

TESTIMONY

Submitted by Debbie Huscher
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Education Committee Public Hearing
March 1, 2019

OPPOSE: Proposed S.B. Bill 457– AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

OPPOSE: Proposed S.B. Bill 738– AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez and Members of the Education Committee. My name is Debbie Huscher, and I am a Realtor specializing in Middlesex County and neighboring towns. I have been a top producing Realtor in Connecticut since 2003. In recent years have had numerous families relocate out of the state due to taxes and the high cost of living.

A large portion of my business is in our smaller rural towns. These towns do not offer the services and the amenities of our cities, but they do provide a close-knit community and highly regarded schools. I would estimate that 80% of the buyers in these towns are coming due to the school district. I had an open house on Sunday in Middlefield, and 4 out of the 6 guests said they are looking to move to the area because of the schools. My personal experience aligns with this article in Realtor.com regarding the importance of schools in home buying decisions: [home buyers forego garages for school district](#)

My grave concern is the impact of this proposed regionalization on the local communities and home values. I have already had several sellers contact me about selling their home in these smaller towns and leaving since the announcement of the proposed bill. Is this what we want to happen to our communities? Homeowners invest more in the local area and engage more in community life. Families choose to buy homes in small towns because they have more direct access to school board members and administrators and can find an audience with decision makers who impact the academic and social lives of their children. It's difficult to imagine a central board when regionally combined as proposed, operating in the best interests of all member towns, fairly and with successful outcomes for all students. There is school property, sports teams, staff and administrator hiring practices and many other elements that are specific to that one building or town.

Additionally, the threat of a penalty for not participating is being received by residents and taxpayers as offensive. For participating, what is the impact on tax savings to these smaller districts that already have high mill rates? What are the gains for these small communities?

I urge you to reject these bills and instead, support measures that facilitate voluntary shared services where cost savings to the district can be realized and quality of education preserved.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns about this bill and impact on local homeowners, students and businesses.