

Dear Representative of the Residents of Connecticut:

I am a Wilton resident and a parent of a public-school student. I STRONGLY oppose SB 454, SB 738 and SB 874 as well as any other bill that would now or in the future be proposed that would require regionalization of our school.

The schools in our town are set up to address the needs of the students of Wilton. If the regionalization of our schools went through, the students of Wilton would suffer immensely. The thought that school consolidation will create more efficiency doesn't sound true. I have seen large organizations split up into separate entities because they are too big to deal with - why would schools be any different? In fact, it should be harder to steer this large school consolidation ship and cause an increase in inefficiencies rather than the other way around. We even have our state university, UConn, saying that there is no link between efficiency and academic performance.

I do not believe that the regionalization of our schools will decrease the cost of education in Connecticut. I actually feel that the cost of combining resources, retrofitting schools, dealing with salaries, and sorting through the legal obligations of the current schools will offset any possible savings that are currently being counted on. I have read studies about the savings associated with school consolidation and according to the 2011 study by the National Education Policy Center, the savings from school consolidation are "vastly overestimated."

Lastly, consolidation means less control for all towns. Our district attracts the best teachers who value what we have: a small district with personal connections to each other and the community. I know my kid's teachers, the members of my Board of Education and my neighbors' kids. I know what is going on in my schools and I know who to talk to when I have questions or concerns. I moved to Wilton because of the schools: their size, their reputation, the home town feel and the knowledge that I will know the teachers, the Board of Education and the administration of my child and my community. This bill will irreversibly change the schools in our town and the small town feel of many Connecticut towns, something that we were looking for when we moved to Connecticut and into our town.

Ultimately, I feel that consolidation will also affect our kids: what choices they will have in classes, the amount of time it will take them to get to school and the teachers they will have.

As my representative, please oppose SB 454, SB 738, SB 874 and any other bill to regionalize Connecticut school.

Regards,

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