

27 Feb 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

As a parent of public school students, 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.

We moved to Connecticut for the schools, and existing school quality and our corporate jobs is what keeps us here. If one of those is no longer viable, we would not stay in Connecticut, and many of my colleagues feel similarly.

The small community schools which drive CT's leadership in education are a critical recruiting tool for the corporations in the Danbury area. None of the aforementioned bills make any mention of school quality or community preference. The accountability for schools must remain with the towns that manage them. Some towns do well, while others do not. Schools should be given best-practice toolkits put together by the State of Connecticut to aid towns in identifying opportunities to share commoditized services with other towns, such as payroll. Forced regionalization of schools shifts accountability away from local towns and towards distant cities, thereby depriving towns of their voice and choice in how their children are to be educated.

Connecticut's state leadership must send a clear message to restore the lost confidence of both citizens and business – that the State will allow towns to manage their own budgets. If either citizens or corporations perceive undue risk due to poorly visioned and/or executed ideas by the state of Connecticut, they will not invest. These three bills have already chilled a shaky housing market, and if they were to be passed, foreclosures would skyrocket as people would walk away from their mortgages to hastily move to areas with more stable town structures and school systems.

Connecticut's corporations would see their talent leave the state, and those businesses would then be unable to recruit new talent. Ability to attract talent is a key decision factor in whether or not large corporations stay in Connecticut. If the businesses start to leave, more people will leave. This creates a vicious cycle of lowered tax base → increased taxes → more citizens leaving → even lower tax base.

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Jen Freed-Rocky
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