

Testimony on SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874
February 27, 2019

To the members of the hearing committee:

My name is Annbeth Lattimer and my husband and I have been residents of Wilton, Connecticut since 1991. We left California in 1989 mostly because the state ruined their K-12 schools with Propostion 13. We tested out living in Delaware, Pennsylvania, had family in New Jersey and New York, but chose Connecticut. At the time, it seemed like the right place for us to plant our roots and start our family. We could have chosen anywhere, but this felt like home.

While we liked many parts of Connecticut, Wilton had the right feel for us. It is filled with people who value education, family, community, and who are not afraid to pitch in and help their neighbors and their town.

We bought just about the least expensive house on the market - a renovated pig barn. It is nothing fancy but we put in a lot of sweat equity to fix it up. We did whatever tasks our contractor gave us at the end of each day and on weekends. It was hard work, but we were young and optimistic about what this state had in store for us.

We had twins in 1993 and they are products of our community and school system. They both had great experiences in this system. I could site you at least a dozen different interactions with teachers and other parents that made this system so effective and positive for our family.

The point I am making is that we chose this place and have invested our time, money and heart into our community. We have put up with rising taxes and lowered levels of state services not to mention social abuse from those who criticize us for working hard and creating the best we can for our children. This latest State stunt to try to take our town's freedom to determine our educational system is too much to stand. This is where the line gets drawn.

Our town has already worked with other towns to create a stronger buying power. We have created a curriculum, arts programs and sports programs that blend cohesively. Our parents are dedicated to serving our teachers whose time can then be freed up to do what they do best - teach our kids. Any kind of Regionalization will detract from these efforts.

There is no evidence that regionalization has been effective in other places. Why would the state waste time and money to do yet more studies? One answer - money! The state has not been a good custodian to our dollars? The state continues to chase away businesses and its highest taxpayers. And still many remain. Why? SCHOOLS!!!!!! Please don't screw this up.

Yes – Please - In Wilton, we teach our kids to say “please” and “thank you” and “Mr. and Mrs.” We teach them to contribute to society by helping others. We teach them to work hard and be part of a team or an ensemble. We teach them not to bully but we also teach them not to be bullied. This is bullying – and it is the worst kind because the government is pretending this is in the best interest of all but it is really not.

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 757, SB 874 and any other legislation that opens the door to forced (or “incentivized” – just another way of saying forced) regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

Respectfully submitted,
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