

Testimony on SB 738, SB 457, SB 874

February 27, 2019

To the members of the hearing committee:

My name is Jason Cole. My wife, Olga Gotta, and I are newer Wilton residents. We thank you for your time in reading our testimony. As the parents of one public middle school student as well another future student (currently 3 years old), we strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

We moved from Westchester to Stamford in 2007 (for lower taxes and the benefits of a small city) and more recently moved to Wilton for the schools and community feel. These bills, which attempt to unfairly shift financial burden to communities and households that are already responsible for generating the majority of the states tax income, ignore mobility. Because of this, they are destined to fail, and, in the process, will further impair the competitiveness of Connecticut. The existence of these bills alone is likely delaying families contemplating a move to CT.

I have not seen anything in the bills, or references to supporting studies, that address impact on school quality. The quality of CT schools will not be improved by the departure of even a small percentage of those families most financially able to relocate. Schools are among the, if not the, most important factors when choosing a home and community. We believe that attempting to negate a CHOICE, that we, and many other families consciously and carefully made, will irreparably harm CT (and trust in state government).

Conversely, if the state wants to improve its fiscal situation, it needs to protect its most coveted communities, lower its taxes, and draw families out of NYC and Westchester (as we were drawn in 2007 when CT was much more competitive).

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. If these bills pass, we will likely move out of state / back to Westchester, NY where the local control of schools is not under attack.

Respectfully,

Jason Cole and Olga Gotta

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