



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN HARDING, JR.
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EDUCATION COMMITTEE March 3, 2017

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SENATE BILL S.B. 457, S.B. 738, S.B. 874.

Co-Chairs McCrory and Sanchez; Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty; and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in Opposition to SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874. These bills would force school district whose populations are under a certain number to regionalize. I have heard from many of my constituents and others from across the state who is opposed to these concepts for various reasons.

I attended Brookfield Public Schools, and I still go to various events and sporting games at the school. I am strongly opposed to forced regionalization of any public school. In my belief, mandating towns to do anything is in violation of the town's autonomy, their freedom to make choices where they see fit for different situations. Something as particularly important as local education should be left up to the local officials. Period. They are the ones who know best how to handle their education systems. Regionalization is just another mandate that we don't need.

Additionally, I want to make it abundantly clear that I am also against mandated regionalization guised as "incentivizing." I strongly oppose any effort to strip funding based on not regionalizing. This is of particular concern to my constituents, when the town of Brookfield, which I represent, is undergoing the process of constructing a critically necessary elementary school. This project is not possible without the requisite State funding.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony. I urge the committee to vote no on SB 457, SB 738, and SB 874.

Sincerely,

Stephen Harding Jr.
State Representative
107th District