

Written Testimony regarding Senate Bills SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

We currently have two children in elementary school and middle school respectively. Our children attend school in Burlington, CT in Regional School District 10. Our school system already functions as a regional district due to the town sizes of Burlington and Harwinton. The proposed bills, especially SB 738 and SB 874, would dramatically impact the education that our children are receiving. Forced regionalization under the Governor's bill, SB 874, is an extremely problematic proposal. The committee proposed in the bill would only include one parent of a public school child. The bulk of the committee would be legislators or politicians who do not directly represent the interests of parents with school age children. This is unacceptable considering the regionalization initiatives that the committee will be asked to undertake.

Furthermore, SB 738 and the Governor's bill have vastly different thresholds for creating regionalization. How have these thresholds been determined? Where is the research indicating costs savings using either threshold?

My husband and I are both products of the Connecticut public education system. We have successful careers thanks in part to our public-school educations. With these proposed bills, we are concerned that our children will not have the same opportunities or outcomes that we had. Education and the highly skilled workforce that is available in Connecticut is one of the reasons that companies continue to expand or grow here. If we move forward with these proposals and force regionalization on our towns, we may not have the same human capital to draw employers in the near future.

Thank you again for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Melanie Wilhelm
Burlington, CT