

Re: CT bill, SB457
February 25, 2019

In my 35 years of living in Connecticut, this proposal is, by far, the worst idea to be floated by any CT legislator or bureaucrat. There is no aspect of this proposal that is acceptable nor that could ever possibly succeed.

The notion that a small town and a larger city have any commonality, either demographically, geographically, financially or representatively, is ludicrous, ill researched and ill informed. Our town doesn't even have the same weather as the city with whom this plan aligns us.

The notion that students, in either community, will benefit is unproven and had this concept been properly researched, the findings would show that small, autonomous districts with local control, and small classes benefit all students from gifted to struggling to special needs. In particular those who are struggling and have special needs thrive in "small" classrooms. There is absolutely no research to support the idea that large, bureaucratically complex school administrations do anything but destroy the educational experience for all students of all abilities.

The notion that the consolidation plan proposed will save us, the taxpayers, money is equally ludicrous. Big bureaucracy, by definition, costs more, has more built-in waste, is infamously inefficient, dysfunctional and offers far more opportunities for corruption.

As an aside, the opposition to this "forced regionalization" plan will, without doubt, result in multiple lawsuits on the part of the many towns being victimized. Is the State of Connecticut prepared to squander, once again, our tax dollars to defend its stance against the residents of its own state? Given the financial crisis that faces Connecticut today, I can't imagine there are discretionary funds waiting to be used to fight this battle.

The notion that any community in Connecticut has any interest in leaving behind its constitutional roots of self-government and self-determination to suborn its rights to the "State" is also ludicrous. The legacy of independence in each of our 169 Towns is long rooted in constitutional precedent. To consider disrupting that self-determination is to go down an unconstitutional, illegal road. It is impossible to understand why any duly elected official would think that this plan fits into our founding constitution. It is equally impossible for any duly elected official to not understand the breadth of litigation for such an infringement of constitutional rights.

Each of us taxpayers in CT has already more than we can handle in state and local taxes. Given the inability of all of us to deduct our SALT payments and the increase in costs and, resultant taxes for this ill-conceived plan will cause bankruptcy for our town and, most likely, the associated city as well. Neither community will be able to educate its children properly, an enormous bureaucracy will devour both, and property values will plummet across the board resulting in further flight of residents from the state & a resultant loss of tax revenue for the state's coffers.

This is a no-win for anyone here- every single student, regardless of where they live, will suffer, every single taxpayer will suffer and the only people who will be left in CT will be the bureaucrats who invented this plan presiding over a bankrupt State; this is a plan that will fail. It's not a question of if, it's a question of when and I predict a rapid collapse.

I hope you will oppose SB 457 and any legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Yours truly,

Michael Foster
Wilton, CT