

February 28, 2019

I am writing today to voice my opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874!

As a former third grade teacher in Madison and a mother who had three daughters go through the Madison school system, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to FORCED regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

Most people move to Connecticut because of the beauty of the state, but also the quality of our schools...especially along the CT shoreline.

None of your bills include one mention of the quality of our schools. I am concerned about the impact of larger school sizes, decreasing administrators, and community engagement.

There is evidence that people are leaving Connecticut daily for more tax friendly states. One of our greatest draws is our schools. Without that draw, I am afraid we will see even further declining property values and the economy of Connecticut.

Eroding the quality and character of our public schools will result in eroding the quality and character of our towns as well.

While encouraging towns to share services is a laudable goal, forcing towns and cities to regionalize their school districts without considering their unique needs creates a whole host of problems. These bills fail to consider, bus route times for rural areas and impacts on classroom instruction, current and future investment on new schools to address shifts in student populations, impact on students' access to sports and extracurricular activities, and loss of control over decision making in the budget process. Ultimately, any bill to address education mergers needs to be done from the local level on a voluntary basis. By the state mandating consolidation based upon population only, potentially puts education in crisis. Finally, none of these bills propose to reduce state education funding, rather the result would be to shift education funding to the cities.

I believe there is merit in looking at sharing services and programs with other towns, but the process needs to be worked through locally, not mandated by the state

I hope you will think seriously about regionalization and oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

Our citizens and communities are counting on you!

Sincerely,

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