

**DAVID P. WALLACE
90 THUNDER LAKE ROAD
WILTON, CT 06897**

February 26, 2019

Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB 738, SB 457, SB 874

Dear Education Committee Members:

As a parent of three children who have successfully navigated the Wilton public schools (K through 12), I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

I moved to Connecticut in 1994 as I started my family for three reasons: (1) quality of education, (2) business opportunities, and (3) abundant natural beauty of the state. The pending bills that would force local school districts to merge their administrative functions threaten the first two of the three reasons I moved here. Thankfully, the bills should not affect Connecticut's natural beauty.

Nowhere in the introduction of these bills have I heard anything about improving the quality of education for all students. Instead I hear about cost savings and reduced overhead. I hear about pushing the burden of teacher pensions down onto the municipalities. I hear about sharing resources. Nothing is said about smaller class sizes, or improved curricula, or better teacher training.

I fear that school regionalization will put our schools on a path of slow, steady decline. At first, regionalization will reduce the administrative support across schools. Then, resources from previously strong schools will be applied to weaker schools. Next, student learning and performance will move toward the middle – below par students will become closer to average, strong students will also move closer to average and the average students will continue at a mediocre level, except that the average across the board will be lower than it had been in the past.

With public school performance declining, parents who can afford to do so will enroll their children in private schools. Thus, the gap between the quality of public and private school educations widens and the chasm between the “haves” and “have nots” in the state also grows.

This brings me to my second reason for moving to Connecticut, business opportunity. In 1994, the state was still reasonably strong economically. However, since I've been here, state policies have served to make Connecticut less friendly to business. Despite high taxes and a declining infrastructure, though, businesses could still make the case for Connecticut because of its well-educated workforce and quality schools for its children.

However, as stated above, I see school regionalization leading to an overall lowering of education quality in the state. Without a well-educated workforce and ability to education our children at a high standard, Connecticut businesses lose a key reason for staying in the state (much less moving to

Connecticut from other parts of the country). The result is an even more difficult business climate and a continued move down the economic ladder.

For these reasons, decline in education quality and making the Connecticut economy less attractive to business, I urge you to oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other legislation that promotes or opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Wallace", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David P. Wallace
Wilton, Connecticut

cc: Senator Martin Looney
Senator Bob Duff
Senator Will Haskell
Representative Gail Lavielle
Representative Tom O'Dea
Representative Robert Sanchez
Senator Douglas McCrory
Representative Kathleen McCarty
Senator Eric Berthel