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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, SB 874, and HB 7150. I am writing to express my strong opposition to aforementioned bills concerning forced school regionalization. As a teacher, I can attest first hand to the damages regionalization will inflict on our children. Children learn best when they are supported by local schools that know the specifics of the community they serve.

Regionalization takes that personal understanding away from schools. How can a teacher truly understand the life of the children in their classrooms when they come from so many different towns? Each town is unique and has unique programs and events. It would be very difficult to connect to so many children with so different lives in their towns. Quality of education in our schools must be forefront in this discussion. Larger schools do not mean a better education. In fact, there is no proof that larger schools educate our children better than smaller ones. A smaller school means teachers and administrators can better tailor programs to the needs of students. In smaller schools, the administration actually knows the students and knows what they need in order to succeed. In larger schools, students slip through the cracks, which results in a poorer education. Parents also have a better relationship with administrators and teachers in smaller schools. Smaller school districts have a more personal relationship between the community and the faculty. Community members have greater investment in the schools when the schools directly affect their town. I moved to Canton because of the small schools and personal feel of the community. It is important to me that Canton remain a small town with great small schools. By forcing regionalization, that will be gone for good. Canton will change forever and not for the better. Community members will be less invested in the schools when the schools are shared between many other towns. Children and parents will have a harder time connecting with other families when they live in other towns. Not to mention, that regionalization will not save towns or the state money. The savings are vastly overestimated and larger school districts end up hiring more administrators which cost more money. As you can see, there are numerous reasons why the bills SB 457, SB 738, SB 874, and HB 7150 should not pass. I hope you will oppose SB 457, SB 738, SB 874, HB 7150 and any other effort to force consolidation of Connecticut public schools. Can I count on your opposition? Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

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