

I am a parent of 3 children who attend or graduated from Darien Public Schools and am writing to voice my opposition to the following bills: SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874. These bills will eviscerate the quality of public education in Connecticut, severely damage the attractiveness of Connecticut as a community for young families to choose as a home to raise their children, and destroy any ability for a school administration to react to the emergency needs of members of the community.

My wife and I were raised in southern Westchester County in New York. In 1996 when we bought our first home, we chose Connecticut over New York due almost exclusively to the lower tax environment that Connecticut offered at the time.

In doing so, we chose to have a longer and more expensive commute to our jobs in New York City, and to move to a community where we had few roots. When it came time to choose a town to educate our children we moved to Darien for the quality of the schools. We could have had a more comfortable life in a more affordable community, but chose to make personal sacrifices in order to live in a town with a high quality school system.

Our three children have flourished in the CT public schools and have given back to the community. One tutored homeless children, another teaches English in the Spanish community and a third has works with special needs children as well as coaches soccer to inner city youth. Recently my daughter told me how she helped a Spanish speaking gentleman in Stamford fill out an application for a job at one of the local supermarkets. She told me the application was quite long and complex, and she was so happy that she could help. Sadly, if these bills pass there will not be a next generation to take her place, and the statewide community will suffer.

Three years ago, I was widowed and now must raise my children as a single father. The ability of the administration to focus on our specific family needs has been essential to my family's transition to our new reality. It is inconceivable that an administration burdened with the needs of a far larger "region" would have been able to react with such skill and dexterity. I worry for the next parent to endure a similar tragedy who will not be able to rely on an administration that has the time and resources to react to such a personal situation.

The excellent school system is the only draw to Connecticut for young families seeking the best environment to raise their children. Not only will the next generation stay out of Connecticut, many will leave this State. In fact, the exodus has already begun. A recent study by United Van Lines in January 2019 shows that 62% of Connecticut moves are out of state, which ranked CT third on the list of states with the greatest resident outflow. These bills would likely make us #1. I ask that you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other legislation that puts Connecticut on the path to forced regionalization of our public schools.

Thank You

Lawrence Warble
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