

Bills SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and Mc Carty, 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 a parent of a child that has had the wonderful opportunity to go to school in the town of Wolcott. My husband and I made a conscious decision to seek out a town and school system that would benefit our child when we became pregnant. Wolcott has done an outstanding job on providing that education while maintaining programs, such as Project Explore for the talented and gifted students. Many of these programs have been cut from the budgets in other school districts due to the needs for other students and programs. However, Wolcott has found a way to preserve it giving these students an opportunity to show their talents in school. My son has benefitted from both and has excelled in school due to the ability for Wolcott to provide this with the current curriculum.

The students of Wolcott should NOT be displaced and forced to attend an inner city school where these programs are not offered as well as students from Waterbury being allowed to attend our schools and benefit. Many people choose the town they live in based on the school system in that town. Regionalization with Waterbury will NOT benefit the students of Wolcott.

I cannot support a Bill that will allow students in Wolcott to be placed in an inner city school. I cannot support budget increases and tax increases for out of town students. I cannot support programs that are currently offered to be cut because of regionalization.

An Article in the Republican American dated January 28, 2018 by Karumni cited "Chronic absenteeism rife at Waterbury high schools". The article goes on to state that in the first 82 days of the 2017-2018 school year that more than 30 percent of the students in the three high schools had missed enough time to be considered "chronically absent". The article goes on to explain that absenteeism is greater on days with inclement weather and delayed openings due to the older students having to assume child care responsibilities. The lowest absenteeism is in the Magnet Schools where families had to apply to enroll their children.

Truancy is not an issue in the Wolcott school system. Taking on this issue alone, creates classrooms that are disruptive and the need to "police" these actions resulting in more resources that will be a burden to the school district and the tax payers of Wolcott. Nor should students that are placed from Wolcott to the Waterbury school system be burdened with that issue as well.

Teachers in the Wolcott school system choose to work with the students in this community. I fear that Wolcott will lose these teachers to other school districts that are not forced to regionalize and are in communities similar to Wolcott. That would be detrimental to this community!

Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kristie Holderbach

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