

Chairmen McCrory, Sanchez, Ranking Member Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for listening to our testimony.

We are writing to express our strong opposition to proposed bills PSB 738, PSB 457 and PSB 874, which would force regionalization of Connecticut's public schools.

While we understand that, on paper, forced regionalization may appear to provide a near-term benefit to some of the state's fiscal challenges, it does so at a significant longer-term cost. First of all, it will further weaken Connecticut's ability to compete for new residents. The "slippery slope" nature of this encroachment on what has, to date, been under local municipal control will naturally alarm prospective residents. Changing the well-established rules of the game by, for example, forcing teacher pensions onto local municipalities runs the significant risk of exacerbating population flight from the state. This will further degrade Connecticut's fiscal viability over the longer term.

Secondly, there has been very little research done to assess how this will impact the children whom these schools serve. At an absolute minimum, until the impact of forced regionalization on student outcomes has been properly researched and assessed, these bills must not move forward.

Thank you again for listening to our testimony.

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