

RSB:874

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Please accept my testimony concerning **RSB: 874 An Act Concerning The Creation of Regional School Districts**.

I **strongly oppose** the forced regionalization of our local school districts. Stellar education has been the cornerstone of Connecticut's reputation, economic success and development for decades. I know when my family was transferred to Connecticut from Michigan the high quality of education was a point of pride for us as new residents and we have felt grateful to have three of our four (the 4th will graduate in a few years) children blossom and graduate from Avon Public Schools.

I am greatly disappointed in the way these bills were rolled out, it has proved to be divisive and confusing to residents. We need you to do better, these are really important issues. I have heard the Governor refer to the "feisty independence" of our local districts, he is right, we are feisty and determined to keep some autonomy. Local governance of a school district assures a direct reflection of the community and the values of local taxpayers and property owners. As a BOE member I have had the opportunity to understand that we have a serious fiscal funding gap, as well as a devastating achievement gap and I am committed to working toward solutions. Unfortunately, this method of surprise roll out has squashed meaningful conversation and created a real fear among your citizenry.

Thank you for considering a NO vote on forced school regionalization.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Blea

Avon, Connecticut