

February 27, 2019

Re: School Regionalization - SB 457, SB 738 & SB 874 – PLEASE VOTE NO.

Dear Chairman McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty and esteemed members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874. While I understand the dire fiscal challenges facing Connecticut and the need to make difficult choices to meet those challenges, I am strongly opposed to bills that force or incentivize school districts to regionalize. Bills directed towards education should focus on improving the quality of education. Regionalization does not do this. Not one of the three regionalization bills even mentions quality of education. In fact, regionalization will likely have the opposite effect on education. It will reduce the overall quality of our schools in several ways, including (1) potentially increasing class sizes and thereby increasing the student-teacher ratio which directly affects student achievement results, (2) placing heavier burdens on our administrators and (3) decreasing local community involvement in the education process.

So if the purpose of these bills is not to improve Connecticut schools, then what is the purpose? Cost savings? Research suggests that the cost saving results of regionalization are mixed at best. While there may be occasional efficiencies to be had in combining back office function or consolidating districts, the long term results have not led to substantial cost savings over time.

I urge you to please ask the obvious questions when considering these bills. Does regionalization make our schools better? Or, does regionalization have nothing to do with improving quality and everything to do with saving money?

Are we willing to save money in the short term, at the expense of our children and our budget in the long run?

Please consider alternative approaches to combating Connecticut's fiscal crisis; toll roads, tax incentives to encourage businesses, etc. Regionalizing our schools should not be part of the equation to solving our budget crisis. Rather than reducing our deficit, regionalization will reduce the quality of our schools and deter people from choosing to make Connecticut their home.

I implore you to stay vigilant in protecting our teachers, our schools and the education system that has attracted so many people to our state.

Please vote NO to SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

Thank you again for reading my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Janie Konidaris
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