

28-February 2019

Lammert Albers
68 Forest Lane
Wilton, CT
06897

203-464-7048

As a parent of public school students, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools."

We are a family that moved from the United Kingdom the United States in 2015. We have a 1st grader, a 5th grader and a 7th grader in the Wilton school system.

In addition to being a parent and active member of the Wilton community, am also an executive for Cogstate. Cogstate is a science, services and technology company dedicated to measuring cognition to guide decision-making in clinical trials, research, healthcare and brain injury. When we moved originally, we evaluated New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts as possible home bases. In evaluating the school systems and its differences we quickly gravitated to Connecticut. This was based on much research and having a long line of family members in education. Within Connecticut my wife and I visited 12 towns where we spoke and met with the local schools to ensure we had the best fit for our children. We were most impressed with Wilton and therefore decided to purchase a home and put roots down and commit long term to being part of the Wilton community. My wife is very active member of the local community charity groups. Since our arrival, we have been extremely pleased with the individual support our respective children have received to date within the school system of Wilton. Our eldest daughter has received services from the school in relation to her Individual Education Plan. We have been very impressed to see much improvement and progress for our daughter in receiving these services from the school in Wilton.

We are now in much distress over the bills in question and regret having made such a strong commitment to the state and town.

Having chosen Wilton and Connecticut as a base, my company has significantly increased headcount at our New Haven offices. I would like to point out that we have two additional offices in New York and Boston and that I chose for my primary offices to be New Haven, Connecticut. This decision has caused to be a major factor in the hiring concentration in the state of Connecticut over New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Cogstate has tripled the headcount in Connecticut since my family

arrived in Connecticut. Had we moved to Boston, most of these resources would have been hired in Massachusetts.

We moved here for the schools, and existing school quality is what keeps us here. We have experienced first-hand in the UK that regionalization can have a detrimental effect on services.

None of these bills include even one mention of school quality. In evaluating whether we had made the right decision for our children, we have done our own research and have benchmarked the Wilton school against some of the top private schools in the United Kingdom. In meeting with these private schools in the UK, they confirmed that Wilton is providing top notch quality that they would find hard to compete with.

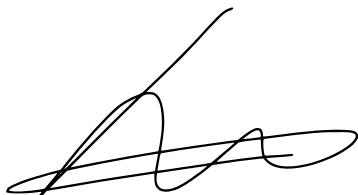
These bills have send a death wish to the town of Wilton and other CT towns that have built their communities around the school system. Everybody knows that the school is the crown jewel of Wilton as is the case in similar towns that have built their communities around the school. It is why folks like ourselves commit to the town and the state long term. It is also why we are prepared to pay the significantly higher taxes over other towns. These bills penalize towns that have managed their school budget responsibly and with greater outcomes.

We already know of several folks that either are seeking to leave the state or are deciding against Connecticut in the wake of these unconsidered bills. This is evidenced further by the real estate community who are now seeing out of state folks decide against Connecticut on the basis of uncertainty around these bills. Our family is now also at a crucial decision point where we would consider moving out of state if forced regionalization were to be implemented. We would do this knowingly to incur financial losses but also knowing that it would be for the wellbeing of our children and for better outcomes in education.

As mentioned before, my company is just one example how these bills will negatively impact the CT economy as these bills will drive company executives into New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts and organizations will seek to move their operations to these respective states along with those executives. Having already lost a number of large corporations, these bills will just be the final nail in the coffin to make Connecticut an unattractive state for businesses.

Lammert and Charlotte Albers

I 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'A' or similar character, located at the bottom left of the page.