

State Senate et al;

Be advised I vehemently OPPOSE bills SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874. These bills do not utter one sentence on why the bills will improve education.

The purpose of SB 738 is defined as "To create a more efficient educational system." For the life of me, politics aside, I cannot understand the reason to regionalize school systems under the guise of a 'more efficient educational system' when this purpose is contradicted by research. After reading several reports (Fed Reserve Bank of Boston, Hartford Foundation, NEPC-Nat'l Education Policy Center), all cite critical reasons not to regionalize that outweigh opposing view points. The first is from NEPC, "Research also suggests that impoverished regions in particular often benefit from smaller schools and districts, and they can suffer irreversible damage if consolidation occurs." The second is quoted from the Hartford Foundation, "Both student and parent engagement declines as district enrollment increases because the added bureaucracy creates new barriers for them to overcome. Subsequently, apathy increases among both students and parents, as does student absenteeism, resulting in lower educational achievement. Parents may also have less influence on K-12 education policies as boards of education merge and more voices are added to policy debates."

I'm sure you have already heard many more reasons, property values, less influence from citizens on their children's education, decline in extracurricular activities, etc. Suffice it to say, these bills should not be approved, extended, or revised.

- Ryan O'Connor