

Ava Gilbert
Written Testimony
Bills 457, 738, SB 874

Good Afternoon,

My name is Ava Gilbert. I live in Lyme, and am in 6th grade at Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School. When I was two and my younger sister still an infant, my parents sold their home in Deep River to move to Lyme. They loved their home and neighbors in Deep River – they still talk about it today. The sole reason they moved was for the school system. My younger sister and I only know Lyme as home. It is a beautiful small town, and as my parents say, families move here because of the low taxes, beautiful land and, most importantly, excellent school system.

I am what the school calls “Talented and Gifted”. Complex math, science and music come easily to me. My elementary school was a wonderful place to be – I loved my teachers, the principal and my classmates. Even though the standard math curriculum did not challenge me, the school with their unique approach to learning, helped me grow more socially and interpersonally. Some of my teachers recognized that I needed extra challenges and would go out of their way to provide me with more complicated homework. I was told that when I entered the Middle School, I’d be more challenged. Well today I am in Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School and I am getting the challenge that I need. I have a wonderful Math teacher who recognizes my abilities. I am in after school math and Science Olympiad programs to challenge me. I even won a medal at the Science Olympiad Harvard Invitational. While I don’t always like 2-3 hours of homework each night, I know I would not develop my full potential without it.

Another thing about me, I am challenged with change. I also am slow to make new friends. Not because I don’t want to, but because I’m socially very shy. The thought of moving to another school would be difficult for those reasons. But that’s not what I fear most. I fear not being challenged and given the opportunity to excel. I fear, for me, it will be a set back. And I don’t want to go back to being that kid who is unchallenged. I want thrive and be surrounded by the teachers I know and love and who know me.

This Bill has caused my parents a lot of stress. They’re small business owners with two young kids – they don’t need more stress. However, they have promised my sister and I that our family would once again move to ensure we have the best education. I love Lyme and I love the Lyme-Old Lyme School system. I would hate to see it change.

Thank you.