

# KRISTA NEILSON

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General Assembly Education Committee Members  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT

Re: SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

Dear General Assembly Education Committee Members:

Charimen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874. I am writing to voice my opinion against these bills and any future bills that would impose regionalization of schools in the State of Connecticut.

My husband was born and raised in New Canaan and after having lived around the country and having two children of our own, we decided to return here to raise them, in large part because of the quality of education. Having moderate sized school districts under local control sets Connecticut apart from other states and results in world class educational outcomes for our children.

I am aware of our State's fiscal problems and definitely support finding ways to cut costs and raise revenue. However, data – including that from the Hartford Foundation's "K-12 Regionalization in Connecticut" report from 2018 – shows that a "one size fits all" approach to districting may not be cost-effective or foster educational achievement. Rather, it sounds like regionalization works best when it is voluntary and on a case-by-case basis. I urge you to consider a more nuanced approach to the regionalization issue.

Lastly, I am uncertain if teacher pension expenses are part of any of these bills, but I would like to also voice my opinion against using a statewide median income as the basis for municipal

pension contribution. Just as a "one size fits all approach" does not work for regionalization, it does not work for salaries either. Obviously cost of living varies widely throughout the State and I do not believe more expensive places to live should be penalized for paying their teachers more than other districts. Therefore, I support using a regional teacher salary average for determining municipal pension contributions.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

*Krista L. Neilson*

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