

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874. My name is Kerianne Fanelli and I reside in Wilton, CT with my husband and three school-aged daughters.

To begin, we would never have moved to the state of CT if it were not for the well-known, reputable small public school districts here. We lived in Westchester, NY for our entire lives and only left in 2010 after our search for a small-town school district that would provide an exceptional education for our daughters. My husband's job and our families remained in NY, but we were willing to sacrifice an easy work commute and proximity to our families for our daughters' education. We found our desired school district in the wonderful town of Wilton, CT and settled here in 2010.

We appreciate so much about our exceptional schools, but perhaps what we value the most is the knowledge that as a community we have direct involvement in how we govern our school district. Wilton has a thoughtful and dedicated Board of Education and a devoted Superintendent. We have many outstanding administrators and teachers. Our system works extremely well and with efficiency. We have one of the most highly performing districts in the state. We are not broken. We do not need to be fixed. Please don't break us.

I recognize that our state is in dire straits with many financial woes. I understand that things have to be fixed and changes have to be made. Forced regionalization of school districts is not the answer, and in my opinion is one of the most risk-laden approaches to try and achieve cost savings. Connecticut's schools are our best asset. These exceptional schools are what attracted EVERYONE I know in Wilton to move here. If our schools change to larger, regionalized districts we are going to lose the essential character of our towns and our prized asset.

I know that my family will not stay in CT. Ever increasing taxes, large impersonal school districts plus an unfriendly business environment does not equal a desirable state to call home. We will go where we can give our children a great education and keep more of our hard-earned income. I am certain that our towns and our state will see a massive exodus. CT is already suffering and we will not recover from a change like this. Another "for sale" sign just popped up on my street this week, joining the two others that sadly foreshadow the future of our town and state.

Finally, research indicates that regionalization is neither efficient nor economical. There is no empirical evidence to validate any cost savings. State savings need to come from other areas. Dismantling our school district structures and jeopardizing what works does not make sense and is an irresponsible and dangerous path for CT.

Please oppose these bills and give our state and local towns a fighting chance to keep our strong schools working.

Respectfully yours,

Kerianne Fanelli