

## William F. Brennan

41 Hunting Ridge Lane  
Wilton, CT 06897

February 26, 2019

To: The Honorable Douglas McCrory, Co-Chair Education Committee  
The Honorable Robert Sanchez, Co-Chair Education Committee  
The Honorable Eric Berthel, Ranking Member  
The Honorable Kathleen McCarty, Ranking Member and  
Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee. My name is Bill Brennan and I wish to express my opposition to Senate Bills 738, 457, 874 (School Redistricting Bills) and HB 7150 (Pension Cost Sharing).

As a former First Selectman of the Town of Wilton, I am deeply concerned and respectfully oppose these recently proposed bills that threaten the quality of the educational system in many communities throughout the state. Each school redistricting bill outlines mandates that would forcibly require compliance with the recommendations of a state *leadership* appointed commission! Potential administrative cost savings are suggested by these bills, but no evidence or factual justification is provided! Therefore, I believe it is essential that a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis be conducted first by an *independent* organization to factually estimate potential financial savings before state wide regional consolidation plans are implemented! Also for greater effectiveness, any proposed bill should provide incentives, not penalties, for voluntary consolidation. In brief, our district school leaders believe there are other more effective ways to achieve substantial educational cost savings. I suggest they be listened to...

Citizens recognize that Connecticut has serious financial problems and that state leaders want to take prompt corrective measures. However, Connecticut is already suffering from a reputation as one of the highest taxed states in the nation. These bills exacerbate the situation and are negatively impacting a steadily declining Connecticut real estate market! Families are very upset by the attack on our schools, as well as by HB 7150, a proposal to force the sharing of teacher pension costs by municipalities. These bills coupled with a plan to shift local motor vehicle tax revenue to the state from municipalities and proposed new taxes on real estate transactions and broker commissions are a formula for a continued exodus of Connecticut citizens to other states and a further decline in state revenues!

In summary, forced school district consolidations are not the way to proceed without verifying the expected cost savings. In addition, targeting of affluent municipalities, which generate a substantial portion of state revenue by punitive cost sharing formulas, is counterproductive, as the resulting substantially increased property taxes will continue to drive out local businesses and residents. More than one citizen has said to me, they are fed up and planning to move! As

legislative leaders of our great state, I strongly urge you NOT to support these poorly conceived bills.

Thank you for allowing me to express my strong objection to these legislative proposals.

Sincerely,

William F. Brennan  
41 Hunting Ridge Lane  
Wilton, CT

Former Wilton First Selectman  
2005 - 2015