

2/20/2019

Hema Shivram
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Subject:

- *Senator Martin Looney's Senate Bill 738: the proposal of school regionalization for schools in small communities*
- *SB 457*
- *the Governors' bill (SB 874)*

Dear Senators/ Sir/ Madam,

I earnestly request you to kindly consider NOT forcing school regionalization: *there could be nothing more important than making sure we provide students with a high-quality education that prepares them to succeed.*

I would like to point out that many of the residents in Wilton are recent migrants from Norwalk, Stamford and other neighboring towns whose school systems leave a lot to be desired. I , myself moved into Wilton eight years ago, to successfully raise my son, who today is a Computer Engineering Freshman at UMD, College Park, MD. My daughter is currently in the 5th grade of Wilton Public Schools, CT.

As responsible parents, desirous of our children's' success, each and every one of us have made multiple changes in our lives, for opting to invest in these small communities with great schools. Almost every state and local budget cut, finally hits the very same homeowners, who opted to move to Wilton. Regionalization is just a way for the suburbs to subsidize the cities once again. The suburbs will end up paying more for less and the money will get burned in the cities where funding isn't the problem. To take away from a successful, blue ribbon school district , the proven resources that they absolutely require, and to degrade what is good, is not just insensitive, it is blatant injustice.

Different communities have different populations, different needs and curriculum standards, and most important, research shows that smaller schools and classrooms provide for better outcomes, especially as our special education student population increases and classroom demands grow. The state should focus on improving the classroom experience of every student, not altering efficient and effective districts like ours.

Tampering with the integrity of the school system and forcing schools to consolidate, at this time when residents are leaving, could erode our state's best remaining asset - Our Schools. Any regionalization of schools, would hit me personally and probably force me to move out of Wilton and probably out of this state as well, to a state offering me good schools and better fiscal policies.

Of significant concern as well is the Governor's proposal to require municipalities to fund a portion of teacher pension costs. I am vehemently opposed to this concept because, at its heart, it is a dereliction of state responsibility. For decades our state leaders failed to adequately fund the plan they created. Local municipalities had no influence over the design or the decision to fund (or not fund) the plan. Despite the fact that this crisis has been growing for years, our leaders in Hartford have turned a blind eye. Now, standing at a fiscal cliff, the solution appears to be to shift the burden to local municipalities including Wilton, that have responsibly managed their finances.

I request you, as a law abiding citizen of Wilton, who moved into town 8 years ago, for the school system and the wonderful resources for the younger generation, to not vote for the bill that could result in potential degradation of education quality.

Respectfully,

Hema Shivram

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