



Ridgefield Board of Education

February 2019

Written Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Legislation SB 457

The Ridgefield Board of Education reviewed the recently proposed legislation. Because SB 738, 457, and HB 6828 directly impacts our community and our schools, we believe it is important you consider our voice in your deliberations.

The Ridgefield BOE is a dedicated governing body of nine elected citizens committed to allocating the resources necessary to meet the needs of our nearly 5,000 students. We are united in opposition to these proposals that reduce local accountability, reduce the efficacy of local school organization, and threaten the local accountability for each town. Our students and their education are at the forefront of our decision-making. We use our local resources to meet our vision of a Ridgefield graduate and do not seek to impose our vision on other communities, nor do we wish to have theirs forced upon us.

The proposed legislation attempts to thwart local control under the guise of fiscal responsibility. The current proposals devalue the legislative framework of boards of education. Each proposal creates legal uncertainty because they would apply regardless of any conflicting special act, municipal charter or home rule ordinance. This severely limits the power and authority of boards of education to control their budgets and to make decisions based on the educational priorities of their districts.

We support opportunities to achieve some of the objectives of the legislation. We do want regulations to be supportive of efforts of boards of education to voluntarily work together to deliver some specialist educational services, and achieve economies of scale. Where possible the Ridgefield BOE will continue to work with other towns to reduce the costs to taxpayers for the services that are required by our students. It would be beneficial to students if the legal constraints and obstacles that have arisen from prior legislation were reduced to allow mutual benefit via cooperation.

We urge you to reject these bills as they will have an adverse impact on the State's public education system.

Thank you

Ridgefield Board of Education

Margaret Stamatis, Chair

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