

Bill 457 and Bill 738

Senators Duff and Osten have put forth a bill in the state Senate that would, quite literally, force school district mergers for any districts with under 2,000 students. Senator Looney has proposed Bill 738 which would require mergers for any town with a population under 40,000. There is benefit in pooling resources and creating stronger school districts—but only when the merger is voluntary and based on mutual desire of the districts. For the state to intercede and force districts to merge with only the protection of “if the schools can justify why they shouldn’t, we won’t make them” existing in the bills, is an overreach. It should be on the schools to justify why they wish to voluntarily merge, not on the schools to justify why they don’t want to be FORCED to merge.

The statement of purpose listed for these bills is summed up by Senator Looney: “To create a more efficient school system.” Properly funding our schools, ensuring educational standards that create a stronger generation of learners, and growth of our towns is how you do this—not compulsory mergers.

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