

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

First and foremost, I would like to begin by thanking you for serving the citizens of Connecticut. In that service, you commit to upholding the rights, opportunities, and interests of your constituents. As one of them, and as a resident of this state, I urge you to vote against and dismiss SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

At this point in time, CT is not poised to attract new residents or retain the ones it currently serves. We have three main powers of attraction: juxtaposition to New York and Boston, quaint scenic beauty, and education. The strength of the latter relies on the rights of every town, regardless of size or economics, to make educational decisions for themselves. Protecting this right is protecting a basic and essential freedom of every CT citizen. SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874, in any form, challenges this freedom. Making my point perfectly clear, forced or incentivized school regionalization confronts our elemental rights and ignores the needs, strengths, and independence of communities and their children.

Connecticut has become a state where residents have to continually fight to retain rights they once enjoyed. We travel up to Hartford, express our concerns, and often return home feeling unheard, unserved, and undermined. How would a current advertisement for this state be worded: Come live in a polluted, over-taxed state with beautiful vistas, poor railroads, and oppressed citizens? Stop bullying the citizens of Connecticut each legislative session and begin to support us. Stop introducing bills disguised as unifying but are actually segregating and destructive. "A Cost-Benefit Analysis of School Regionalization in Massachusetts" saw no significant benefits, economically or educationally. It might be useful to examine <http://www.ruraledu.org/articles.php?id=2034> which also concluded that school regionalization had deficits rather than benefits. In education, it is well-documented that smaller is better.

Finally, I realize the sacrifices you have made in time and family to represent all of us. We have made sacrifices also to live in the communities we chose and to ensure our children can enjoy a quality, locally controlled education. Please honor this by giving SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 a non-support.

Sincerely,
Sally Francia
Wilton, CT

SB 738 SB 457 SB 874