

Christopher & Erica Thiesing
32 Eaglebrook Drive
Somers, CT 06071
2/26/2019

Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874

Education Committee Members,

As parents of public-school students, **we strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874** and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

As a family, we were faced with a choice about 1 year ago to move to a state without income taxes, or to remain in Connecticut. We decided to not move, and stay in Somers (despite Connecticut's high-income taxes) for one reason only; our small local school system.

We are greatly concerned that these proposals will lead to a marginalization of our say in local school issues, an increase in the size of the classrooms, and a loss of access we currently have with our superintendent and the board of education.

Connecticut is in a very challenged economic environment, and one of the only benefits to living in this state is its quality small school settings. Taking away this carrot, greatly reduces the incentive for businesses and families to relocate to, and even stay in, the state. We have been contacted by at least one family from out of state (with interest of moving to Somers), that has questioned if moving to Connecticut is wise based upon this school regionalization discussion. They have told me that they are likely going to stay across the border in Massachusetts (where they currently reside), based on these three proposals because they are worried the quality of the small schools will be directly impacted by this movement. It is a risk they are just not willing to take with their children.

While this is just one anecdotal story, this regionalization discussion has already resulted in two high paid professionals making the decision to move to neighboring Massachusetts and taking their combined \$13,000 in income taxes with them. This tax loss, extrapolated over the time that their children would be in school, equates in an income tax loss, of approximately \$195,000.

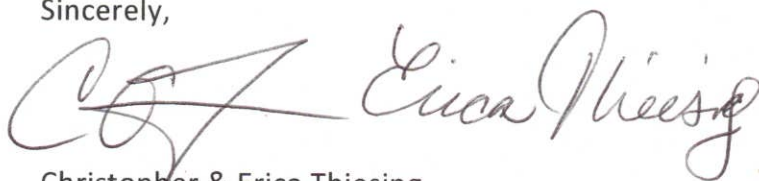
Sadly, if these bills become a reality our family will move as well, taking an addition \$16,000 of needed income tax revenue a year away from the state. Over the next fifteen years, the

combined income tax loss from just our little two families, not including any other tax revenues that we would also have paid over this time, would be approximately \$435,000. Those that pay the taxes are the ones that Connecticut can least afford to lose.

We are willing to try to help this state regain its greatness by remaining Connecticut residents during these tough times, but if you take away our local control of education we, and many others like us, will leave.

We hope you see that by impacting Connecticut's small schools by regionalizing, you are forcing those who will bail out our debt-ridden state to take our tax dollars elsewhere. We hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher & Erica Thiesing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C" and "E".

Christopher & Erica Thiesing
Somers, CT