

February 26, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

In 2013, we moved to Wilton, CT from Stamford because of Wilton's strong public-school system. In 2018, we considered moving to the South to be with our families but decided against it in large part because of the excellent public-school system. The Wilton public school system is the pride of the town and the reason we chose to make this our home and to continue making it our home. A change in the educational structure will surely inspire us to reconsider our decision to remain so far from our family.

It is disappointing that the proposed bills do not suggest that the quality of our schools will improve with the proposed regionalization plan. It appears hasty recommendations have been made based on poorly researched financial ideas without taking into account the burden they will place on families and educators, or the short and long-term impact they may have on the educational system. These bills mess with CHILDREN, PEOPLE and FUTURES – not just numbers.

Do you want your 5-year-old on a school bus for an hour or more? Does the Route 7 Connector need more traffic as parents drive their children to and from schools that are unreasonable distances from their homes? (Certainly, the exit onto West Avenue doesn't!) What about the children whose parents aren't able to make that drive to shorten their child's commute? (Unfortunately, they are likely disproportionately minorities.) What will the impact be on sleep schedules, breakfast time, family time and afterschool activities, when hour to hour and a half commutes are added onto the beginning and end of the school day? What about mental and physical health? Children with this kind of commute could travel from South Norwalk to NYC in less time than it will take them to wind through Norwalk and Wilton to get to school!

Please do not get caught up in partisan politics and vote with your party without considering the impact of your vote. Now is the time to be reasonable, to put yourself in our shoes and to vote with your heart. Tough decisions will have to be made to get the Connecticut economy on track, but forcing the State's educational systems to carry that burden is not the answer.

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

Hunter Arton  
Wilton, CT