

Connecticut Education Committee

300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Subject: Opposition to bills SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and SB 7150

I'm writing to record my strong objection to the bills currently in consideration related to forced regionalization of schools. Specifically, bills SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874. In addition would like to state my strong objection to bills that attempt to localize payments of teacher pensions, bill SB 7150.

As a father of 3rd and 7th grade students in the Darien School District, we choose to live in Darien because of the excellent schools that provide small class sizes and individual attention and are focused on achievement. Simply put, all of these bills put the quality of the education at my district in peril. As a registered Democrat who voted for Mr. Duff and Gov. Lamont, I must say I'm appalled at how they have turned their campaign promises of improving education into an attack on our schools. These bills seem designed to target our school system which currently receives little to no state aid, is a responsible manager of its budget and provides exceptional outcomes for its students. And simply put these bills put that at risk. Why? Because essential to public education is the ability for schools to operate at the local level for the best interest of its students. Time and time again, schools have found that being forced to conform to regional, state or federal rules hurts schools and students. The job of running our public schools and educating our students is hard enough, without politicians using it as a pawn in their budget balancing game. In fact, evidence from implementation of forced regionalization in other states and studies on the topic have shown that these efforts rarely result in cost savings and have unintended consequences that related directly to student outcomes. Specifically, according to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving report on K-12 Regionalization in Connecticut, "policies that call for wholesale regionalization based on imposed criteria (e.g., minimum/maximum number of students) can have unpredictable, and often adverse, consequences." The report goes on to find that "K-12 regionalization generally includes combining school districts, boards of education, and central office staff. This can result in closing schools, eliminating teaching positions, reducing administrative staff, and increasing student-to-teacher ratios, among other consequences."

So, in conclusion, while I understand the challenging budgeting issues facing our state, we cannot compromise on the education of our children. Therefore, I ask that you keep your hands off our schools

and that my strong objections to these bills and any effort to legislate the regionalization of the Darien School district be entered into the record. In addition, I hope that all our representatives will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools. Lastly, I ask that you would oppose bills like SB 7150 that would represent a undue burden on local budgets, putting students education at risk and reducing spending on students education.

Sincerely,

Michael Medeiros
12 West Elm St
Darien, CT 06820

cc: Governor Ned Lamont, Senator Bob Duff, Senator Carlo Leone, Representative Matt Blumenthal, Representative Terrie Wood