

By E-mail: EDtestimony@cga.ct.gov

February 26, 2019

Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
300 Capitol Ave #5100
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: SB457, SB738, SB874

Dear Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and Members of the Education Committee:

I am a resident of the Town of New Canaan, CT and I wish to express my strongest objection to forced regionalization of schools, measures which could severely impact our District and my ten year old daughter. When my daughter was a baby, my wife and I researched public schools and determined that we wanted to purchase a home in New Canaan because of its preeminent school district. My wife and I made sacrifices to afford a home on the lower end of the spectrum here. Still, our taxes are very, very high, and my wife and I both work long hours so that our daughter can go to school in New Canaan. Attending a New Canaan school has taken hard work and planning for over a decade. Everything we have worked for was so our daughter could attend West Elementary School.

Forced regionalization would allow a neighboring community with many more kids and a much lower tax base to pay far less per student for education than we do. Instead of getting the education we planned and pay for, we will have to share resources with communities who will not pay their fair share, while watering down the quality of education by increasing class sizes. A town such as New Canaan should be entitled to maintain their independence to operate their way – a world class way with world class kids.

This is not a situation where neighboring districts have no resources or where neighboring communities of children are being denied a quality education while New Canaan thrives. This is still Connecticut, and every school district provides a quality education. Each child is entitled to the best education their tax base can provide and the solution is for those tax bases to use their resources better or to raise revenue by taxes, even outside their communities, not forced regionalization.

Let me be clear that children in neighboring communities should receive the best education their tax bases can provide with help from the state or other local communities if necessary. Maybe the legislature levies a tax and creates a pool of funds so that other districts can get where New Canaan is as a district. Maybe the legislature creates a fund that can be used for higher teacher salaries in the poorest sections of Hartford. If we need to build more schools in low income areas of Bridgeport, levy a state tax. Sponsor a referendum. Make Fairfield County residents pay more because of the higher property values. Just don't siphon off resources or require a town like New Canaan to dismantle the great learning institution that they have built.

I appreciate the hard work you do on behalf of Connecticut's children. I ask that you pursue any other alternatives to accomplish your goals. Anything other than forced regionalization.

I would have driven up for this hearing but I was not aware of the hearing until it was too late to miss work. If there are further public hearings, I will attempt to be there as I believe this is a crisis-level issue that will hurt in a major way my daughter's future. Thank you again for considering this testimony.

Very Truly Yours,

Casey Fundaro
New Canaan, CT

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- Format your statement in a Word document or a pdf.
- Include the bill numbers at the top. The bills dealing with forced school regionalization are [SB 457](#), [SB 738](#), and [SB 874](#).
- Start your written comments with this introduction: "*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.*"
- End with: "*Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.*"
- Include your name(s) and town.
- Attach the document to an email.
- Put the bill numbers in the subject line of the email.
- Address the email to EDtestimony@cga.ct.gov.
- Email the committee **before 3:30 PM on Thursday, February 28**.
- These instructions are important for those testifying in person as well as those submitting written testimony only.