

SB 738

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

To Whom it May Concern on the Education Committee,

I am absolutely opposed to forced school regionalization.

My husband and I are upper middle class with 4 degrees between us, the very population Connecticut struggles to keep instate after graduating college. We chose Seymour as our home based on so many things but first and foremost our schools. In doing so, we made many sacrifices; we do not city water or sewers, we have no gas lines to our homes.

We pay higher taxes than we would have in Shelton or Oxford but Seymour has worked hard to maintain a balanced town and school budget despite decreasing state funding and taking on many necessary projects like paving streets etc. We want to be able to continue to manage our schools as we see fit, and to fund them as we see fit with our voices heard by the town and the superintendent who we can run into in town, whose children attend our schools . Towns being in control of their services is something that has always set Connecticut apart, and made it a desirable place to live. It allows for a small government feel, and for a large impact to be felt from the actions of a few citizens. It permits each town to develop it's own identity.

I have so many concerns and questions in regards to forced regionalization. Oxford used to use Seymour High School, a few years ago they opted to build their own. Are you going to then force us to re-regionalize? And to what effect, what cost savings will come of this? How are you going to maintain a reasonable bus ride? My son is already on the bus for 45 minutes in the afternoon to travel 3 miles to his elementary school, will regionalization force him to spend even longer on the bus for a poorer education? How are you going to handle more inclement weather days when typically schools go late already? How are you going to prevent teacher unions from becoming stronger, or the difference union contracts that currently exist. How are you going to ensure the safety of our schools when school personnel have more students and families to keep track of and to learn. When I walk into my son's school they not only know him, his academic strengths and weaknesses but they know me and my husband. They know that I am a safe individual, that he is my son, the students know whose mom I am. I have yet to

hear of an existing regionalized school where families are as happy as we are in Seymour.

I plan to raise my child in Seymour where our voices are heard, where our concerns are addressed. But should the state decide we must be regionalized I cannot guarantee that we won't move to a less expensive state with better infrastructure and opportunities. Plans such as these WILL result in many well-educated professional families like us leaving Connecticut! One of the few things that Connecticut still has over other states is our education, but we can certainly live somewhere MUCH less expensive and afford to send our son to private schools if necessary. Please do not force us to leave what has been my husband's home of 36 years and mine for the last 18 years.

Please tell us what is wrong with permitting collectives of citizens (towns) from deciding what is most important to them? What does this forced regionalization achieve?

Please save our schools from unnecessary and unwanted forced regionalization. Please oppose SB 738.

Tara Shepherd  
Seymour, CT