

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

Dear Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

I am writing to state my opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874. My family of 5 moved to the town of Wilton in large part because of the excellent reputation of the local school system. During our 6 years in Wilton, our two daughters and our son have attended Wilton public schools. They are currently in 3rd, 4th and 6th grades. Prior to living in Wilton we lived in Norwalk for 8 years, and our oldest daughter went to the Norwalk public schools for 2 years. Based on our respective experiences, I'm convinced moving to Wilton was the correct thing for our kids. The quality of the education system in Wilton is excellent, and I firmly believe that forced regionalization will compromise the quality of education we are currently experiencing and have come to expect. Further, I believe forced regionalization will negatively impact the value of our homes and our local economy.

I do not support the forced regionalization bills before the Connecticut state legislature (SB 457 and SB 738 (formerly SB 454) and SB 874). A foundational value of Connecticut educational system is the importance of *local* voice and *local* control in educational decision making. Therefore, mandating regionalization (or mandating any such action that would fundamentally remake school districts) undermines the values and beliefs that guide Connecticut school systems. These bills are completely inconsistent with what we value as Wilton residents and citizens of Connecticut.

Furthermore, there has been no evidence presented indicating this would improve educational outcomes or reduce cost. Nor do any of these bills include any mention of school quality.

Looking at the bills and thinking about my school district and the region, I do not believe that regionalization would be beneficial for our students, for our schools, for our community and for residents of Connecticut. Forced school regionalization will deter new families from moving to CT and will encourage people to leave CT – both of which negatively impact the economic rehabilitation of our state.

Thank you reading my written testimony. I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Respectfully,

Thomas Viggiano
25 Little Brook Rd.
Wilton, CT