

***My Opposition to SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874***

February 27, 2019

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.

To begin, I am a life-long Democrat - this is a bipartisan issue. As a grandparent of children currently attending public school in Wilton and parent of four children raised in Wilton, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

We moved to Wilton in 1986. A close friend and former colleague of mine with whom I had previously taught public school in New York suggested we consider making Wilton our home after my husband's job was transferred back to the northeast after a stint in Texas. My friend was, at that time, a principal in a neighboring Fairfield County district. He extolled the merits of the Wilton school system, its fine teachers and administrators and a community that was family centered. He knew we would appreciate all that the Wilton schools had to offer our children. Thirty-three years later I can state that I have never been disappointed with our decision. I have enjoyed my involvement in the Town of Wilton serving at various times as a volunteer in the schools, the Senior Center, the education programs offered by the Historical Society and as a Commissioner on the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission. This is a town of civic minded and actively involved people who have worked hard and paid their taxes to provide excellent schools. We moved here for the schools, and existing school quality is what keeps us here. We have understood that our increases in taxes over the years were necessary to the continuation of excellent schools. Though our youngest of our four children graduated more than ten years ago we stayed in town gladly paying taxes to support the next generation of families who have moved to here for the same reasons. To our delight our daughter and her family moved to Wilton this past summer and our grandsons have started kindergarten in the school she once attended. We, as a family, are shocked and dismayed at the threat of school regionalization as it impacts negatively on both our children's decision to move here and our decision to stay. It would potentially erode the quality and the character of our local schools, which would erode the quality of a town I dearly love.

With respect to all the children in Connecticut schools and as a former teacher, none of these bills include even one mention of school or educational quality. It may be that regionalization is helpful in other rural parts of the state but not here! Leave this part of the state alone. Fairfield County generates the highest state income taxes paid in Connecticut. Why target us? There is evidence that this is preventing people from coming to our state and is also driving people to leave. Think about it - this cannot be good!

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Respectfully a Concerned Grand Parent, Former Teacher and Wilton Resident,

Marian Wulffleff  
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