

TO: edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Date: February 27, 2019

Dear Committee Members:

My letter today is to serve as my testimony strongly opposing SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization OR any bill that offers voluntary regionalization, including the statement that a town would not receive funding if they choose not to regionalize in the State of Connecticut.

I live in Wilton CT.

My husband and I have 1 child.

Our child graduated in 2018 from Wilton High School.

I have no other children attending the schools in town.

So you may ask why would I care if the state goes to regionalization?

Let me start by giving you our history.

I was born in Norwalk and grew up attending schools in Norwalk CT. I graduated in 1981 from Brien McMahon High School.

My husband was born in Wilton and grew up attending schools in Wilton CT. He graduated in 1985 from Wilton High School.

I received a good education in Norwalk. The schools I attended (Kendall, Ponus and BMHS) were good schools, but Norwalk is a city. I was a good student. BUT in the four years I attended high school not one time did a counselor ever call me in, talk to me, or help me decide IF I was going to go to college. Never did they ever offer help or make a suggestion. I was on my own. They had too many kids to cover and not enough staff. That's a city school even in the 80's! I didn't go to college. Back in the 80's not everyone went to college and that is true - BUT perhaps if someone showed interested in me and helped me I would have gone. But you see they didn't and so I left HS and went to work. I did ok for myself. I worked hard, had good jobs, but would have been so much more successful if I had a college education and had someone who I could have turned to in high school who could have mentored me.

My husband went to Wilton schools and had a GREAT education. He was an good student.

Wilton was a small town., a small community. He was given every opportunity to work with counselors, educators, and staff to help him figure out what he wanted to do next, college? work? military?.. that was in 1985 - He went on to college and graduated with a degree in Architecture.

So your still asking yourself what does this have to do with Regionalization...

You see, he had the advantage even in 1985 of a small town education, he was a member of a small community, a group of citizens that were so much more deeply involved with the education of their students and their town. A small town that everyone knew each other, that

they helped build stadiums, they voted on their education budget, they talked about what was the best way to spend their tax dollars, they passed along guidance to each others children, they bought apples from the local farmers who still had orchards, they knew each other. They were a small town a small community coming together to be Warriors.

Regionalization will Erode the quality of this community, it will erode the quality of the town.

We got married in 1998 and we talked about where we were going to live...Norwalk, or Wilton.
- There was no choice - it was going to be Wilton.

Its very simple why we choose Wilton - I wanted to live in a small town., a place I could get to know everyone, that my children could be apart of a small community where they could go to school in the same type of environment that my husband did. Be supported in the same way. That as a member of the community we could have a say in how they spend our tax dollars on education. So that my children could have the amazing services that the Wilton school system would provide, A sense of belonging to a place where they would receive that attention in the schools that I never received in Norwalk. That my children would in fact receive a high quality education that would prepare them for college. That the educators in their schools would know them, would know me by name when I walked in. A town where my children would feel safe and secure. A small community.

We looked at the schools systems at the time and simply made our choice.

Did I want my children to go to school where they would be an individual or a number? -

INDIVIDUAL

Did I want my children to go to a school where they would be pushed aside if they weren't an A student? **NO**

Did I want my children to go to a school where if they needed special education services they would have the very best? **YES**

Did I want my children to go to a school where they felt like they belonged and were apart of a small community? **YES**

Did I want my children to go to school and potentially face gangs? **NO**

Did I know that as my children got older they would still face the same challenges of drugs know matter where they went to school? **YES - BUT** - I wanted them to have less of a chance to be influenced by that.

So the choice was simple - we moved to WILTON - Because of the Quality of Education

Regionalization will not maintain that quality of education in Wilton!

We have a one son, who is an individual who wasn't always an A student but had teachers always available to help and spend time with him. Neighbors who were always willing to help, offer advise, or tutor him, simply because we are a small community. He did not need special education services, but when he had a concussion, he had many people available to help him and work with him. He always felt like he belonged and is a Warrior through and through. That means something to kids in Wilton. If you didn't live in Wilton but went to school here -

you would't understand why being a Warrior is important..it's a small community thing. He never had to deal with gangs, or violence because the schools are small and it just doesn't exist here. Drugs are everywhere today - you can't deny that - but in a city like Norwalk its right around the corner and it's not so easy in Wilton.

If the schools were regionalized I wouldn't have a voice, this wouldn't be a small community, a tight knit community, it wouldn't be the same. Even if they simply shared a Superintendent, it wouldn't be the same, they would not know our kids, our town, our volunteer organization, I won't have a say in my tax dollars and how they are they being spent.

Regionalization of any kind is not the answer in solving Connecticut issues - find a better way to fix the state. This will not solve our problems.

And remember, I don't have a child in the system any longer and I still want a say. Don't take that right away from me. Don't regionalize our schools!

Sincerely,
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