



DATE: February 24, 2020
TO: Transportation Committee
FROM: Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance
RE: S.B. 151 An Act Concerning Recommendations by the Department of Transportation

Good evening Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Martin, Representative Devlin and members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy at the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association of community nonprofits. Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving half a million people in need and employing 117,000 people across the State. They are an important part of what makes Connecticut a great place to live and work and an important piece of our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of Section 13 of S.B. 151**, which would allow nonprofit service busses and other vehicles owned by nonprofits to travel the Merritt Parkway and the Wilbur Cross Highway.

Community nonprofits serve people in every city and town in Connecticut, and in part, the delivery of services includes traversing parts of the state adjacent to the Wilbur Cross Highway and the Merritt Parkway. As the service delivery-system has evolved, nonprofits have led the way to providing services in integrated, community-based settings. Today, nonprofits regularly need to travel to visit clients in their homes or transport clients to various programs, among other reasons.

Nonprofits own or lease passenger vehicles to transport people from where they live to where they work and receive services. But, despite there being no risk or danger, current law restricts many of these nonprofit vehicles from traveling on the Merritt Parkway and Wilbur Cross Highway.

Current law is not only an inconvenience to nonprofits and the people they serve, as they must travel many miles out of their way to reach their destination, but it's adding to an already increasing number of unnecessary administrative costs and burdens. Unnecessarily driving around the Wilbur Cross Highway and Merritt Parkway costs nonprofits valuable resource including staff time, fuel and maintenance on vehicles. Nonprofits are already operating on nonexistent margins due to years of state budget cuts. Section 13 of S.B. 151 would reduce these burdens and has the potential to save nonprofits money, allowing them to focus on the delivery of services as well as the safety of the people being transported and others.

We urge the Committee to support Section 13 of S.B. 151. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.