

**GARY BIRKMAIER**

9 Fern Lane | Newtown, CT 06470

25 February, 2019

**SUBJECT: Proposed Bills HB7150, SB874, SB457 and SB738 – My Opposition**

I would like to voice my opposition to these proposed bills.

I am a resident of Newtown and I have a son with special needs. Because of the excellent programs in Newtown my son gets the extra care he needs. As a result instead of being shunted aside he is a happy school child with many friends and he is keeping up with the rest of his grade without specially adjusted grading – he is graded the same as the other students.

I feel that if Newtown were forced to be regionalized and the spending cap to go into place he would lose that special care. Currently he has a 1-1 aide at all times, gets special counseling from various therapists, gets extra breakout sessions and much more. These are all essential to his well-being and success.

In addition, a longer bus ride would be extremely detrimental to him – he already has a 45 minute ride and that's just up the street. In a geographically larger area he would likely have an even longer ride. He also has bus aides that help him and interact with him.

Newtown has a student population of over 4,000 so SB457 would not apply. However I disagree with it in principle.

Newtown has many fine school programs overall that make it one of the best in the state. I don't want to see those disappear in the name of "efficiency".

Why can't the parents and residents of the various districts decide this for themselves? Why should we have to sacrifice in the name of efficiency at the hands of others who may not know all of the details? Honestly I think I and the local professionals know much more about what is best for my child. The proof is his track record. **Were Newtown to become regionalized and the spending cap on special education to pass I would likely be forced to move out of the state to get him the care that he needs and is making him successful.**

Sincerely,

**Gary Birkmaier**  
**Concerned Connecticut Citizen and Parent**