

Senators Duff, Osten and Looney;

We are writing to voice our opinion on bills SB457 and SB738.

We are aware that you have received much input from concerned parents across the state concerning regional consolidation of our schools in CT. We are sure you have been told that people often choose smaller towns for their smaller school systems. We are sure you have been told that these bills have not been thought through for reasons such as overcrowding, less classroom attention per student due to increased class size, and a logistical nightmare busing children to other towns and the time needed to do so. It is ridiculous for any of you to think that it is OK for our children to have to wake up any earlier than they already do to make a long trek across town.

However, while we agree with these issues and concerns, we are also concerned about the non-classroom aspects that will be impacted such as sports, music and the arts, and other after school activities. For example, combining schools will undoubtedly combine the top talent in these areas from multiple schools. Why is that a bad thing? When you combine your top talent and make up teams, bands, and other activities, you squeeze out the children that are perhaps still developing and are not quite as advanced yet as the top children. Therefore, you are taking away opportunities for certain children to participate as there are size limitations to be members of any of these activities. What signal are you sending to those who could have played in their smaller town but now are told they are not good enough to participate. Are you possibly opening up a wrong path to travel down for these students? I was a student heading down the wrong path and thankfully, sports and the arts turned me around.

Lastly, we do not need to remind you that CT is, I believe, the second highest taxed state in the union. CT is in the top five for people moving out of the state because of those taxes. Many are on the fence about moving out of the state because of their children still being in their pre-college years. Let us tell you this... Rather, let us warn you, if these bills are passed, you will be helping people on the fence decide what is best for their family. To that, what will be best is to not accept these short sighted regional consolidation bills and they **WILL** leave. My wife and I are parents who are on the fence. The first thing we will do if these bills are passed is pull our children out of this school system. We will either send them to a private school or home school them while looking into other school systems in another state. You will continue to see CT's tax base shrink.

We suggest you look at other ways to fix Connecticut's financial problems. Leave our schools and children alone.

Kevin and Pamela Frost - North Branford