



Testimony of Jan Hochadel
President, AFT CT

**SB 738: AN ACT CONCERNING THE
CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Education Committee
March 1, 2019

Good morning Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. I am Jan Hochadel, and as the President of AFT CT I represent over 15,000 teachers and other school related personnel, including paraprofessionals. It is on their behalf that I testify on behalf of SB Bill 738: *An Act Concerning the Creation of Regional School Districts*.

SB 738 is an appropriate first step in acknowledging that 151 school systems in a state the size of Connecticut is not a fiscally sustainable model. We have opportunities to share services and facilities that would save money and increase efficiency, yet we accept redundancies between towns as inevitable. We cannot afford to continue in this direction.

I especially want to thank Senator Looney, who introduced the bill, for putting processes in the bill to address the issues of collective bargaining. We often hear that regionalization of services is impossible because the unions will oppose any attempts that affect bargaining units. I can only speak for AFT CT, but we are willing to work with other affected bargaining units to find common-sense solutions that will work for both the members and the region. Obviously, the details will matter, but the process Senator Looney has put in his bill are a reasonable attempt to address the issue of representation. We are certainly willing to work with other unions within this framework.

The challenges we face as a state require bold solutions. A state educational system that requires every district no matter how small to purchase its own software, textbooks, and other supplies; hire their own superintendents and athletic directors; and build and maintain their own facilities is doomed to collapse under the weight of its own redundancies. The money spent duplicating services could better be invested in providing students the materials they need and investing in the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce. I recognize that this change in approach to how we provide education may result in consequences that need to be addressed, including consequences that affect bargaining units. AFT CT is committed to working with this body to find solutions that benefit Connecticut's students, workers, and taxpayers. It is in that spirit that I support the passage of SB 738.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

