

Written Testimony: SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874.

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874.

I write to oppose SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874, and any future bill that would remove town control of Wilton schools or that would study the possibility of doing so. As a parent of three young children, I would not have chosen to live in Wilton if it did not have a reputation for high quality schools. This reputation is put at risk by the proposed bills, which would undermine the local control and accountability that has been central to Wilton's academic success. I believe that cost efficiencies, while important, must be implemented in a way that contributes to the number one priority of student success. I find it telling (and misguided) that protecting and improving student learning outcomes is totally missing from these bills.

The Wilton school system is one of the town's most attractive features and is also a feature of neighboring towns such as Weston, Westport, and New Canaan that may be less negatively impacted by these bills. If Wilton's academic reputation is damaged, property values, which are already in decline, would fall even more dramatically as residents flee to neighboring towns and states, or, at increasing rates, to states such as Florida and Texas which are more taxpayer friendly. There is the potential to create a situation in Wilton where many of our neighbors are a job loss or medical emergency away from losing their homes—a situation akin to the 2008 housing crisis.

Please leave our schools in local control. They are functioning well. Citizens of Wilton are happy with them.

Thank you again for considering my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Daniel Mack
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