

Thank you Chairman Green, Vice-Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Shehy, and all members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Walsh Jesuit High School. My name is Kyle Ferrara. I am the Database and Stewardship Manager for Walsh Jesuit's Development Office and a graduate of Walsh Jesuit's class of 2012. I am joined by Mr. Jason Ruegg—the school's Alumni Relations Director and a graduate of the class of 1996, and by five of our current executive and senior class student government representatives.

I am here as a proponent of the bill that would allow the sale of Walsh Jesuit High School license plates. In arguing in favor of these license plates, I will talk to you about the great Walsh Jesuit network that exists among more than 9,000 alumni and about our school's new student wellness initiative.

The shared experience of a Walsh Jesuit education creates a tangible and visceral bond between graduates whether they graduated in 1969 or 2017. Our alumni recognize that we have been blessed with an education that forms not just our minds but our spirit. When any of us think back to our time at Walsh Jesuit, we think of teachers who taught us not only how to become intelligent but that we are intelligent. Coaches who taught us not only how to be disciplined but that we are disciplined. Jesuits who taught us not only how to see God in all His beautiful creation but that we are a part of His beautiful creation. It is rare to find an institution that puts such immeasurable value on each individual that passes through its halls as Walsh Jesuit does. And it follows that Walsh Jesuit alumni, current students, and faculty are always ready to share the appreciation they feel for their school and for each other. Any opportunity to deepen the bonds of this community is worth pursuing.

These license plates would have value beyond that of strengthening an already close-knit community. As a fundraising tool, the license plates would help Walsh Jesuit to continue to grow its newly implemented Student Wellness Program, an initiative that the school unrolled for the 2016-2017 academic year. As a Jesuit school, we talk about the idea of "cura personalis," a Latin term for "care for the whole person." We challenged ourselves on what it meant to "care for the whole [student]" in this new millennium, and we rolled out programs intended to support the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual needs of our students. Among other worthwhile pursuits, these programs educate students about drugs and alcohol and provide them a safe place to turn if they are confronted with these dangers. These programs teach our students and faculty about the dangers of stress and anxiety, how to manage and combat it to reduce burnout. They give our students all the information needed to make the right nutritional choices. Our school is centering itself on the value of a sound body, mind, and spirit in our students.

Early feedback of these programs has been encouraging, and we hope to continue to improve in these areas so that our students receive all the care they need while they are in our building, and so that after they leave it, they feel the same sense of pride and joy in their education that their 9,060 predecessors already do.

Thank you.