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Committee on Education
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S.B. 457, S.B. 738 and S.B. 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 457, SB 738 and SB 874. I am against any forced redistricting or mass regionalization efforts. I would like to see administrative and purchasing functions of very small districts (less than 2,000) regionalize but I believe that this is most effective, when it is organic, to ensure on a case-by-case basis that students benefit.

From my research, merging schools is not cost effective and can be a slippery slope. From my reading of these bills in this hearing today, they are not suggesting any redistricting of families, closing schools nor transporting children out of town schools. But I would like this to be more explicitly expressed in the bill, as there has been a lot of confusion about what regionalization means.

I understand that regionalization to mean a consolidation of school administrations, back off functions, and purchasing powers rather than the schools themselves. This means less superintendents and assistant superintendents, leading to cost savings through eliminating redundant high salary, six-figure positions. I also think that regionalization of purchases is also effective way for the state to save money. These savings could be redirected to increasing teacher wages, purchasing new technology, or expanding courses offered to students.

Additionally, I do not think that a commission should be choosing what towns regionalize but should only recommend to towns who they regionalize with. Towns should be able to apply to regionalize administrations with the neighbors of their choice.

In summary, it is my belief that it does not serve our children to disregard our towns' and cities' investment in the schools, to close schools, or to bus kids great distances in an effort to save money. In the spirit of fairness and accuracy, I do not believe that this is not what regionalization is. The real focus of regionalization is to create efficient schooling policies so that our local systems can focus on their the most important goal: ensuring equitable, quality education for every child.

Thank you for your time,

VICE CHAIR
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE

MEMBER
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