

February 26, 2019

Re: SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

To Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty and esteemed members of the Education Committee:

I submit to you, my written testimony, expressing my staunch opposition to SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874 which propose forced school district consolidation.

Unlike many of my Wilton neighbors, I am a Democrat. I'm also a minority woman, who is a full time working professional. My husband and I moved back to Connecticut after living near Washington DC, because we missed many aspects of the "true" northeast. We ultimately decided to purchase a home in Wilton solely because of the strength of the school district. I can not emphasize this enough. We bought a home in Wilton **because of the school district**. We wanted a small school, where the community is very involved in the way the school is run.

Similar to my neighbors, however, **I strongly oppose SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874**. The idea of regionalization seems prosperous to me, as it dilutes the community influence on the school. If we wanted to be part of a large district, we would have moved to Greenwich, Ridgefield, Stamford or Norwalk. But we choose Wilton for a reason.

Both the Wilton Board of Ed and Norwalk Board of Ed oppose the idea of consolidation, as there is literature that demonstrates consolidation does not lead to efficiencies and cost reduction. West Virginia is a commonly referenced failure for consolidation.

The point of democracy is that local people influence government. It is not that central government makes blanket decisions for an entire region without considering what its constituents really want.

In short, if this or similar legislature passes, which forces Wilton to consolidate with Norwalk, I will regretfully no longer support the Democratic party. I have a strong history of supporting Democrats but you will no longer be able to count on my support. While some Democrats ideals will always hold true for me, the passing of this legislature is a misstep that I can not forgive.

Thank you for you time,  
Tiffany Balicki  
Wilton, CT