

PLEASE VOTE NO ON SB 457:

I am writing to ask that you to VOTE **NO** ON ALL 3 PROPOSED BILLS relating to Connecticut school district consolidation.

There is a huge amount of easily accessible information that details the multitude of reasons based on data from West Virginia, Vermont, Massachusetts and Florida, that consolidation doesn't work for a variety of proven reasons. So, I will not list them all here. All of these situations in other states that have consolidated, NONE of them have a positive result, quite to the contrary, their school systems and student success has deteriorated alarmingly. And the amount of bureaucracy and cost actually went up. I'm assuming you've done your research, so you should be keenly aware of why these states and districts have now suffered because of consolidation.

In terms of trying to save the state money, we realize that we need to except this hard realization, but there are other ways to do it. Every year parents are in front of the BOE in Ridgefield, and it's groundhogs day — where parents have to come and stand up and say please don't take money from from our foreign language department or from our art department. Taking .3% may seem small but when we're already asking our town every year for money for basic line items that make our schools great, asking us now to give up what is really more than .3% is not acceptable. Now Ridgefield will have less especially when you factor in the \$460,000 they're asking us to put towards teachers' pensions.

Moreover, I think you already know the multitude of reasons based on data from West Virginia, Vermont, Massachusetts and Florida, that consolidation doesn't work for a variety of proven reasons. So, I will not list them all here.

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Moreover, how are the unions chipping in to help save the state money? Will they be reducing and revising their mandated costs that makes binding arbitration and other costs exorbitant?

Finally, could we not come up with some other ideas to perhaps help Danbury our neighbor out?? (Asking towns to step up and be creative.) For example, perhaps Ridgefield and other towns could reach across to offer to cover all or part of transportation for certain students at Danbury to come to Ridgefield high school or Wilton high school for special AP classes, or to take part in their drama program, or special education, etc. This would be based on perhaps a merit system of the students.

We need to think outside of the box.

I am asking you to commit verbally and publicly that you will **VOTE NO on ALL of these three bills**.

Sincerely,
A. Cluney
157 Saint Johns Road
Ridgefield CT