

From: Keryn Cerbone
Ridgefield, CT

OPPOSITION TO SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

I am opposed to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874, as well as any other bills that open the door to forced regionalization (whether through directive and/or withholding of state aid) of CT towns and cities.

I am a life-long Connecticut resident, having grown up in Norwalk and attended Tracey Elementary, West Rocks Junior High, and Norwalk High School (which, I might add, were VERY GOOD schools when I attended). I lived in Norwalk for my first 32 years, and have lived in Ridgefield, CT for the last 31 years.

With few large companies in the immediate area of Ridgefield to offer employment with good salaries, the only thing left that we have to offer people moving in to our area are great schools with quality education. Without that, there is simply NO REASON for people to move here. In fact, a number of realtors in our town have openly commented that home buyers have cancelled appointments to come look at houses, and prefer to look elsewhere as the school situation is in flux.

What happens when tax receipts further decline as high income earners choose to leave the state rather than subject their children to schools over which they have no input, as well as have to pay even higher property taxes for pensions over which the local electorate has absolutely no control? Or worse still -- refuse to move here for the same reason? Fairfield County is the main source of revenues in our state -- and Hartford depends on the continued tax flows from Fairfield County.

Also, some statistics provided by a fellow CT citizen:

Based on US News and World Report:

1) In CT, 20 of the top 25 ranked schools in CT are public. Of those 20, eleven are in Fairfield County.

2) CT's #5 school is ranked 332 nationally and our #10 school is ranked 439 nationally.

3) In VT, #1 ranked school is ranked #493 nationally. Their #10 school is ranked #2314 nationally.

4) In NH, their #2 school is ranked #717 nationally and their #10 school is ranked 2010 nationally.

5) In Maine, their #1 school is ranked #209 nationally and their #10 school is ranked #1999 nationally.

6) In MA, where regionalization is still in discussion, their #1 school is ranked #48 nationally and their #10 school is ranked #303 nationally.

How does this show regionalization produces positive education outcomes for our state's children ?

Thank you for reading my testimony. Again, I am opposed to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874; I hope you DO NOT SUPPORT THESE BILLS and shut them down, leaving control over schools where it belongs – in the local community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Keryn Cerbone" followed by the date "2/27/19".

Keryn Cerbone
Ridgefield, CT