

February 27, 2019

RE: Written Testimony AGAINST Proposed Bills 738 (fka 454), 457 and 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

Please accept this written testimony expressing my family's **opposition** to Proposed Bill No. 738 (fka 454), Proposed Bill No. 457 and Proposed Bill 874. Forcing Connecticut School Districts to regionalize is not an idea that can be supported in any form.

My family and I moved to Wilton, CT several years ago from a much larger Connecticut school district. Our child was just numbers in an oversized school system, anxious and not meeting his full potential. We specifically chose the Wilton Public Schools for its reputation as an exceptional school district. My child is now thriving! My child is greeted each day by an administration and staff who know my child by name. My children is taught by outstanding teachers who are invested in his growth because many of the teachers are also Wilton residents themselves.

Proposed Bill No. 738 (fka 454), Proposed Bill No. 457 and Proposed Bill 874 will adversely impact the quality of education provided in Wilton, provided to our children, it will take control of our children's education out of our town and irreversibly change the character of Wilton.

Before proceeding with such a drastic re-structuring of our public school system through regionalization, all legislators involved with these proposed bills need to thoroughly examine the numerous studies conducted by leading universities and think tanks regarding states that have adopted regionalized school districts and the adverse impacts to the educational system that resulted. Iowa, Michigan, Colorado, Maine and other states have all adopted regionalized educational systems with all having been studied in great detail.

Below are the studies referenced as conducted by leading thought leaders in public school regionalization at the University of Chicago, the Cato Institute for Educational Freedom, the Harvard Graduate School of Education as well as Syracuse University. All conclude creating large school districts do not achieve any cost savings touted by the legislators that initiated and supported the regionalization of the state public school systems but do note the deterioration in the quality of education provided to the children, the creation of negative impacts such as higher transportation costs, a "leveling up" of salaries for teachers and administrators, and more negative attitudes among staff members and parents after regionalization was implemented.

With that said, please reference the following research:

1. Andrew Coulson of Cato's Center for Educational Freedom: Research on Michigan school consolidation: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED520065>
2. Christopher Berry of the University of Chicago and Martin West of the Harvard Graduate School of Education: Joint research on all US state consolidations from 1930 through 1970: <https://academic.oup.com/jleo/article-abstract/26/1/1/913468?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

3. John Yinger of Syracuse University: Research on public school regionalization: <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=13218>

4. A Report on Colorado School District Organization: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeedsserv/sdorganizationreport>

5. Orlando J. Rodriguez of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving: [http://www.hfpg.org/files/7915/3013/0299/Regionlization\\_Report\\_Draft\\_as\\_of\\_6-27-2018.pdf?fbclid=IwAR27XvqWyVCtleqodMiRmpSKo\\_5v6vzgXzw4pQ7hD7KpfHRi4uryww05AiY](http://www.hfpg.org/files/7915/3013/0299/Regionlization_Report_Draft_as_of_6-27-2018.pdf?fbclid=IwAR27XvqWyVCtleqodMiRmpSKo_5v6vzgXzw4pQ7hD7KpfHRi4uryww05AiY)

There is too much empirical evidence that shows regionalization concepts do not yield any “economies of scale”, cost savings or positive results for our children who are the most impacted by regionalization. Based on the above research alone, legislators in Hartford should abandon all efforts to proceed with forced regionalization which will have such a dramatic impact on children, families and communities that the majority of our state legislators have no connection to in any form.

The superintendent of our school district, our administrators and our teachers know my child and what is best for my child. Collectively we work together to create budgets that support numerous programs to foster a robust educational system that best serves our children’s educational needs. Additionally, we as a community fund over 99.5% of our educational budget based on what is best for our children with little support from the state. We know what is best for our children! The state should not intercede in the educational affairs of self-supporting communities like Wilton.

Lastly, legislators in Hartford do not know our community, our processes, costs savings we have already achieved through shared services and shared negotiations with other school districts and most importantly, legislators in Hartford do not know my child or what is best for my child.

We strongly urge you to oppose SB 738 (fka 454), SB 457 and SB 874, or any other bill to explore and/or force regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.

Regards,

Christopher Millin  
Wilton, CT