

OPPOSE Bill 457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Dear legislator

I am a resident in Old Lyme. I am writing to oppose Bill 457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

First of all, may I ask if there are data to support this action???

8 years ago, we moved from New York State to Connecticut. During the house hunting then, we chose the town of Old Lyme for the main reason of the small school district and small class size. In this school, our admins know the names of each child. All students get the needed attention for their education and mental nurturing. The school bus to high school takes about 20 minutes in the morning from our house, which is not too bad. It's true we don't have all the after school activities like the large schools offer. It is our choice to choose the personal attention over the programs. My son has grown up nicely in this school district and is in the good hand of a nice college now. The small local school is vital in my child's success. We continue to look forward to the same benefits for our young daughter and many other children in our community.

The proposal of splitting our district into two is such a harmful idea. It forced our children to separate from their long term friends. Imaging we are forced to join Old Saybrook school district, the bus ride would be one hour long in each way after picking all students from the communities. Two hours on the bus ride will be 36% of their daily study time at school! In addition, they are forced to attend massive schools where they lose personal connection with their teachers. As you can see the forced regionalization of our town harms more than benefits. Districts across the state already engage in regional services that save money. To force this upon our schools based on arbitrary enrollment and population numbers is foolish and short-sighted. The concept of saving money by running large does not always work. Huge districts actually cost the taxpayer more money due to the sheer size of the organizations and the numerous layers of bureaucracy that are required to run them.

Many of us have chosen to move to our towns because of their small size. The proposed legislation stands in contrast to the desire of us to live in a community that has that "small-town America" feel. The idea of local control is a concept that is rooted in our New England heritage. Should the forced regionalization occur, we will be forced to move out of Connecticut.

Kindly yours

Michele Guo, Old Lyme Resident