

Testimony submitted to the Education Committee
February 26, 2019

Written testimony In Opposition to Proposed Bill SB 457

To members of the Education Committee:

As a resident of Ridgefield, CT, I oppose the proposed bill SB 457 and the forced undermining of local control of education.

The word “require” in the Statement of Purpose is the main point of my opposition. My secondary question is, “why?”

I can assume that the proposed bill is under the guise of fiscal responsibility, yet that comes at the cost of local control. The bill does not mention anything about the fiscal status of the school district, or how efficiently it is being run, or with regard to how much funding it receives from the State. As a local BOE member, it also bothers me that the forced regionalization has no consideration for the quality of the education being delivered, but is rather based upon an arbitrary student population number.

The current proposal devalues the legislative framework of board of education. It severely limits the power and authority of boards of education to control their budgets and make decisions based on the educational priorities of their district. In this bill, I don't see any reference to the quality of education delivered.

In my district, which would not be affected by this bill as written, our school administration, our staff, and our resources are aligned to work in furtherance of the mission and vision of our local district. This mission and vision, and the strategic plan behind it, were the result of over a year of collaboration between our district staff, students, parents and community members to design a vision that reflects the aspirations and values of our local community.

I support regulations that support local board of educations to work together voluntarily to deliver some specialist educational services, an achieve economies of scale. Rather than force regionalization, it would be beneficial to students if the legal constraints an obstacles that have arisen from prior legislation were reduced to allow mutual benefit via voluntary cooperation.

Respectfully,

Margaret D. Stamatis
10 Hessian Drive, Ridgefield, CT