

February 27, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

I am unable to attend the public hearing on Friday March 1, 2019. I am writing to convey my strong views on this subject. Forced regionalization is a mistake and would cause significant harm to Connecticut families and communities. While allowing towns to share services *if* they choose to do so can be beneficial, forcing towns to regionalize school districts is not the solution.

My husband and I moved our family from New York to New Canaan, CT in large part due to the quality of the schools. We specifically chose a house within walking distance to the public schools our children attend in New Canaan. In addition to personally moving to New Canaan, my husband also moved his business to Stamford, CT. I am very involved in our local schools and we are both very involved in our local community. We like that our schools are managed locally.

While we love New Canaan, we are very disappointed in CT at the State level. Connecticut has proven an unfriendly place to run a company. The mentality in Hartford of "shifting the burden" to employers, business owners, and those deemed affluent has driven businesses and families out of Connecticut. Real estate prices are plummeting, employment and wage growth is stagnant, and the outlook for our state is concerning.

Nonpartisan studies in CT have shown that any perceived savings as a result of consolidation are limited and educational outcomes are not improved. In the summer of 2018, Connecticut-based Rodrogiez Data Solutions, LLC completed a comprehensive analysis on the impacts of K-12 regionalization for the *Hartford Foundation for Public Giving*. Their report included the following statements:

- "Policies that all for wholesale regionalization based on imposed criteria can have unpredictable, and often adverse, consequences."
- The researchers found that "regionalization may lead to diseconomies of scale resulting from: higher transportation expenses because of longer bus routes, overall increases (leveling up) in staff salaries because of seniority and/or contract renegotiation, and increases in the number of mid-level administrative support staff."
- "Students who are involved in extracurricular activities (e.g., band, sports, clubs) have higher graduation rates and it is widely accepted that participation in extracurricular activities decreases as enrollment increases."
- "While it seems apparent that the closing of school buildings will reduce costs, savings are limited because there may not be buyers, and the facilities still must be maintained by the school district. In already struggling neighborhoods, these now empty school buildings (with boarded windows) contribute to a downward economic spiral by attracting scavenging, dumping, drug users, and graffiti. The neighborhood children who previously attended the now closed school are then exposed to an increase in crime resulting from the blighted property."

One of the primary factors keeping us in the State is the excellent schools in New Canaan. If the Legislature and Governor unwisely choose to force regionalization, this will accelerate the departure of many more people, likely including my family and my husband's company. Hartford is providing residents with more reasons to leave Connecticut. Please do not give us another major reason to leave. Please vote **AGAINST S.B. 457, S.B. 738, S.B. 874**, and any further attempts to force regionalization.

Regards,

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