

February 28, 2019

Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capital
Hartford, CT 06106-1562
EDtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Subject: Opposition to Bills SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 (School Regionalization)

Dear Education Committee:

As a parent of a first grader and a toddler, I'm submitting this testimony to communicate my strong opposition to any consideration of school regionalization in our state, and specifically my opposition to bills SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

I am a pulmonary and critical care physician who serves Norwalk, as well as Fairfield County as a whole. Less than a year ago, my husband and I moved our family to Wilton. We chose Wilton because of its high-performing schools, as well as the centralized school geography of having only one school for each grade level. We chose Wilton despite incurring a very large property tax bill to move there which we knew would be a double penalty with the new federal tax changes limiting deductions for state and local taxes. Despite this significant financial burden, it was worth it to us to give our children a high quality education. Now, with these threats of forced school regionalization, or "voluntary" regionalization that is essentially forced by steep penalties, we are questioning our decision to move to Wilton or to stay in Connecticut. Many of my colleagues live in Westchester County, NY, which is mere miles from our current home. The tax burdens are already so great in Connecticut, it is increasingly difficult to be able to afford living here. And while I agree entirely with trying to direct our educational resources toward areas of need, forcing regionalization on a school district that is highly functioning, both fiscally and educationally, is without any clear value. Experience in other states that have embraced school regionalization, including Vermont and Massachusetts, has shown that regionalization does not improve the quality of education nor lower educational costs. And most distressing is that none of the proposed Connecticut bills mention anything about improving the QUALITY of education for our children.

I urge representatives not to support any these bills, or any regionalization efforts, forced or otherwise. School regionalization will hurt our kids, hurt our towns and their economies, and will further damage the economy of Connecticut. Please listen to the loud and numerous voices of opposition among your constituents, and to do what's best for our children, our towns, and our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy M. Ahasic". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "M".

Amy M. Ahasic, MD, MPH
Town of Wilton, Connecticut