

Testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on the school regionalization bills SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874.

As a registered Democrat, I write to urge you to oppose all school regionalization bills. While all of us must support cost savings, both in education and all other areas of state spending, school regionalization shows no such savings. While some districts may need more help fiscally and in improving their educational outcomes, many local communities are doing a pretty good job of it all on their own with the results to prove it. I ask you to listen to the districts. Many towns already are successfully pursuing cost-sharing alternatives where it makes sense, as towns are looking for innovative ways to reduce expenses to shore up economic viability. We need more of this across Connecticut and that is what the State can encourage and facilitate.

As a parent of one current and one graduated public school student, our schools are the core of the town, the very reason why people move to Connecticut versus elsewhere in the tristate area. We moved to Connecticut from New York City for the small town living and high quality schools where our students stay together from grades K-12. We are here for the town where we can participate in local government, know our school superintendent and Board of Education members, serve on various town boards, and work with all town officials for the betterment of our children and community. We put up with the long commutes to NYC on abysmal and expensive train service to provide the best for our children. What will draw people to Connecticut if taxes are high, services are low, and the schools mediocre?

As an involved PTA member for 15 years and as president of the high school PTSA that serves one thousand families, I know how effectively our teachers work to help our students achieve their best potential both on academic and personal levels. I know our administrators work diligently to provide a system that supports our students and community. And with everyone working together as a town, we justify every single tax dollar requested from our residents in order to produce a fiscally sound budget that ensures a strong education system for our students.

Connecticut's residents have already been hit hard by the changes in federal tax law. Our taxes as residents of a blue state have risen significantly. We need to tackle the underlying problems causing our financial problems and leave our education system intact and sound. Locally controlled education, run by people who students and parents can reach out to and work with, is at the core of this system.

I urge you to oppose any bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

Thank you for your attention,

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