

To Whom It May Concern,

This testimony is in regards to Senate Bill 457. My name is Jacob Olsen. I am a senior at Lyme-Old Lyme High School of Region 18. Earlier this afternoon, I learned of Senate Bill 457 (An Act Concerning the Size of School Districts). Although I am graduating at the end of this school year, I felt it was still important to have my voice heard, for the sake of the classes below me. I have spent the past thirteen years of my life in the Old Lyme school system and have thoroughly changed for the better because of that. Prior to moving to Old Lyme in 2005, I was a very introverted child and had very few friends. Upon arriving in Old Lyme, however, I felt an immediate change. The small community of the Old Lyme school system was much more welcoming than the school system I was in before. Due to the small size of this school system, I was able to make personal connections with not only my fellow students, but my teachers as well. As I continued with my education, I found myself to be more outgoing, found it easier to make friends, and began to ask teachers for help when I needed it. I feel that, had I not gone through the Old Lyme school system, I would not be the person I am today. If I had gone through a larger system, one like what the above bill proposes, I would not have become comfortable asking for help and meeting new people. I feel this sentiment holds true for many residents of Old Lyme, including my younger brothers, members of the class of 2023 and the class of 2026. I am, in part, writing this testimony on their behalf. If they were to be uprooted from Region 18 and sent in to a new school system, I do not think they would turn out similar to myself. I fear sending them to a larger district may take away from their education and make it more difficult for them to succeed or get help when they need it. Both my siblings and I have not always had the easiest time in school, each of us struggling a bit in different subjects. However, because we were not part of an overcrowded district, our teachers were always ready, willing,

and able to help us succeed. It is because of that help that we are able to be the students we are. Therefore, I wish it to be known that I, along with many other residents of smaller districts like Region 18 disagree with Senate Bill 457 and hope that our legislators will take in to account our thoughts. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jacob T. Olsen

Lyme-Old Lyme High School Class of 2019