

2/28/19

SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

Chairmen 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. These proposed bills are very concerning to me and I'd like to express some of the many reasons why I am opposed to them.

First, I'd like to start by telling you that I am a resident of Harwinton & a Mom of 3 children in our Region 10 School System. I have a 2nd grader at Harwinton Consolidated School, a 7th grader at Har-Bur Middle School & a 9th grader at Lewis S. Mills High School. By having one child in each one of our schools, I can say we are totally invested in our school system & these proposals would directly affect all of us. My husband & I decided to purchase our home here in Harwinton 4 years ago, specifically because of the excellent regional school system that exists here. Made up of the towns of Harwinton & Burlington, our Region 10 school system is an amazing, flourishing, successful, close knit group of students, administrators & parents. I couldn't ask for a better school system for my kids to learn & grow up in. But, this could all change in an instant if SB 738 were passed. By aligning the school system districts to match up with the Probate Court Districts map, it would push some towns together while pulling others apart. In the case of Region 10 comprised of Harwinton & Burlington, it would remove Harwinton from our already regional school system & replace it with Farmington. Harwinton would then be placed into the newly created Region 24. This is absolutely absurd & makes no sense. Why would you tear apart our already successful regional school system just to match a map? Right now, my children have a 45-minute bus ride to get to their schools that are between 4-6 minutes away from our home. How long is it going to take for my children to get to school, when most of the towns they'd be forced to regionalize with, are over an hour away? By the time my children would arrive at school, they'd be exhausted. What kind of education are they going to receive when they're too busy trying to stay awake, rather than learning, in class? How many hours of the day would be left to actually spend in the classroom, after all the hours already wasted riding on the school bus trying to get there? Also, how additionally stressful will it be to our children to be ripped away from their friends, teachers & schools that they've comfortably settled into, over the years. For example, my daughter is a Freshman in Lewis Mills this year & she is on many clubs & organizations. One of these committees is the Lewis Mills Class of 2022. They've been working hard planning fundraisers & many other activities to support their next 3 years. She's even purchased LSM Class of '22 sweatshirt & sweatpants, which she loves & wears frequently. How will all these children feel when you tell them they won't be able to attend their beloved school for their Senior Year? That they'll have to graduate from some strange school, in a strange town, far from home without their friends?

More importantly, not to mention, how far away from home our children will be during the day. What happens if our children get sick & we need pick them up, or even worse, an emergency arises? How quickly can us parents get to them when they're over an hour away? With this crazy world we live in today, sadly, it could come down to a matter of life & death & this is not acceptable!

These scenarios are not right, we should be supporting our children by making them feel safe & secure, not pushing them away with no regards to their feelings? All this change, inconvenience & stress added to our children's daily lives, because the state is trying to save a few dollars, because it would be easier if all CT's operating system's maps matched? This makes no sense. These are some very trivial reasons, that do not equate to the major effects these would have on our children's lives. How many of these people that proposed these bills actually have children in the state's school systems? How will tearing our successful community apart solve Connecticut's problems? If anything, to me, this is going to create even more problems. Granted, I am not narrow minded, I do understand pairing up certain, lone towns that are financially unstable or lacking resources, as they could benefit from regionalization. But, in the case of our already successful, thriving, Region 10 School System, I see this as a case of "If it ain't broke, then don't try to fix it."

I urge you to, please, put the wellbeing, success & happiness of our young children & students first & to, please, do not pass proposed Senate Bills 457, 738 & 874.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Christine Misluk

Harwinton, CT