

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Below is my testimony on bills SB 738 and SB 457.

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to SB 738 and SB 457, the bills to force regionalization of Connecticut public schools. I have taught in Connecticut public schools for 20 years, and my perspective is that of both a classroom teacher and a parent.

My reasons are as follows:

1. It will not save money.

The immense initial and ongoing costs of combining resources, retrofitting schools, leveling-up salaries, and sorting through legal obligations will offset any savings. Larger districts may require more, rather than fewer administrators. Higher compensation may be needed to attract and keep quality teachers.

2. It will eliminate local control.

Self-governance is a basic tenet of American government. Forced regionalization violates the long-established principle of communities to make decisions that directly impact the safety and well-being of their own local populations. Forcing any local community, large or small, to relinquish its decision-making power is the equivalent of asking state lawmakers to relinquish their decision-making power to the Federal Government. It is inherently wrong, defies our American system of governance, and violates our rights as citizens. Furthermore, withholding state funds from school districts that choose not to regionalize, if this becomes the case, would be punitive and destructive to our public education system.

3. It will harm school quality.

Any consideration of mandatory consolidation of schools must start with education quality, and there is no proof that larger schools are better than smaller ones. It is more likely that larger class sizes will result in districts that now have smaller class sizes, unless more teachers are hired. That will cost more, and offset any other savings. Smaller class size, crucial to quality education, will be lost in districts that already have it.

Forced regionalization is a clumsy, dangerous and irresponsible way to redirect money, and will result in the destruction of quality education, where it already exists. This measure is not progressive. It will only compound our state's problems, not solve them.

Please oppose SB 738 and SB 457, the bills to regionalize Connecticut schools.

Thank you,

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