

Dear Representative Cortvriend and Senator Ujifusa,

Thank you for taking the time to form a study commission on student transportation in Rhode Island. I understand your concern, however, as a former student of St. Mary Academy - Bay View from Coventry, I benefited by attending for several reasons, and those reasons are the same that many parents chose to send their children there today:

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- This the best learning environment for many to grow and learn
- Some children are able to have more targeted support.
- Private schools offer an array of options that are not accessible in public schools. The smaller classes sizes made a huge difference for me.
- Our school has made a significant impact on the life of my child (insert something specific that stands out about our school).

Bus transportation is one of the very few student supports supported by our tax dollars that makes it possible for many children to get to and from the school that best serves their needs. Additionally, having the buses on the road cuts down the cost on the roads having less cars travel daily. St. Mary Academy-Bay View is one of the schools most impacted by the Washington Bridge, and having a bus limits the amount of cars in the already gridlocked traffic.

A bus is a safe option to get students to and from school. If there is a change to bus transportation it will deeply impact the wellbeing of many children and their families' ability to get their children to and from school. Private schools have used buses for decades without issue, this not only creates jobs, but also cuts down on our carbon footprint.

I personally did not have access to a regional bus when I was at St. Mary Academy - Bay View, and my parents spent a lot of time and money trying to accommodate my sister and I's transportation to and from school; including paying hundreds of dollars for private busing, getting to work late and leaving early to do it themselves, relying on family members to drive us, buying and insuring a car when I could drive so I was responsible at 16 for getting myself and my younger sister to and from school halfway across the state.

I support all students going to the school that best serves their needs in this state and we need our elected officials to help ensure every child has transportation to get to the school that is best for that student through regional busing. Families need your support for all children in Rhode Island. I strongly urge you to consider all our students in Rhode Island and their families and protect student transportation options. Thank you.

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