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Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874

We are the parents of a second grader attending the public elementary school in Redding, and we strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

One of the most important factors in choosing Redding to raise our son was the school system. We diligently researched the quality of Redding public schools, including the teachers, the programs and how important maintaining the school system was to the town. What we found is that the Redding school system is a major focus in town – not only from its citizens but also from town government and representatives.

We made sacrifices in order to move to Redding and we are very concerned that the suggested regionalization will disrupt the quality of the Redding school system. Redding has a very small corporate tax base and the school system is funded by private taxpayers, which makes the school system a high priority in town. We recently discussed moving away from Connecticut given all of its financial problems and lack of jobs – we both work in New York State and travel over an hour each way, every day. What is keeping us in Connecticut? Our answer is the town of Redding and, in particular, the quality of education my son is receiving at the Redding public elementary school.

We see nothing in the proposed bills that mentions school quality.

We are unable to find credible evidence of any significant cost savings (as any would be offset by other costs such as transportation).

We *do* see consequences of regionalization such as increased class size, decrease in community engagement, and an erosion of quality in the Redding school system in general. Lastly, this could be a final factor for those of us who already work in a neighboring state to seriously reconsider the town that we call “home.”

For these reasons, we ask for your support in opposing SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 or any other efforts to force consolidation of Connecticut public schools.

Signed:

Thomas P. Bobbin
Catherine P. Wall