

To: [edtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:edtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874

As a parent of public school students, 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.

My family and I moved to Connecticut 4.5 years ago to pursue a job opportunity I had with GE Asset Management (which has since been acquired by State Street Global Advisors but still located within Stamford, CT). We came from a large school district in Georgia, the Gwinnett County School system. We have experience with a large diverse school system as my daughter completed Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade there. When she started 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Farmingville Elementary School in Ridgefield, CT, the school identified within 1 week that my daughter was well behind the standards set in reading, writing and math for an incoming 2<sup>nd</sup> grader. They immediately contacted me and set up a plan to get her up to speed with her classmates. Thanks to several specialists and a great counselor helping her along throughout the day, she was caught up and excelling within 3-4 months. I couldn't be happier that her needs were identified early and rectified so quickly and painlessly. 1<sup>st</sup> grade is one of the most important building blocks to a good education and she was robbed of a good education due to a poor performing teacher who wasn't identified until the following school year. Although I spoke with several people at the school, they were too overworked to pay attention to a child who was getting by and behaving well. In a school district of that size, only the squeaky wheels get oil, and that means a lot of kids' needs fall through the cracks. With our small school size and local control, we don't have students who fall through the cracks, every student's needs are met to the best ability of the school. Please don't take away our ability to address our student population by making a large bureaucratic system with centralized decision making far away from the population being impacted.

Furthermore, I worry greatly that regionalizing our schools would negatively impact property values, and we really can't afford that outcome. Coming from Georgia where cost of living is much more reasonable compared to Connecticut, it has been constant sticker shock since moving here. The taxes are really out of control, and now this legislature wants to increase the tax load in hundreds of different ways as well as adding tolls to our highways. **I moved to Ridgefield CT because I loved the school system**, and it has been very good to us so far. If our property values are negatively impacted by these proposals, and if taxes continue to increase at every turn, we will be looking to relocate to another state, not because we want to but because we will have no choice.

I think we have to ask ourselves, how does regionalization help the students? I haven't found the answer to that question, and I think we need that answer to even consider this further. Maybe property values aren't important to the legislators of this state, but the economy is, and people moving away and not considering moving here is a very negative development. So many students benefit from the local control of the schools, why should that be changed for no recognizable benefit. I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michelle Middleton  
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