

February 28, 2019

Regarding proposed Senate Bills 457 and 738 and Governors Bill SB874

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in Opposition of the proposed Senate Bills 457 and 738 and Governors Bill SB874.

I grew up in Old Lyme and know that both I and my peers benefited greatly from the education we were afforded by Region 18 schools mainly due to the small, tight-knit community we formed. My husband and I recently sold our home in East Lyme. We searched in East Lyme and surrounding towns and then made the decision to move our family back to my home town. The biggest driving factor for that was the school system. While arguments can be made for the pros and cons of both large and small districts I can personally attest to the pros of our small, already regionalized, district and wanted the same for our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade son.

Parents choose where to live and by doing so, choose where their children will be educated. Many choose large districts for the offerings they provide, but many, like my husband and myself, have chosen to have our kids in districts like Lyme-Old Lyme Region 18. For us, the personal connection and small town feel of this district is what is right for our family. Forcing districts like ours to regionalize will have an immense and immediate effect on the type of education our children receive. They will be forced to have long bus rides, attend much larger schools, potentially be split from their peers that they have formed bonds with, and they will lose that sought after personal connection they have with their teachers and support staff.

While opposed to state-mandated regionalizing to conform to arbitrary numbers that the government has set, I am fully supportive of towns regionalizing services provided to students. Many districts, Lyme-Old Lyme included already regionalize with surrounding towns on services, sports, and extra-curricular activities. I think this is a great way to offer as many opportunities as possible to those students in these smaller communities. This is financially beneficial while also keeping the choices parents have made for their children when deciding to move to these small towns.

I hope you will join me in opposing these bills and continue to afford parents the opportunity to raise and educate their children in these small towns if they so choose.

Signed,

Elana Chapman

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Old Lyme