

To Whom it May Concern:

As a parent of public school students, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools, or any attempt to penalize public schools for NOT regionalizing.

I have been a resident of Cheshire, CT for over 20 years. I attended the public schools in Cheshire myself and graduated from Cheshire High School in 2001. The public education I received in Cheshire is what set me apart from my peers in college. The public schools of Cheshire prepared me for higher level college courses immediately in my first year of college. It was clear that my knowledge-base was far superior to those coming from school systems in surrounding towns. I was able to earn a master's degree at a young age and become successful, and I praise the public education I received for my success.

This is the reason why I chose to eventually buy a house in Cheshire and raise my children there. We moved here for the schools and for no other reason. If schools in Cheshire become regionalized with surrounding towns, my family no longer have a reason to reside in Cheshire or the state of Connecticut for that matter. I believe the quality of the schools will decline drastically. If I wanted my children to attend schools in Southington or Wallingford I would have moved there.

Speaking of surrounding towns such as Southington and Wallingford, their taxes are significantly lower. See the 2019 mill rate grand list for reference: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CPIP-Data-Grants-Mgmt/GL-2017-FY-2019-Mill-Rates-UPDATE.pdf?la=en>.

In addition, the median home value in Cheshire is significantly higher compared to Southington and Wallingford. A simple google search will provide this data. Combine the higher mill rate and higher property values and you will see that families in Cheshire are paying more. Why should I share my tax dollars with a neighboring town? I pay this price and live here for the public services of my town - education being the number one reason. Sharing such public services will erode the quality of our town and school system. If this happens, I see no reason to live in Connecticut. I live in Cheshire for the schools and no other reason. If I didn't have kids I could have moved to a subpar town, instead I chose a town well known for their schools.

We already have a problem with people leaving the state, and I am certain that regionalizing schools will force hard working families to leave as well. That, or families will be forced to pay for private schools as the quality of public school systems decline. If families are forced to pay taxes plus private school tuition, consumer spending will for sure decrease which is not beneficial for our state's economy.

I do not believe anyone will actually read this, but if you do I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,
Carrie Clews
Cheshire, CT

