

Subject: Opposition to SB738, SB 457, and SB 874

To Members of the Education Committee:

As a former parent of three public school students who attended the public schools in Westport through high school graduation, my husband and I state our opposition to the following bills: SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill which would open the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

We moved to Westport because of the exceptionally good schools here, elementary through high school. I am a former educator, supervisor, and consultant with experience in teaching at all levels, special education, and counseling. I am well-aware of the importance of quality education for children, and that is what I wanted for mine. Westport schools exceeded my expectations. I feel that local control of the schools was a major reason for the educational quality of the schools.

I strongly oppose any efforts which would take away local control of the schools. It is important for the local population to have input into the Board of Education policies and not to have that input diluted by people who do not live in our community.

I have concerns that the proposed regionalization will negatively impact the quality of life in our town. People are leaving Connecticut each day, and this will convince more people to leave. Town residents like to feel they are paying local taxes to have local control of their schools and maintain the quality they have come to expect for their tax money.

I urge you to oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other legislation which will allow or force regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

Bonnie A. Ashman, Ph.D.

Westport, Connecticut