

February 24, 2019

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

We are writing to share our objection to Senate Bill (SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874), “An Act Concerning the Creation of Regional School Districts”. It appears that the premise of this bill is driven solely on finding potential cost savings without fully understanding the ramification on the quality of the education being provided.

When Melissa and I first got married, we lived in Norwalk. She has been a school teacher for over 29 years at a Stamford Elementary School. First hand, she is aware of all of the hardships, challenges, and resource constraints within the inner-city school districts. We saved everything we possibly could so that we could someday move from Norwalk to Wilton so that our children could be in a school environment where they could excel to their fullest potential.

After looking at many houses back in 2007 we were fortunate to find a small ranch house that we could afford to move into. We felt so blessed because all we wanted to do was to be in Wilton where our kids could attend the school district from the elementary level through High School. The Wilton High School is annually recognized among the top 1% of all school districts in the nation. The small class sizes, exceptional teachers, the availability of advanced courses and all the extra-curricular programs truly make Wilton a unique school district. We whole heartedly know that they will be prepared very well for college and will excel. Seeing our children excel in this amazing school district is the greatest thing that a parent could ask for.

This bill, if it were passed, would create mediocracy at best and would deteriorate the quality of education for the Wilton community. A 2011 study by the National Education Policy Center found the savings from school consolidations are “vastly overestimated”. Any consideration of mandatory consolidation must initially start with education quality and there is no proof that larger schools will be better than smaller ones. By stripping away the local control of the schools the unique character of our Wilton community will be adversely impacted.

Personally, we would be devastated and heart-broken if this bill passed as we would strongly consider moving out of Wilton. This would be exceptionally difficult for our kids as they have been part of the community since they have been little and developed many meaningful friendships as we have.

We appreciate your consideration and hope that you will oppose (SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874) and any other effort to force consolidation of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

Melissa and Jason Leventhal