TO: Education Committee of Connecticut General Assembly  
RE: S.B No. 1019 - AN ACT CONCERNING AN EVALUATION OF EQUITY ISSUES RELATED TO THE TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY’S MEMBERSHIP IN THE REGION 15 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Some voters in Middlebury have been frustrated by the fact that they vote to oppose increases in the Region 15 school budget, but their nay votes are offset by a preponderance of Southbury voters who approve of the increases. Typically, a majority of voters in Middlebury will oppose the school budget, but a majority of Southbury votes in favor of the budgets that typically show a modest increase from year to year. Southbury’s population is nearly three times that of Middlebury. Thus, Southbury voters generally decide the outcome, just by sheer weight of numbers. Note that in recent years, there have been times when Southbury also voted down proposed school budget increases, so the issue is not totally one sided in every referendum.

As a result of this history, Middlebury is now pushing to gain a veto power in the budget process, by giving their Region 15 Board members equal voting power to the Southbury contingent, if I understand this bill correctly. This proposal is obviously unfair to voters in Southbury.

Essentially, Middlebury is demanding that each of their citizens be granted roughly three times the voting power of a Southbury citizen. If this is done, then the school budget process will be controlled by Middlebury, and the will of Southbury voters may well be frustrated in the process. This proposal is undemocratic, probably unconstitutional, and an affront to the people of Southbury. I ask, as a representative of the Town, that this bill not go forward.

Respectfully Submitted By:
    George T. Bertram
    Selectman, Town of Southbury, CT