

Dear Official,

I strongly oppose school regionalization bill SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, SB 7150

I am a resident of town of Wilton who moved to this town in Nov 2017 despite this town's notorious reputation of higher taxes, in hope to provide a better school system and superior quality of education to my middle schooler kids.

We looked long and hard to find a community that would embrace us and provide a nurturing environment to my family and were very fortunate to have found that in this town. We considered a lot of things before considering a move to Wilton.

Me and my husband have to undertake longer commute to our respective jobs and we willingly took that as the benefits of a solid school system far outweighs the pain of being stuck in traffic for long. Longer commute wasn't the only challenge during our decision making, the real estate market was booming in Wilton and the taxes being one of the highest in the area and yet we saw that more and more young families choose to move here, for the single reason and that is "Excellent School System". In the years since we moved, I have experienced the joy of belonging to this community where my son who started 6th grade was welcomed with open arms and was able to quickly adapt to a new system as the teachers and counselors and principals were all so supportive and involved in making this transition a success. So the pain of commute and the higher price we paid to be a home owner here along with the taxes we pay was all worth it. Until recently when regionalization talks made it big and I was deeply worried about my children's future and the prospects of my investment going down. We are a middle class working family who worked our way, saved enough to provide our kids the opportunity that we never had growing up and it was very unsettling for us to imagine one decision could make it all go down for us. Decisions like these impact middle class the most and yet we are least heard.

In the past month or so I found myself trying to find the logical reasoning behind it, but could find none, this could not and should not be a way to shift the pain around without any real benefit to anyone.

So I have my questions which are still unanswered, and I hope to understand the rationale behind this all:

- Why are school districts that are good with managing their funds being penalized. How will this fix the school system?
- Where is the proof that it has worked? The burden of proof lies on the elected officials who have suggested this bill in the first place.
- Exactly how will this save us money and still maintain and improve the education outcomes?
- If this is because we can't balance our state budget then shouldn't we look for improving our economy overall and take steps to get more businesses to CT which will generate more jobs and more taxes and make this a more promising state to move rather than drive people away as these good school districts are the only things going well for CT currently and by diluting that we would actually drive people out of CT. People have options (except for people like us who put all their savings in buying a home here and will be stuck as we won't get the price we paid for it)
- Again if it is about balancing the budget why something as foundational as school system needs to be touched, do we have no other way to fix that? Have we explored all other options before disturbing the core of our society?
- We all know that real estate markets are sensitive to such things, so why would we want to create a fear that will and is already driving the house prices down,? So many of us who have paid a lot to be here are worried to lose our investments and be subjected to sub-standard school system

Regards,

Preeti Gaur

(An Indian American mother who values education as I have seen firsthand what opportunities good education can bring)

Wilton