

Re: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874

Dear Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

I am writing to state my opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874. Twelve years ago, my husband and I selected to reside in Wilton in no small part due to the education we knew our future children would receive. We were also very fond of the centrally located schools in Wilton that were near all town residents. We now have two thriving girls- one in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and one in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Through the years we have met many families that have moved to Wilton specifically for the excellent reputation of the local school system. It has always struck us as telling that many of these families move to Wilton when their oldest is kindergarten eligible. The cost of living here is high but it becomes worth it when you understand the quality of the education received. I firmly believe that forced regionalization will compromise the quality of education we are currently experiencing and have come to expect. Additionally, the complexity and increased transportation time for regionalization would create a hardship for many. Further, I believe forced regionalization will negatively impact the value of our homes and our local economy.

I do not support the forced regionalization bills before the Connecticut state legislature (SB 457 and SB 738 (formerly SB 454) and SB 874). A foundational value of Connecticut educational system is the importance of *local* voice and *local* control in educational decision making. Therefore, mandating regionalization (or mandating any such action that would fundamentally remake school districts) undermines the values and beliefs that guide Connecticut school systems. These bills are completely inconsistent with what we value as Wilton residents and citizens of Connecticut.

Furthermore, there has been no evidence presented indicating this would improve educational outcomes or reduce cost. Nor do any of these bills include any mention of school quality.

Looking at the bills and thinking about my school district and the region, I do not believe that regionalization would be beneficial for our students, for our schools, for our community and for residents of Connecticut. Forced school regionalization will deter new families from moving to CT and will encourage people to leave CT – both of which negatively impact the economic rehabilitation of our state.

Thank you reading my written testimony. I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Respectfully,

Beth Anne McMahon  
82 Thunder Lake Road  
Wilton, CT 06897