

To: Education Subcommittee
From: Anne Burnham
18 Bates Road, Chaplin, CT 06235
Re: House Bill No. 6493

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Thank for this opportunity to express my support for the above-captioned legislation.

In my opinion, the current wording of Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-63c requiring an affirmative vote in each town participating in a regional school district in order to implement a plan of dissolution or withdrawal concerning such district a recipe for dysfunction, especially in a small regional school district.

I am a resident of Chaplin, Connecticut, which is one of the three towns participating in Regional School District 11. I have been a resident of Chaplin for over eight years and during that time there has continual conflict between the three member towns. The town of Scotland has determined that it is no longer in the best interests of its children to continue to participate in the Regional District, and has made an ongoing effort to withdraw from the Regional District, dissolve the Regional District, or withdraw some of the grades currently being educated by the Regional District. Their efforts have continually been rebuffed by the Regional District Board of Education or defeated at referenda in the three member towns. This constant unrest has cast a shadow on Parish Hill High School, the only school operated by the Regional District. It is demoralizing for both the staff and the students attending the school and it makes it impossible to muster the support (both public support in general and financial support at budget time) that is needed to provide a quality education to the students attending Parish Hill.

Currently, there is a committee convened under Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-63c studying the advisability of the dissolution of the Regional District. I am very concerned that should the committee recommend dissolution, the question will be defeated at referenda even though the popular vote as a district as a whole supports dissolution. Such an outcome will only result in continued unrest in the district, all to the detriment of the education of our children.

I recognize that, in a small regional district, the withdrawal of one town or the dissolution of the district has a significant impact on all of the member towns. However, I believe that should one or more member towns determine the educational goals of their children are no longer being best met by regionalization and should the issue be supported at referendum by the popular vote of the district as a whole, it is untenable the will of people should not be implemented.

Finally, I would like to point out that the Connecticut legislature has previously recognized that, in the context of regionalization, allowing the popular vote of the regional as a whole to pass referenda concerning the region is preferable. (See Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-47b(a)(1) which provides that an affirmative vote of the regional as a whole will pass referenda concerning the addition or withdrawal of grades from the region).


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