

February 20, 2019

RE: S.B. No. 738 and S.B. No. 457

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislative Committee,

My name is Lisa Sallese and I am a mother to 3 children in the Wilton School System. I am testifying today in **opposition** to proposed **S.B. No. 738** - an act concerning the creation of regional school districts **AND** proposed **S.B. No. 457** – an act concerning the size of school districts.

I am testifying today because the passing of these two bills goes against everything we hold dear in America. We are a country of choice. Forcing consolidation of school systems and taking away our towns' local control, is collectivism at its best. Freedom to choose where we want to live, the houses we'd like to live in and the schools we'd like our children to attend are the benefits of living in our great country.

The impact on our family alone would be significant. We are not a wealthy family. We often joke that we bring down the curve in our community. We chose a small, modest home, so that we could raise our children in a close-knit town with excellent schools. We have two typical children and one with special needs. We have endured exorbitant medical costs that have left us wondering at times how we would be able to stay in Wilton. However, the benefits to our children in the Wilton School System, has only strengthened our resolve to conserve, work harder and pray that we may persevere.

We love our town, we love our schools. The Wilton School System is special. We are all so proud of our town and we know how fortunate we are to be here. Our teachers and administrators work so hard to provide an outstanding learning environment for our children. Our kids are thriving in Wilton and their success matters to us. Not just academically, but socially as well. They have built, and are continuing to build, long-lasting friendships, and families have built a life here - together. Changing our schools, is changing how we do everything in our town. We are a warmhearted community and our Wilton schools are the touchstone.

I ask that you seriously reconsider forced consolidation of schools in Connecticut. Like Wilton, there are many towns across our great state that are providing quality local education. Our sought-after towns are what make Connecticut so desirable to prospective out of state buyers. Dismantling these great school systems will have irreparable damage to our children's quality education, families' hard-earned home equity and ultimately our state's prosperity.

Thank you,
Lisa Sallese
Wilton, Connecticut 06897