

February 28, 2019

I am against the following three proposals.

Senate Bill 457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS- Requires any school district with a student population of fewer than two thousand students to join a new or an existing regional school district until that district equals two thousand or more.

Senate Bill 738 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS- Requires towns to join state-created regional school districts similar in size to the state's Probate Districts.

Governor's Bill SB 874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

The proposals to further regionalize school districts will have a tremendous impact on my children, our teachers, our property values, and our community as a whole.

First and foremost, the Governor's Bill SB 874 is going to deplete resources and force a very large group of appointed officials to try to weed through the intricacies of regionalization for the state. This work group, and the resources it will need to hire consultants and require the Department of Education to support it, will need funding to operate. Why allocate funding toward a multi-faceted work group that will not come to agreements on how education would be reformed in the state? The appointed position takes them away from their current duties and pushes education into a government bureaucracy. I will be carefully watching how members vote and will not be supporting those in favor of education regionalization.

Lyme schools would be forced to separate from Old Lyme and required to travel a distance to cross the river to attend school. Combining Old Lyme with towns farther away such as Salem and Montville will require that kids are bused a long distance in order to attend school. Just the distance alone, for any regionalization, will take a toll on young children and teenagers. It is well known that teenagers require time to wind down and sleep, it is directly linked to their performance in school. Their transportation time will make an even earlier start to the day where they already are at the bus stops before daylight. My child fell asleep on the bus in Kindergarten just on the way to aftercare. This will happen to all young children as their long day includes a long bus ride to and from school. How would aftercare be handled? How far will children have to go to attend school? The very idea of regionalization saving money has no merit. It will require money to make these transfers, set schools up for the large number of kids that will be attending, arrange the bureaucracy to handle large regional districts, and maintain a decent teacher to class ratio.

We are adamantly opposed to regionalization proposed by all of the Senate Bills- Senate Bill 457, Senate Bill 738, and Senate Bill 874.

We moved to a small town to obtain a quality education for our children. We wanted a close-knit school system where all of the children are known by name from the teachers and staff. We have that right now.

Another aspect of combining regions that would have a devastating impact on the children is how special education would be affected. Currently we have a child that receives services from the school to help her in reading and math. In a regional setting, there would be hundreds of kids that would need this type of close attention from one school. How can they receive quality care and attention if the school must spend the time to coordinate testing, observations, and arrange additional small sessions with a large number of children while still managing their classrooms and the other hundreds of children that do not receive services?

To force this requirement based on something as illogical as the number students in the population is irrational and based on nothing substantial. If you need something to do, find out how to bring businesses to the state and how to upgrade some of the city schools with updated computers, and hire teachers with the money that would be spent on this idea.

Linda Brunza
51 Flat Rock Hill Rd
Old Lyme, CT 06371