

To whom it may concern,

My name is Robert Anderson, from Naugatuck. My phone number is 203-893-0956. I am writing to urge you to disapprove the forced regionalization of school districts in our state.

Though I live in Naugatuck and from what I have seen I would personally benefit from this plan, it really is nothing more than a plan to transfer costs from larger school (and often more financially irresponsible) districts to smaller and more financially responsible smaller towns. This would accomplish nothing more than removing incentive from these larger cities (Hartford, New Haven, etc.) to control their own spending while at the same time it will reduce the quality of education that residents of the financially responsible towns that pay a higher share for and enjoy. As with most progressive attempts at equality, reducing everyone to the lowest common denominator is NOT the way to go about achieving fairness, even if it is done with good intentions.

If you want to help the towns and cities with their educational burdens, a good first step would be eliminating unfunded mandates such as not barring school districts from lowering their educational budgets despite lower enrollments and binding arbitration. These are just two examples but there are many others. Eliminating some unfunded mandates would send a signal to the residents of CT you are serious about addressing our problems as well.

We all know some of the main drivers of our current budgetary woes are fixed costs such as salaries, benefits and pensions of public employees. The state has done a terrible job at getting those costs under control. Until that happens, we will continue to face budgetary crises every single year. For crying out loud, even if everything the new governor wants is enacted, his plan shows high hundreds of millions of dollars in deficits starting in the years after this budget.

Regionalization will have many unintended consequences and I don't believe will achieve the level of savings expected. Here are a couple of things to consider. What happens to higher paid teachers that are merged into a region where majority of the teachers are paid at a much lower rate? Do they take a pay cut or do the other teachers get raises to bring about parity? I'm pretty sure their unions will insist on parity. Also, while you won't need multiple Superintendents of Schools, likely the individually merged districts will maintain an Assistant Superintendent in order to have an equal hand in management of the larger district. Additionally, local voters will be one more layer removed from their local schools; I'm not sure how voters would like that but I know I would not. So many more unknown potential problems that I am unsure if any savings will be worth it.

CT is losing productive (i.e taxpayers) to tax and business friendly states at an alarming rate. These are the people we need to turn around our state. Forced regionalization of our school districts will only accelerate this loss. Please do not pass this foolish idea. Let the towns decide for themselves whether or not to regionalize. Let's address the root causes of our problems instead shifting the burdens.

Thank you

Bob Anderson