

Dear Governor Lamont,

I am writing to oppose SB 738, SB 457, and Governor's Bill SB 874 as I fear they will do great harm to the educational system in our town and the State of Connecticut.

As a parent of public school students in East Granby, I hereby object to the formation of any Commission on Shared School Services for purposes of developing a plan for redistricting or consolidation school services and/or school districts. Some towns, including ours in 2015, have already looked into this matter recently and found there to be zero benefit from district consolidation. In fact this would be both an economic detriment and poor influence on the quality of education desired in small towns. Consider that even sharing services, the fact remains people still must be paid to perform services, and rolling up services across entities would not reduce the amount of work to be done, nor the time to do it. There would be no gain.

Sec 4 (2) (b) implies a mandated shared superintendent for towns fitting a population of under 10,000, 2 or less elementary schools, and under 2,000 resident students under threat of withholding salary of said superintendent from towns. Those superintendents have been crucial to hiring great teachers in our districts. Such a move would result in an unwelcome power play, trying to remove freedom from local towns on how school systems and boards of education operate. These are local decisions made by local residents and taxpayers, not a state government vying for control. We are not here for our freedom to be subjugated. Too many have fought and died in battle, and many living still carry the wounds of war today in the name of freedom.

By incentivizing grant monies to districts that make an effort to consolidate, this represents an unwelcome means of oppressing town government and bending to the state. I believe less government is better. People who purchased homes in small towns want the smaller school systems which small towns typically offer. Their homes aesthetic and monetary values reflect that. We fear the longer times riding on buses and larger school and class sizes that are being inferred in the proposed bills mentioned above.

You will also need to consider the human aspect of a school district and teachers. The impact of teachers in a district cannot be measured by scores on a test. Rather, the true impact is measured in their actions, their compassion as people, and the heart they devote to their profession each and every single day. A test score does not even begin to capture that.

We recently had a personal situation where the teachers and administrators of a small school district were able to provide us great reassurance in an ongoing personal situation involving our child and a personal experience requiring some time away from school. They were able to provide availability of educational resources and personal connections to make this experience easier for the student and us as a family.

I humbly implore you to seek alternative means of budget balance, and ask that you oppose SB 738, SB457, and SB 874.

Sincerely,

Ken Kovaleski

