

To: Education Committee, Connecticut General Assembly
Senator Thomas Gaffey, Co-Chair
Representative Andrew Fleishman, Co-Chair
Members of the Committee

RE: Raised HB 6493, Public Hearing 2/23/09

There are no less than nine bills introduced this session to support regionalization among towns, including the education committee's own bill to support regionalization among towns for administrative support – SB 0057, as submitted by Senator Gaffey, co-chair of this committee. A quick look at WNPR's website shows thirteen newscasts regarding regionalization. It is being sold to the electorate as a financially beneficial response to increasing budget concerns since it appears to be in the financial interest of everyone to not duplicate services because the town line says we can't rely on someone from somewhere else to provide that service, whether it is public safety or education. Yet the education committee seems unfazed by raising HB 6493 "An Act Concerning Regional School Districts" – a direct attempt to change current education laws for the benefit of a constituency that does not see any benefits to regionalization or reasons to support reducing redundant services and financial waste. This bill comes on the heels of PA 08-169, authorizing various changes to the same statutes for regional school district laws as well – in support of another constituency that didn't see any benefit from the then current structure of the laws.

This raised bill represents an unethical manipulation of existing laws to satisfy a constituency that is in doubt of their success on the current playing field. This raised bill will do nothing to advance or support the current legislative wisdom regarding financial prudence through cooperative efforts. This raised bill will retroactively change the basis on which three towns based a decision to cast a ballot in a vote that took place last year. The effect of this proposed change on the outcome of the historical vote is unknown, but it is clear that a change in this law could have conceivably changed to outcome of that vote.

These are difficult times to be an elected official, but it is now that you must show the public that you support the agendas you propose and to not fast-track little changes to existing laws which undermine your credibility and convictions. The members of the Board of Selectmen of Chaplin were never made aware of this request to the legislature. If we were, I would not have been in favor of this request. This is not a request that is made on behalf of the citizens of Chaplin, but is a request made on behalf of a group of zealots that want total control of their fiefdoms. The people that cast votes based upon their understanding of the rules shouldn't have those rules changed three-quarters of the way through the study that was initiated last year. That is common decency. That is why people will or won't continue to have faith in the representatives chosen to represent them on the basis of their ethics and integrity. If the legislature chooses to review the delivery of public education within the state of Connecticut, then a whole review of the system should be initiated. Not the piecemeal revisions that benefit only the few. All the residents of Connecticut deserve better.

Very truly yours,

Eugene V. Boomer, Jr.
Selectman, Town of Chaplin