

Date: February 24, 2019
Subject: Senate Bill 454/738 and SB 874

Hands of our schools!

I am a resident of Wilton, and my son currently attending a Wilton school. **I am strongly against the Senate Bill 454/738 and SB 874 with regard to school regionalization.** My objection to these proposals is based on the following considerations:

1. The objective of these proposals are to cut costs, but it's not clear to me and the general public as to how exactly the proposed school regionalization will ultimately cut costs. These proposals will have wild and deep effect affect to thousands of residents and children, but they do not appear to be rooted on careful and thorough research to demonstrate that they will achieve the intended objective.
2. The cost cutting initiative is to improve our state's general financial situation. I don't believe school related costs are the main reason that caused our state to fall into the financial crisis. This school regionalization will have unintended negative consequences since the proposals are not carefully thought out.
3. Wilton and Norwalk are not equal towns in many aspects. The forced consolidation of these two school districts will degrade the quality of education and major concerns about property values in Wilton. How is this appropriate to Wilton residents and children?
4. Part of the Governor's proposal requires municipalities to fund a portion of teacher pension costs. These plans are created by the State leaders and are the State's responsibility. For many years, the State leaders have failed to fund these plans. Now the state leaders want to push this responsibility down to each municipality by way of school regionalization. This is not a decent way to resolve the issue. We, Wilton residents and others, should not be the scape of goats of the State leaders' irresponsibility and failure.
5. The Governor's plan also calls for a surcharge for towns like Wilton that pay teacher salaries that exceed the state median, which is affected by many factors that's outside of Wilton's control. Why Wilton has to bear the costs when we don't have much control in determining the costs?
6. SB 431 proposes to divert motor vehicle tax revenues from municipalities to the state government. While this move can help state government, this can only resolve the financial crisis in the short run at the expense of Wilton and other towns because this move will not fix the root cause of our state's financial crisis.

I am strongly against these proposals because these proposals, if enacted, will add millions of dollars additional obligations for Wilton residents that will result in increased property taxes for a diminished education quality.

Sincerely,

Wilton resident Yingzhen Wu at 31 Glen Ridge