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Wilton, CT 06897
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To: edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Regarding opposition to SB 454/738, SB 431, SB 874

We moved to Stamford, CT in 2005 with our then 11 month old twins from New York City seeking more space for our growing family. In 2012, we relocated to Wilton, CT when it became clear that the large and over-burdened Stamford school system was unable to best meet the education needs of one of our children. We spent most of the previous year having our son privately evaluated and consulting experts on what our next steps should be in terms of meeting his needs.

We specifically chose Wilton, CT because of the seamless flow of communication of the education specialists from one school to the next in a small school district with one school at each age level. Given this education structure, our son's transitions from each school level have been well planned, structured with strong team input from both the school he current is at and the school he is transitioning into and his success and growth has been tremendous. In conversation with parents in other CT districts, I know that our experience is unique to smaller district.

Our son, Luke, has unique medical and educational needs and requires the attention of teachers and a district that can meet these changing needs. Luke is exceptionally bright and has language processing issues and ADHD. He has had urological issues since he was born and has dysfunctional voiding requiring him to have frequent bathroom breaks and be constantly hydrated. He requires regular renal scans that cause him to miss some school. In September 2017, Luke experienced complex symptoms of disorientation, balance issues, extreme fatigue, increased heart rate and memory loss and after many months of diagnostic testing and Stamford Hospital, Greenwich Hospital and Yale Children's Hospital in CT and at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, he was diagnosed with a disruption in his parasympathic nervous system. Luke missed several months of school during his 8th grade year and was only able to tolerate ½ days when he returned. His team at Middlebrook Middle School worked closely with us to help him through that year and meet with Wilton High School to plan for transition to high school, given all the missed school and unknowns he faced medically. Luke made Honor Roll is first semester of high school this fall and plans to be an engineer. This success can only be attributed to the detailed planning of his 8th grade team, his guidance and special education support at the high school and the collaborative work of these staff together. In a larger district, where staff does not know each other well, I believe that Luke's unique and complex needs would never have been met to this level of amazing success.

I will add that Luke is an exceptionally bright child and a technology whiz. He has interned at the district office of the Wilton Board of Education, working on technology issues to support the rollout of new teacher laptops this fall. Once again, this type of opportunity would not exist in a

larger district and for a kid who missed a significant amount of school to have this opportunity meant more than I can put into words. This is because we have a Superintendent who in a small district knows when there is a child who is experiencing complex needs. This is priceless.

We are the parents of 3 children in the Wilton school system and we have grave concerns that the reasons we came to Wilton would be seriously by these bills and regionalization. Removing the local control from Wilton means taking success away from our child. For my family this means leaving Wilton. Leaving CT. And most certainly, as registered Democrats, losing our votes.

Please vote against regionalization and allow our local districts to continue to be able to provide individualized, focused and unique education to the children in our small towns.

Sincerely,

Deborah List, PhD and David Schwartz, Esq.