

To Our Connecticut Lawmakers,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the bills proposed by Senator Looney and Senator Duff, PSB 738, PSB 457, and PSB 874 which would force regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

As a former student of the public schools in Wilton, Connecticut and aspiring teacher, I have been fortunate to attend locally run public schools. I have had phenomenal teachers who go above and beyond to provide support both in and outside of the classroom, a superintendent dedicated to serving the unique interests of my school, and overall a district where people feel a close tie to the community and a deep involvement with the success of our schools.

Now in my final year of college I have looked at schools across the country as I consider my next step and time after time I have seen how cutting costs and not having a dedicated advocate for each school has harmed the quality of education. I understand how there is a need to address some of the fiscal issues looming in our state, but I fear that these bills that do not even mention school quality will negatively impact the schools that I have come to see as the benchmark for quality and rigor across the country. My dream is to one day return back to Connecticut and give back to the community that gave me so much by also serving as a teacher there, but I am concerned that these bills will lead to decreased administrator and community engagement.

Research by the National Education Policy Center has concluded that any perceived benefits from consolidating school districts are “vastly overestimated.” Another article called “Does School District Consolidation Cut Costs?” in the Education Finance and Policy journal has concluded that overall consolidation leads to a host of negative impacts including higher transportation costs, higher teacher costs, lower staff and student motivation and effort, and low parental involvement. In addition, it only led to significant benefits in incredibly small, rural school districts where there were fewer than 1,500 pupils. This clearly will not be the case with school consolidation in Connecticut.

I hope that you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools. Lawmakers voting to approve these bills will not receive my vote in future elections.

Sincerely,
Katherine Kahal
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