

February 24, 2019

To: State of Connecticut Education Committee

RE: SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, SB 431

Dear Education Committee,

My name is Christine McVeety and I was born and raised in Orange, Connecticut. My husband was also raised in Woodbridge, Connecticut. In 2010 we moved to Tampa, Florida to pursue a job opportunity for my husband. We now have two children, four and two months old. We have enjoyed our time living in Tampa but we always knew we wanted to return home to Connecticut to raise our family and especially to have our children receive a top notch education in a small town, locally controlled school.

I am a School Counselor and I worked at Oxford High School in Oxford, Connecticut prior to our move to Tampa. While in Tampa I worked as a School Counselor for Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS). HCPS is the eighth largest school system in the country, covering an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. Working in a county like this was an eye opener and became the main reason that we made a commitment to ourselves that we would move back to Connecticut before our daughter started school in 2020. I got to see first hand the effects a regionalized administration had on local schools. There is much less understanding of the needs of each school and far more bureaucratic and useless policies and interventions. Testing is used as the county's way of knowing their schools' needs and is out control. As a counselor I organized and implemented a county imposed, school wide test almost every month during the school year. The effects on the students' quality of education and experience of education were disastrous. When I worked at Oxford High School (CT) I saw and spoke with the superintendent of schools at least once per week. I worked for HCPS (FL) for four years and never once met the superintendent. In Oxford that personal attention was critical to my positive experience and satisfaction on the job.

There is no question in my mind that town controlled and operated school systems are far superior to regionalized schools/administrations. Because we were planning a move back to Connecticut (specifically Wilton or Westport) I have joined several Facebook groups from those areas and those groups alerted me to the introduction of SB 874, 738, 457 and 431. I am shocked that the state of Connecticut would want to fiddle with its greatest asset, the school systems. Rest assured that if any of these bills are passed and regionalization is implemented in Connecticut we WILL NOT move back to Connecticut. We might as well stay here in Florida, put our children in private school and save ourselves thousands of dollars in income and property taxes.

I implore you to please do not support SB 874, 738, 457 and 431. Not only are your current residents watching, but potential future residents as well.

Regards,

Christine McVeety
Potential Future CT Taxpayer
Tampa, FL