

**Testimony on SB 738, 457 and 874**

**February 28, 2019**

To the members of the hearing committee:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed bills PSB 738, PSB 457 and PSB 874, which would force regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

As a new resident of Wilton who will have kids starting school in 2019 and 2020, I can tell you that the reason we moved to Wilton was for their reputable schools and the small school district. I grew up in Norwalk, Connecticut and graduated from the Norwalk School District in 1999. However, as I saw Norwalk's population grow, my wife and I knew we would rather find a small town that has proven to invest and focus on the education of their children. We looked at other states and decided to stay since I have roots in this state. Unfortunately, we may be forced to start the search again because Connecticut is threatening to impact the main attraction for us to remain here.

Regionalization may be beneficial in some cases, but that should be achieved with careful evaluation and not at the risk of "any" child's education. Forcing a town to regionalize should not be up for consideration. I have also heard mention of penalizing towns that don't regionalize. This immediately makes me think regionalization is not being brought up to improve education, but as an attack on smaller towns or for fiscal reasons. Wilton has done a tremendous job of maintaining excellent schools while receiving little funding from the state.

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

Thank You,

Josiah Bowman

Wilton, CT