

March 1, 2019

Education Committee
State of Connecticut
edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

RE: Senate Bill 457, Senate Bill 738 and Governor's SB 874

Dear Education Committee:

I am a resident of Old Lyme, CT. I reside there with my wife and two children, ages 3 and 8. Both of our children are enrolled in the Old Lyme school system. On behalf of my wife and children, please note our objection to the proposed school regionalization bills referred to above. Our objections are as follows: First, the proposed action includes a splitting of the Lyme-Old Lyme Region, which already exists and is thriving. This existing regionalization works very well, saves money and promotes efficiencies; it works. The proposals seek to destroy this existing situation and is simply mind boggling. It is highly unlikely that the proposed bills will result in a better or even equal system for our children enrolled in these schools.

Second, it has been reported to parents by school administrators that no data has been presented to demonstrate that any actual cost savings or enhanced efficiencies will be experienced through this proposed regionalization. If the data is lacking, then the proposed action should not be endorsed by the responsible committees.

Third, even if data does exist concerning cost savings and efficiencies, that is no reason for broad regionalization to be endorsed by the committees and legislature. These schools my children attend are very effective in teaching and socializing children. We tutioned our daughter into Old Lyme for two years before we were able to move from Norwich to Old Lyme in 2018. Our move was specifically for the school system. The town residents are committed to the education system; it is well supported and local political decisions are made and implemented with the intention of promoting the school system. There is a uniqueness to each town and its relationship to their schools. Regionalization of the scope proposed cannot duplicate the existing Lyme-Old Lyme system. Regionalization of the scope proposed will likely diminish the nuanced services that existing systems provide as larger districting cannot, by definition, provide better or even equal servicing. If you have complete, fair, accurate data to the contrary, please provide it to the citizens and professionals during the hearings on this matter. I would be very surprised to learn such data exists. This type of broad regionalization will likely result in longer bus rides, greater burdens on families and children, splitting of existing, high functioning regions, greater cost to be sure and loss of community driven, purposeful education. There is too much to be lost if these bills are passed. Please note our objection to these proposals.

Very truly yours,

Lorenzo J. Cicchiello
143 Neck Road, Old Lyme, CT