

February 27, 2019

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

Dear Education Committee,

We have been residents of Wilton for over 12 years, and have 3 children in the Wilton Public Schools. We are writing today to register our vehement opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874. As a registered Democrat and an Independent, we are extremely disappointed in these bills that will serve only to punish districts that are already fiscally responsible. The goal should be to assist districts that need improvement, not to punish successful districts.

There is only one reason why we chose to live in Wilton, and that reason is the Wilton Public School system. We have made sacrifices to live here. One of us commutes 3 hours round-trip to Manhattan every day. If we wanted to live in a big town with a huge public school system, we would not have moved to Wilton 12 years ago. We wanted the intimacy of a small town and small school district where we have access to our Board of Education and our Board of Selectmen. Our town functions well because of the engagement of the residents with our Board of Ed and elected town government officials. The proposed legislation takes away local control of our schools. Again, the ability to have a voice in the direction of our schools was and is our fundamental reason for living here.

Wilton already does its part in sharing costs. Our Board of Selectmen and our Board of Education share a long list of services to reduce costs. Perhaps Wilton should be used as an example of success, instead of being leveled down to resemble less functioning towns and districts. School quality will not be improved by any of these bills. None of the research on forced regionalization points to any improvements in education. Research by the National Education Policy Center concluded that benefits from consolidation are vastly overestimated. We can continue to list research findings but the bottom line is that forced regionalization will have an entirely predictable result: no benefit, either in meaningful cost-savings or educational outcomes.

The time is right now to put an end to any bills that propose forced regionalization in Connecticut. The very existence of these bills has already had a negative impact

on Wilton and our neighboring towns. This is not the way to bring people to Connecticut, or to keep people in Connecticut, and it will most certainly ensure consequences in our next election. We implore you to oppose SB 738 SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of CT Public Schools.

Respectfully,

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