

February 28, 2019

Dear Education Committee:

As a parent of three public school students, I respectfully write in opposition to Bills 874, 457 and 738 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

I have lived, studied and worked in Connecticut since 1999 when I started law school at UConn. I chose to stay in Connecticut after law school to live, work and raise my family. My husband and I bought our first house in Connecticut in 2007 in Darien because of the reputation of its schools and accessibility to New York City. We decided to move in 2016. My husband works in New York City and I am a lawyer licensed in CT and NY. We could have gone anywhere in the tri state region or even beyond. We chose to stay in Connecticut and chose to move to Wilton, again for its schools and its community. It wasn't an easy decision or one that we took lightly, but we were confident that the schools would be just as strong in Wilton as in Darien, and they have been. However, I have never been regretful of that decision until now. My husband now commutes 3 or more hours per day to New York while I commute longer to Stamford every day, obviously spending less time with our children due to the longer commutes. The only thing making these sacrifices worthwhile are the schools and community in Wilton. We are fully confident that our children are getting the best education they can during the day when we are not with them. The teachers in Wilton care. They know who we are. They know who my children are. The administration is approachable, accessible and visible. This is the environment we chose and what we wanted for our family.

These three bills are confusing, vague and nowhere within them does it say anything about how this would benefit our children or the quality of education. In fact, by not regionalizing, towns may lose funding for their schools? How does that benefit our children? My own research indicates that regionalization has not been shown to improve school quality or result in any cost savings. Regionalization has already failed in Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Vermont. Regionalization's high failure rate has been well-documented in case studies. We do not need to fund a commission to investigate it further.

These bills have already done harm. I strongly believe that anyone looking to move to or within Connecticut now, which is the position I was in a few years ago at this time, would look elsewhere. Families who are already living in Connecticut are looking to leave, which only compounds the many problems this state faces. I'm disappointed that in light of the problems, an idea such as regionalization is even considered a solution. The schools might be the only thing working in CT and are the main reason people move here and stay here. The opposition to this idea is like nothing I have ever seen before. Therefore, as a parent of three children attending public school children in Wilton, I hope that you will listen to the people who are opposing these bills. Therefore, I urge you to oppose Bills 874, 457 and 738 and any other legislation relating to school regionalization.

Respectfully,
Carol Faherty
Wilton, CT