



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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Testimony of Anne LaMonica
Associate Director
In Support of
Proposed HB 6175
AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS
Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee Public Hearing
March 8, 2021

As Associate Director for Education for the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of the Bishops of Connecticut, and on behalf of our Catholic school families, including over 21,000 students, and our staff, I would like to thank your committee considering HB 6175.

Connecticut Catholic schools provide rigorous, nationally recognized academic curricula, rooted in basic skills that are coupled with innovative programs that prepare young people for college, career, and life. Our 89 Catholic schools are part of the fabric of our state and strongly enhance our quality of life. They have been the cornerstone of neighborhoods for decades. Many families choose a nonpublic school based upon their own beliefs, family traditions, and size of the school. We attract a wide-range of students - 21% of our students are not Catholic, and 31% of our students are minorities.

Our schools should not be considered to be in competition with our great public schools. Instead, they should be considered a different option for families, and their vibrancy should be considered a great benefit for Connecticut. Presently, many interested families cannot afford Catholic school tuition.

As an example, 30 years ago at St. James School in Manchester, many children walked a few blocks to school. Tuition was only \$300. Now with laypersons as teachers, the vast number of students now living in those homes cannot afford half of the school's tuition, which is about \$5,495. More of these children and children like them ought to be able to enjoy this excellent, award winning school in their backyard, their neighborhood.

To address these financial challenges, last year, our dioceses, schools, and foundations provided scholarships to many of our families in need, but we would like to do more. Our schools have room to accommodate more children, but they have no plans to expand.

HB 6175 will help us do more at the local level, and it will also help other nonpublic schools support the needs of students across the state. As always, we support bills that make education more affordable for all. Everyone wins when Connecticut has diverse educational opportunities for all families. I respectfully request your support for HB 6175.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Thank you,

Anne LaMonica
Associate Director for Education