

February 28,2019

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 SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

I am a member of the Thomaston Board of Education. We are a small district in Northwest Connecticut with approximately 1,000 students. I am opposed to the above-referenced bills which would force our district to merge with others. We have a creative Superintendent and business manager who have kept administrative costs down in our district through shared services with our neighboring districts. Our business manager and food services manager are part-time positions shared with the Wolcott School District. We share transportation services with the Wolcott and Plymouth School Districts. We have an insurance consortium with other towns in the area to keep our health insurance costs in check. We have done an excellent job regionalizing services to save money for the taxpayers of our town. Shared services is a way to save money, not shared school districts.

I also am concerned that the proposed bills would take the governing of the schools away from the local school boards. Our authority as boards is already being challenged by magnet and vocational schools. Funds are being taken away from small districts every year. I do not want the state legislature or the State Board of Education to have any more control over local issues that are out of their realm of understanding and purview.

I urge you to vote against the above-referenced bills.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ruthann H. Fainer
Thomaston, CT