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To: edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874

To Whom it May Concern:

As a parent of public school students, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

My husband and I specifically chose to move to Wilton for the schools and the size of the town. I moved often as a child and I wanted to live in a small town where no matter where we lived in the town our children would always go to the same school. I love the fact that I know the principal of each of our schools. I love the fact that I know and see our board members around town. I love the community involvement. I moved here so that my children would go to school with the same group of kids from kindergarten to seniors in high school so that they could make lifelong friends and so that I could be friends with the parents of their friends.

Both of my children have IEPs; each for very different reasons. I spend a lot of time in meetings with school staff and the fact that the system is small has helped because I have been able to build a relationship with staff members.

Educational efficiency was quoted as one of the reasons for regionalization. Based on my research, there is no evidence to prove that regionalization to reduce costs or make things more efficient. As a matter of fact most research says that costs go up.

If a goal is improved quality, there is no research to support making schools bigger in order to improve quality. However, there is a lot of research that points to smaller schools and smaller class sizes to improve quality.

There is evidence that people are leaving CT or not moving here at all. If we create regionalized schools across the state, we certainly are not creating a situation for people to move here or to stay here. I am in the process of trying to sell my house to move to a smaller house in our same town. The housing market is abysmal and most people hate change. A big change like this will have a huge impact on families who might choose to move to CT and then not. This leads to an even smaller tax base from which to draw for all of CT.

Any forced regionalization will take away the reasons that I moved to my small town. I implore you to oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Thank you,

Katie Hall

Wilton, CT