

As a parent of a future public school student, I STRONGLY oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools, including any bills that attempt to enact financial penalties (including loss of grant funding or any other shared source) against non-compliant towns or school districts.

My family moved here for the schools, and existing school quality is what keeps us here. Performance of the larger school districts is distinctly lower, and in fact lend credence to the opposite of what these bills hope to achieve – that it would be better for student performance and community engagement to break up the larger districts.

There exists a plethora of research which shows school district consolidation brings no measurable improvements in cost reduction or student performance, and in fact can cost more, while lowering student outcomes. This list of research includes a 2012 article sourced by the Council of State Governments, research by the NCSL, as well as the Center for American Progress.

None of these bills include even one mention of school quality. As such - and given the wealth of research contradicting regionalization as an effective course of action (as mentioned above), these bills are nothing short of totally irresponsible.

These bills erode the quality and the character of our local schools, which erodes the quality of our town, and every other which would be affected by these bills.

My town (Wilton) is one known for a high level of local involvement of the school personnel, including administrators. These bills totally destroy that existing framework and risk larger class sizes, lower performance of ALL students, as well as less engagement of teachers.

If anything, research backs the opposite of what these bills hope to achieve - in that, a more productive goal for educational reform in Connecticut would be to break up larger school districts into smaller ones. Performance should increase in those areas, and failing policies would be easier to isolate and fix. The most cost-effective districts have fewer than 5,000 students. Many of Connecticut's large districts such as Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford have high costs while many of our small districts have average or low costs.

In closing, I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced, or coerced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Most sincerely,

Nicholas Kraemer, Wilton resident