass) privileges for unlimited TCAT privileges in their first year as a matriculated student in a degree program. Privileges expire annually on August 31 for Fall entrants, and December 31 for Spring entrants.
- Non New-to-Cornell can purchase OmniRide privileges.

Johns Hopkins University:
- Subsidized student passes for all buses, the light rail and the subway are available for $25 per month for students at the School of Medicine. Monthly passes for the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train are valid for MTA bus, light rail and subway lines.
- The MTA All Access College Transit Pass offers students a convenient, affordable way to get around town. It can be used on the MTA local bus, Light Rail, and Metro Subway and costs only $55.00, while the monthly regular fare is $74. The pass is available to all Johns Hopkins University students taking six credits or more and who are enrolled in KSAS, WSE, Peabody, Carey, or Education.

Harvard University:
- Some graduate schools offer reduced rate (up to 50% off) MBTA passes offering unlimited travel over a semester period, including Graduate School of Education, Graduate School of Design, TH Chan School of Public Health, Law School and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

MIT
- MIT subsidizes 50% of the cost of MBTA T-passes for students, which are available either monthly or as a semester bus and subway pass. All MIT students enrolled in a degree program are eligible for the T-pass except students who have campus resident parking accounts.

University of Chicago:
- The University of Chicago, in conjunction with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), provides U-Pass cards to UChicago College students. The U-Pass provides unlimited travel on CTA's bus and rail system during regular term time.

Stanford University:
- Pilot Go Pass programs for off-campus graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Eligible off-campus graduate students and postdoctoral scholars can receive a free Caltrain Go Pass, which offers unlimited travel on Caltrain between all zones for the calendar year.

Timeline of Progress at Yale:
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<td>March 2019</td>
<td>● Joint resolutions passed by Yale GSA and GPSS, stating that we support the University’s efforts to improve transportation in CT, and that Yale G&amp;P students should have access to the CT DOT UPASS system. (attached below)</td>
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| April 2019  | ● CT transit negotiations, including Yale Transit officials, Janet Lindner, Provost Pollock & President Salovey  
              ● Request for information from GPSS survey regarding student usage                                                      |
| Summer 2019 | ● GPSS survey, including UPASS questions (results above)                                                                                  |
| Fall 2019   | ● UPASS advocacy established as primary GSA financial goal for 2019-2020 academic year  
              ● Discussion of UPASS between GSA, GPSS and Yale Board of Trustees  
              ● GSA & GPSS joint meeting with Dean Lynn Cooley and Secretary Kim Goff-Crews to discuss current state of the advocacy effort |
Resolution S19-003- Resolution advocating for improved CT transportation and UPASS

Sponsors: Fabian Schrey (fabian.schrey@yale.edu)
Chair, Transit and Security Committee
Economics representative

Meaghan McGeary (meaghan.mcgeary@yale.edu)
BBS representative

Recipients: Peter Salovey (peter.salovey@yale.edu)
President

Kimberly Goff-Crews (kimberly.goff-crews@yale.edu)
Secretary and Vice President for Student Life

Janet Lindner (janet.lindner@yale.edu)
Vice President for Human Resources and Administration

Donald Relihan (donald.relihan@yale.edu)
Director of Support Services

Whereas the Graduate Student Assembly and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate advocate on behalf of graduate and professional students on issues relating to better transportation within, to, and from New Haven

Whereas the University advocates for better transportation to and from New Haven through improved services of Connecticut Department of Transportation

Whereas the UPASS allows graduate and professional students to more economically travel within Connecticut, connecting them to local and global communities, and serving their academic needs

Therefore be it resolved by the Graduate Student Assembly, alongside our colleagues in the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, that we support the University’s efforts in advocating for better transportation in Connecticut

Be it further resolved that Yale Graduate and Professional students should have access to the CT DOT UPASS system.
GPSS/GSA Joint Resolution advocating for improved CT transportation and UPASS

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