

February, 27 2019

RE: Opposition to Bills 457, 738, and 874

Dear Committee,

The nature of a proposed bill tells us much about how our legislators feel about their position and how they feel about their constituents.

Both my senator and representative suggested we submit brief testimony, but when you see bills like we have in 457 and 738, we simply cannot overlook what these bills tell us.

1. These bills tell us that the state believes it knows more about serving the majority of communities in this state than the communities themselves.
2. These bills tell us that the state is willing to act in totalitarian ways to force its will upon municipalities and the thousands of citizens who want nothing more than to be free to manage their schools and municipal affairs as they deem appropriate.
3. These bills grow state government during a time when the state government should be shrinking along with the public's ability to fund it.
4. These bills tell us that state does not trust in the natural and current rights of municipalities to enter into voluntary agreements with other towns for those areas where it seems to the municipalities most appropriate to do so.

I believe this to be the crux of the situation. This is not a move so that all 169 towns can operate efficiently. There's no proof that would occur while there is proof that increased school size does negatively affect student performance. No, the real motive is to force citizens who currently give, who have given for decades, and for which we remain in a state of failure, to now give up their way of living in the interest of a social good. After all, why should one citizen be entitled to live a particular way when another does not have that same privilege?

Given the track record of state overreach and mandates which impact municipalities, it is hard to imagine votes to give the state more authority. It is also hard to imagine the state justifying these bills when a large part of the problems municipalities face comes as a direct result of the mismanagement by the state of the affairs it was responsible to manage. The state's seemingly insatiable desire for more control over everything conveniently ignores that fact.

We are at a precarious point in the relationship of the tax revenue producing citizens of CT with their state government. The right thing to do, would be to stop passing bills that either a) infringe upon personal or local control rights or b) seek to continue to tap the loyal tax base who has given for decades and for which they've received a fiscal crisis in return. It is time to pass legislation that returns control to the people in all of our 169 towns. Allowing these bills or any similar bill to pass would be catastrophic for this state.

I encourage you to vote NO on bills 457 and 738 and governor's bill 874.

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