

Written Testimony

SB 738

SB 457

SB 874

Kathryn Marr

Wilton, CT

My name is Kathryn Marr, and I have lived in Wilton since 2014. **I am a life-long Democrat but that may soon change. That is how important our schools are – above all else.**

I am submitting written testimony to vehemently oppose SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874.

My husband and I began our professional careers in New York, but after having children we looked to move out of the city to a town known for its schools. Like many others I have met in our small community, we ended up in Fairfield County. We looked at homes in Wilton, Weston, Westport, and Ridgefield—at the end of the day it didn't matter to us where we bought our house because we knew that all of the schools were good. The quality of schools was the ONLY criteria on which we based our decision. **Without top-notch schools, there would have been no reason for us to move to Wilton. And so, I wonder....without top-notch schools, why would anyone else want to move here?**

These proposed bills have already created unwanted consequences. Let me illustrate some examples in my own life, and I am just one constituent: (1) Several of my friends in Wilton have already called real estate agents in order to put their house on the market to move OUT of Wilton in anticipation of combining our schools with Norwalk; (2) Former investment banking colleagues of mine who still live in New York are no longer considering a move to Fairfield County after my discussions with them about these proposed bills—NJ or Long Island look more attractive now; (3) My own sister, who has been planning to move for years from NYC to Wilton to be closer to my family now that she has a toddler, is expanding her search to NJ instead of CT.

Small communities like Wilton are centered around their schools. Without local control over schools, there is no longer a draw to live or move there. My husband and I know that our property value will significantly decrease as a direct result of these bills. We have started to have discussions about needing to move out of Wilton. Maybe we will move to New Jersey to be closer to my sister since she doesn't want to move here anymore. My husband commutes to NYC so New Jersey is just as easy as Connecticut. That is, if we can even sell our home. Who will buy it? And we'll take such a hit because these bills will surely drive down property values. You will drive out the middle class. Those who don't care about these bills can afford to send their children to private school. However, there will be an exodus of people who commute to New York, or elsewhere, who will seek to leave. **These bills will drive people out of our small communities. If these bills pass, you will do significant harm to your constituents and no good.**

There is massive bi-partisan opposition to these bills. We are united in our opposition. Democrats and Republicans in my community are outraged. Democrats in Wilton are attending Republican-hosted discussions and events on these bills. **As a life-long Democrat I am incredibly disappointed with the officials I helped vote into office. I can assure you, if these bills pass there will be many constituents who will no longer vote across party lines. ALL of your constituents are opposed to these bills. You will lose our trust.** Your job is to represent the communities that you serve.

If you want to draw taxpayers to Connecticut, you need to ensure that the quality of the schools remains a priority.

The proposed bills make me sick to my stomach. I cannot imagine lawmakers wrecking what is most sacred to our communities. Schools are the hearts of our communities. Children are the future of Connecticut and their education should be of utmost importance. Please LISTEN to your constituents, to your communities, to the residents across your state. **If my elected officials do not listen to the VAST MAJORITY of its own constituents, why then should I, or anyone else, be loyal to that party?**

Regards,  
Kathryn Marr