

To those concerned, regarding the propositions for the state's imposition of school regionalization, reference SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874. My name is Neil Montlick, resident and tax payer in Windsor CT. We chose to raise our family in this great and diverse community. Nothing in any of these propositions says anything about if or how this would improve the education of our students. It does seem to indicate a change in who would have a say in that education.

Our town has worked hard within the democratic process and currently available resources, to establish what education services we wish to provide, and how we wish to do so. This includes the property and physical resources, as well as cultivating the human resources required to do so. Annually this is the largest portion of our budget, approximately sixty percent. We don't always agree exactly what this should include, but ultimately the will of the majority prevails. The town has created a great educational opportunity for our student population. I also say this as a parent of two students, one of which has joined the CREC student population, and her sibling may likely follow. We do so by choice, for our own reasons. We still love our town schools and what opportunities they provide, and we remain part of that community.

All three of these proposals threaten to upset the voice I have as a tax payer. By having smaller and local control of this large portion of our tax dollar, we have more of a say in what and how we provide to our students. By creating a larger governing body for those resources, we reduce our individual voice. The proposals also do not speak to the future distribution of the accumulated resources of the individual towns, across whatever new region or state organization(s) would then seize control of it.

This may also raise concerns for things like real estate values, as prospective buyers would place value on not only the tax bill, but the schools. Any change in value will throw off that budget we're talking about. So far there seems only a small narrow and expectation that there may be some economies found in some consolidation of administrative resources. The proposals further suggest that there isn't even a current understanding of the current resources being employed, yet some promise or expectation of some sort of saving is the justification for this.

SB 738 goes so far as to draw a line bisecting our state population, excluding only the top twenty-four most populous cities and towns from regionalization. Having personal experience with at least two of the school systems in towns that fall below that forty thousand population number, these towns take full advantage of the resources they chose to employ, the school administrations, to provide the services. Some smaller towns are not so lucky and are already part of some regional organization. If a line is to be drawn, I do not believe that forty thousand is the place to draw it.

Any time such a line is drawn, there will be an argument as to where it should lay. With the other two propositions not drawing the line in the same place, it's not specifically the inclusion of the towns in which I have lived that I object to. If regionalization is such a great idea and create cost saver, then create the program and have willing towns join voluntarily. Create a program that improves the service and opportunity for our students. I reject the notion that the towns are not capable of deciding how to deploy this largest part of their budgets. I reject that the state, or whatever subsequent entity is created, will more efficiently provide education services overall. A larger bureaucracy is not a path to efficiency.

Neil Montlick, Windsor CT