

As a parent of two students in our local public school district, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools. This includes any bills that would punish schools that do not regionalize by withdrawing support and funding or threaten to do so.

Before moving to Connecticut over 10 years ago, we considered moving to Westchester County, NY for the shorter commute to New York City. Although they too have great schools, we ultimately chose to move to Connecticut because of the far superior school districts that we saw. We were impressed, and continue to be impressed, by the local involvement in our district. Parents frequently get involved and stay in contact with the Board of Education and our Superintendent on issues that matter to them. If I were looking to move to Connecticut now, regionalized school districts would certainly deter me from committing to this state. I'm certain that this will ultimately hurt our state's economy further and erode the quality of our schools and the character of our small school district and town.

In reading the above referenced bills, I do not notice any language that implies that this will improve school or education quality. In fact when researching this very topic, I have come across numerous accounts in other communities of diminished quality of schools without local control.

If this is meant as a cost-cutting measure only, without regard for how it will affect the quality of schools or the character of the towns they serve, then where is the data that supports significant savings? I have only been able to find accounts of negligible savings at best. Negligible administrative savings are not worth the overall cost of forced regionalization and the damage it will do to our communities. If some very small school districts see the benefits of consolidating for their own communities, I applaud their efforts to make bold choices for their own districts. It has always been an option and some Connecticut schools have already consolidated certain services. This is an individual district decision that can only be those within a town and district. They intimately know the needs of their own community.

I strongly urge you to oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools. Please oppose all bills that either force or coerce regionalization.

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