

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 738, the bill which would require the regionalization of Connecticut's schools. As a native of Connecticut I have experienced and benefited from some of the very strong, locally controlled school systems in our state. I was raised in a household where my parents headed various PTA's for over 20 years as my four siblings and I moved through the school system. My father served as head of the education committee for the Representative Town Committee. Our local schools were priority #1. My wife and I chose to raise our family in this state largely because of the strength of the schools in Wilton. It was of utmost importance to us that we reside in a town with strong education system where we would know the teachers and administrators, and they know us. Education in a community school environment was paramount.

This was never more important than when our daughter became sick and placed on a 504 program, which she still uses. I told the administrators two years ago that she would never be the healthy person she is now were it not for the compassionate, selfless support of the teachers and administrators in her schools. I am confident that this would never have happened in a large, multi-town district with teachers and administrators far removed from the families they teach. I have not seen any studies that show students – especially those on 504 programs – perform better in larger systems; who knows what would have happened to my daughter in a regional system without such strong communal ties.

Lastly, a topic as consequential as this should be put to the public forum of the people of Connecticut - and not in the form of a one day open session. To raise it immediately after an election when the public is not afforded the opportunity to speak with their votes is disingenuous at best.

The local school systems have been fundamental to whatever success Connecticut has had as a state. They are part of the solution, not the cause of our problems. There are far better and less destructive options to consider which won't destroy the fabric of the communities that continue to hold this state together. People remain in Connecticut for many reasons, and I would argue that the largest is the quality of the local schools. Regionalization will provide yet another reason for folks to leave, and businesses to stay away.

Please oppose SB 738, the bill to regionalize Connecticut schools. It is the wrong bill and wrong idea for how to cure Connecticut's ills.

Thank you,

Stephen Chase

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