

Re: Senate Bill 457 and Senate Bill 738

The forced regionalization of school districts in CT, a wildly unpopular and unrealistic idea, would negatively impact one of the few strong sectors left in CT: education. Those of us who choose to live and teach in small towns do so because we feel that those educational systems are the best fit for us and our families. The priorities and wants of small town constituents would be swallowed by disproportionate representation on Boards of Education, and there has been no clear evidence that forced regionalization would be a cost-saving measure. Prior to the introduction of Sen. Looney's and the governor's bills, the superintendents of Monroe, Easton-Redding, and Newtown had already been meeting and discussing ways that local districts can work together to share costs. These grassroots movements should be celebrated, but a force of political will is not in the best interest of teachers, students, or communities in general.

Another, somewhat related issue, is the idea that small towns should cover a greater share of teachers' pensions. The state has failed its obligation to the teaching profession, as they have dipped into our coffer at various points and never funded them as they are required. Teachers in CT are not eligible for social security, and for the state to shirk its responsibility to education professionals is unacceptable.

Passage of either of these bills will kill education in CT, and with it any hope of the state making an economic comeback.

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