

February 27th, 2018

I am writing to express my strong opposition to proposed bills SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.”

As a parent of four public school students in Ridgefield Connecticut, I have witnessed first hand the benefits of locally run public schools. The Ridgefield Public Schools are high achieving. In fact Ridgefield High School was ranked 332 out of 20,500 US High Schools by US News and World Reports and also received a gold standard. If you have districts that are succeeding and high performing forcing them to combine with larger districts will erode the quality of the education the students receive. I have been a resident of Ridgefield for over a decade and moved here for the quality of the schools and it is the primary reason that I remain in Connecticut.

While I can appreciate the grave financial situation our state is in, regionalization of schools is not the answer. Economies of scale may appear attractive from a fiscal standpoint, but these bills attack our most precious asset as a community and as a state, the quality of our schools. When the inevitable quality decline occurs through regionalization than what? Residents will find what they want elsewhere and it will not be in the state of Connecticut. This will further erode the overall economy of our state.

If approved, these bills will only increase an additional outflow of residents, many of whom came to this state for the schools, further eroding state revenue and worsening the state's fiscal crisis. To be honest reading the coverage I have seen in the news and in social media if I was considering a move, it would most certainly not be to Connecticut. However, I am here and I'm invested in my schools, my town and the health of education in Connecticut. These bills offer nothing that indicates education quality will improve. The harsh reality is you may save some money in the short term but the overall damage to the health of education and the economic health of our towns and state over the long term will be far greater and long lasting.

The small towns of Connecticut are successful based on the quality of their schools, which attract residents, small business and community engagement. The quality of our schools is a matter of civic pride, attracts new residents to our community and brings our town a steady stream of new ideas and energy. The end result is economic growth, which our state desperately needs. Smaller towns like Ridgefield are the economic engines of our state. Forced regionalization will devastate our strong schools and the economic growth of these communities.

For these reasons, I implore you to oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Respectfully Submitted,

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