

I, Kara Giacobbe of 10 Solar Ridge Road, Trumbull, CT hereby oppose SB 738 regarding regionalization of school districts.

I am a public school teacher in Fairfield. I live in Trumbull and have a first grader and sixth grader enrolled in Trumbull Public Schools. I previously taught at Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet School in Bridgeport which is comprised of children from Bridgeport, Stratford, Trumbull, Fairfield, and Monroe.

My husband and I built our home in Trumbull in 2006 when I was pregnant with our eldest daughter. The reason we chose Trumbull was for the benefit of the school system.

Our girls are thriving in our community, neighborhood schools. They have classmates in our neighborhood or classmates that are just short bike or drive away. When our middle schooler needs help on a project or is working on a group project, we can get her classmates together easily. If regionalization was in place, that benefit would be lost.

Trumbull is different than Fairfield. Greenwich is different than Monroe. Newtown is different than Easton. Each town currently maintains their own autonomy and that is beneficial and enriches our state as a whole. Each town has their own unique experiences in school and a shared cultural community. It would be sad to take that away and leave a standard experience for all.

As a professional educator, I have experience teaching in a school that was comprised of five feeding districts. One reason why I left that school and wanted a neighborhood school was the community experience ended when the bell rang at the end of the day. Those kids weren't on the same soccer teams. They didn't take dance lessons at the same school. They weren't meeting at the end of the street to ride bikes. And they weren't meeting at the town beach or the town pool to play over the summer. It was hard for those kids to build and maintain relationships with other children in their class. Socialization is paramount to a healthy mental state.

Additionally, there is a lack of evidence that this kind of regionalization or "consolidation" leads to cost savings or efficiencies. In fact, some information suggests consolidation models can more often create negative results including higher transportation costs. My middle school daughter has a 30 minute bus ride daily, each way. I would imagine that would increase significantly with the addition of more children and the addition of more schools that aren't in our town. Regionalization is not the answer. . I end with an excerpt from NEPC (National Education Policy Center) where researchers at Ohio State University caution policymakers in their attempts to consolidate districts. They are encouraged to look deeper before making decisions for regionalization and I encourage you to do the same.

**• *Closely question claims about presumed benefits of consolidation in their state.***  
*What reason is there to expect substantial improvements, given that current research suggests that savings for taxpayers, fiscal efficiencies, and curricular improvements are unlikely?*

- **Avoid statewide mandates for consolidation and steer clear of minimum sizes for schools and districts.** *These always prove arbitrary and often prove unworkable.*
- **Consider other measures to improve fiscal efficiency or educational services.** *Examples include cooperative purchasing agreements among districts, combined financial services, enhanced roles for Educational Service Agencies, state regulations that take account of the needs of small districts and schools, recruitment and retention of experienced teachers for low-wealth districts, distance learning options for advanced subjects in small rural schools, smaller class sizes for young students, and effective professional development programs.*

(NEPC, 2011)

Very truly yours,

Kara Giacobbe