

Melissa-Jean Rotini, Esq., Chair
Max Fanwick, Vice Chair
Jennie Wong, Treasurer
Brad Unger, Secretary



Wilton Town Hall
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897
EDC@wiltonct.org

Wilton Economic Development Commission
wiltonEDC.org

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Gov. Ned Lamont- *Through Website*

Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz- *LtGovernor.Bysiewicz@ct.gov*

Speaker Joe Aresimowicz- *Joe.Aresimowicz@cga.ct.gov*

Pres. *Pro Tempore* Martin Looney- *Looney@senatedems.ct.gov*

Chair Douglas McCrory- *Douglas.McCrory@cga.ct.gov*

Chair Robert Sanchez- *Robert.Sanchez@cga.ct.gov*

Rep. Gail Lavielle- *Gail.Lavielle@cga.ct.gov*

Education Committee- *EDTestimony@cga.ct.gov*

Re: Education/School Regionalization Proposals
File To: SB454; SB457; SB738; SB874; and HB7150

Dear Elected Officials:

The Town of Wilton Economic Development Commission (“EDC”) submits this letter in strong opposition to the above-referenced Bills.

Wilton EDC conducted a survey in 2016 that included questions with respect to why residents moved to town and why they leave.¹ The number one response on both questions was schools. People moved to town for our excellent school system, and people left when their children graduated.

¹ Data was based on real estate transactions between April 1, 2015, and March 31, 2016. Available online at: http://wiltonedc.org/WP2/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/finalEDCforum_102016version.pdf, last accessed February 27, 2018.

Businesses looking to open or relocate search for communities in which their employees are comfortable residing. Interviews conducted for an EDC video reflect this important consideration.² Large and medium sized companies seeking to attract qualified talent both internationally and from large cities throughout the United States, know the quality of the local education system is paramount. Furthermore, the ability of highly educated employees to be involved in the educational decision-making process on a local level is a key benefit. Bills such as the ones identified above intended to force school consolidation, regionalization, or a study regarding these issues would only result in additional difficulty for small and medium sized towns trying to attract residents and businesses.

The proposal regarding pension cost redistribution to the local municipalities would also negatively impact the economy in Wilton and other towns. Such a redistribution of debt is an additional tax burden on businesses and their employees, driving more business out of small and medium sized towns, and out of Connecticut as a whole.

While there is no evidence that consolidation creates any cost savings, the negative impact to the ability of small and medium sized towns to attract business and residents is self-evident. Many small and medium sized towns need to differentiate themselves from their neighbors in order to attract residents and businesses. Removing the ability of towns to differentiate themselves through school management would destroy this important economic driver.

We hope that you consider the negative economic impact that would be incurred by small and medium sized towns, and **vote no on each of the above-referenced Bills.**

Sincerely,

Melissa-Jean Rotini

Melissa-Jean Rotini, Esq., Chair

Wilton Economic Development Commission

² EDC Video, available at: <https://vimeo.com/216907505/462fe875f2>, last accessed February 27, 2019.