

TO: MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS – CT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
LORI STEWART, HARTFORD
ANNE LAMONICA, MANCHESTER
BOB SHEA, WEST HARTFORD

DATE: FEBRUARY 8, 2019

On behalf of Catholic school families across the state, we are writing to ask your committee for your continued support of our school children and parents.

We believe that one of the primary reasons why Connecticut is one of the best places to live in our nation is the fact that we have many effective options in education – public schools, charter schools, magnet schools, faith-based schools, private schools, and home schools.

Connecticut parents have many different, wonderful options for our children’s educations; and we believe that our options and decisions should continue to be encouraged and supported at the State Capitol.

Our Catholic schools students, along with the members of our parishes, all work very hard to perform charitable works of mercy in our communities – providing hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer work at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, nursing homes and hospitals – and we donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to other charities.

Our Catholic, faith-based schools are not trying to compete with the public schools. We have approximately 28,000 students in a state with a population of 3.5 million people. We are not trying to take kids away from the public schools, and nor we would be able to do so; because the vast majority of families do not espouse Catholic education. That’s fine -- and that’s their option.

We are respectfully requesting the General Assembly to provide some assistance and recognition to families who choose nonpublic schools. We are good members of our communities--and although the actual financial amounts are disputed--our towns do save substantial money by virtue of the fact that our 28,000 kids are not in the public school system.

Accordingly, we are respectfully requesting the Education Committee to:

- **Continue to support the bus transportation program that allows nonpublic school students to catch a public school bus to their schools in town. We would appreciate the Committee opposing any proposal that would which eliminates this long-standing program that ensures the safety of many school children; and benefits all families in the towns that have both public and nonpublic schools – by keeping kids on buses and more cars off of the road.**

Thank you for your work to support all of Connecticut’s great school options.

