

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. I live in Burlington, CT and my son attends school in the Region 10 school district. We love our small town and small town school system. I grew up in a similar-sized town in Massachusetts and loved what a small town and small school system had to offer growing up. Everyone knows your name, and the teachers have the opportunity to personally connect with their students.

Being part of a small community was a major reason we chose to move to Burlington. Prior to moving to Burlington, we lived in Cheshire. Cheshire is a great town with a wonderful school system. Cheshire is also 3x the size of Burlington. We made the conscious decision to move to Burlington for a smaller (but still wonderful) school system.

My son's kindergarten classroom has 15 children, which we feel is ideal. He is thriving in his class and has a great relationship with his teacher and classmates. He gets the attention he needs, as do his fellow classmates. The school is run wonderfully and they have an amazing sense of school spirit (Go Huskies!). I have friends and co-works in larger towns who have up to 25 children in a kindergarten class, this too many!

My kindergartener currently rides the bus in the afternoon for 30 minutes every afternoon. This is already a long time for 4 and 5 year olds. Having our town potentially move to another school district is too much for elementary school-aged children. Prior to enrolling in public kindergarten we entered the lottery for Reggio Magnet School of the Arts. Our son was accepted to attend starting in preschool. My husband and I both work, so sending him to Reggio instead of daycare would have saved us \$10,000. After learning how long the bus ride would be, we chose not to accept the offer to attend Reggio so our son would not have to take a long bus ride two times a day. It is not fair for these small children to spend so much time on crowded buses.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony.
I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.
Rachel Sharkey