

February 27, 2019

Opposition to SB 874:

An Act Concerning Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut

Opposition to SB 457:

An Act Concerning the Size of School Districts

Opposition to SB 738:

An Act Concerning the Creation of Regional School Districts

Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in **opposition** to bills **SB 874, SB 457** and **SB 738**. **I oppose any bill that would require school districts to regionalize or consolidate in any way. I also oppose any bill or amendment that would regulate homeschooling families, requiring them to register with the state.** I support our fundamental right to home school our children without interference or intimidation from the government. It is clearly an overreach and imposition on the rights of parents to raise and educate their own children.

Many public school families come to Connecticut for the school systems. They want to be actively involved with their local school boards and administrations. This makes for better quality schools, more involved families, more engaged students, and better learning overall. Why on Earth should that be undone by forcing districts to combine when they don't want to? How can that possibly be of any benefit to students and families? It's not. Many people settle in smaller districts intentionally. Let them be! It's no business of the state. People will leave if measures like this are taken.

As for registering homeschoolers, there is no need and this is a gross governmental overreach and legislative creep. What right does the state have to interfere with the God-given liberty to educate our own children, free from intimidation of government officials and/or the Department of Children and Families? The public schools are available for people who *choose to use them*. There is no justification for requiring the registration of children who are educated at home by their parents. It has been suggested that DCF needs to "cross-check" this registration list with their neglect investigations. That doesn't make any sense. If DCF has an investigation they are already aware of a family's status and a list of homeschoolers is useless to them. The

implication here is that homeschoolers would essentially be registered with DCF and set up for bullying and harassment. Not okay. Let's remember that truant and homeschooling are very different situations.

I am also opposed to the language that declares the state will be providing curricula and frameworks for homeschooling parents. This is clearly more legislative creep as it opens the door further to curriculum requirements. The language is not necessary to the bill and should be removed.

Across the board, this current legislature continues to write intrusive bills that undermine parental rights, individual freedoms, and privacy, in an attempt to solve problems that don't exist and to control the actions of the people who live here. That needs to end. I will not live in a place where my fundamental liberties as a citizen are micromanaged by meddlesome governmental officials. You are walking on treacherous ground with proposals like this.

Please oppose any bill or amendment that opens the door to further regulations on the schools and home schooling parents, or that serves to further erode our individual liberties, religious freedoms, and God-given rights to parent, nurture and educate our own children.

Thank you,

Meredith Nielson
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