

Testimony of Jason Adler
President, AFT Local 2038

Raised Bill 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. My name is Jason Adler. I am president of the Waterford Federation of Certified Teachers, Local 2038. I am also the father of two boys in the public education system in Clinton. It is on their behalf that I testify on behalf of Proposed Bill 738: An Act Concerning the Creation of Regional School Districts.

I am here to offer my qualified support for Proposed Bill 738. As our state and towns continue to struggle with their budgets, it is imperative to find efficiencies within our current system. Incentivizing smaller towns to join together and share resources is a smart idea. Regionalizing areas like central office administration, bus contracts and health care insurance can save money while minimizing impact on student learning.

Forced regionalization, however, is not the way to go. Such a move will simply sow discontent between impacted smaller towns and Hartford. A hybrid solution, that allows towns the choice to maintain local control of their school systems' curriculum and staffing, while ceding administrative roles (etc.) to a regional cooperative, is a more reasonable pathway forward.

There are many areas the state can assist with cost-savings associated with such a change. Improving the teacher evaluation system to require less of proven teachers will free up administrators to handle other tasks. This will lead to efficiency in their job roles that would require fewer administrators to be hired in each district. Changing special education law to better reflect federal and regional practices would decrease special education costs. We also must find a way of moving away from funding education primarily through property taxes. Perhaps a voluntary regionalization could lead to a major funding source outside of this? We must be creative and use our current crisis to cut costs while still maintaining our high level of education in this state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.