

***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.***

As a resident of the town of Harwinton, an educator in Regional School district for 18 years, I ask you to not pass the aforementioned bills. While I support school regionalization, I do not support forced regionalization because it ignores the complexities of regionalization and fosters decisions based on finances rather than what is best for children. Moreover, there is no evidence supporting its success in New England states. If you examine the history of the state of Maine, you will see that forced regionalization led to more conflict than successes. Ten years later, acknowledging this legislative failure, Maine is now focused on an incentive-based system for regionalization.

These bills would force regionalization on schools that are already providing high quality education at a reasonable cost. Our school has been a School of Distinction for 4 years, and I believe forced regionalization would be detrimental to the high performing schools in our state leading to negative effects on education.

The Governor's bill calls for forcing shared superintendents. In 1999, a report from the New Jersey Assembly Task Force on School District Regionalization concluded that, "Sharing administrative services doesn't necessarily cut costs, because as personnel begin to take on region-wide responsibilities, it often becomes necessary to hire more staff to support them."

There is no one-size fits all solution to the problems we face in education. Forced regionalization is not looking at the individual needs of the towns and the people they service.

***Thank you again for reading my written testimony.***

Cheryl Hedrick  
Harwinton, CT