

Oppose Educational Bills SB457, SB738, SB874, HB7319

March 12, 2019

CT Planning and Development Committee
CT Education Committee

Be advised I vehemently OPPOSE bill HB 7319. Effectively, you are saying that 'property' owners will be billed by Boards of Education in addition to the billing that will be assessed by the town government in which an individual lives. Since the word 'property' is not defined in your bill, one can only assume that housing, autos, boats, trucks, etc. are open for additional taxation by a completely different entity than the town tax collector.

These school bills are creating an undercurrent in the electorate around the state. People are extremely nervous, upset and angry at the prospect of losing the integrity of their towns, involvement in community schools, and quality of learning.

For the life of me, politics aside, I cannot understand the reason to regionalize school systems under the guise of a 'more efficient educational system' when this purpose is contradicted by research. After reading several reports (Fed Reserve Bank of Boston, Hartford Foundation, NEPC-Nat'l Education Policy Center), all cite critical reasons not to regionalize that outweigh opposing view points. The first is from NEPC, "Research also suggests that impoverished regions in particular often benefit from smaller schools and districts, and they can suffer irreversible damage if consolidation occurs." The second is quoted from the Hartford Foundation, "Both student and parent engagement declines as district enrollment increases because the added bureaucracy creates new barriers for them to overcome. Subsequently, apathy increases among both students and parents, as does student absenteeism, resulting in lower educational achievement. Parents may also have less influence on K-12 education policies as boards of education merge and more voices are added to policy debates."

I'm sure you have already heard many more reasons, property values, less influence from citizens on their children's education, decline in extracurricular activities, etc. Suffice it to say, these bills should not be approved, studied, extended, or revised... just cancelled!

Kevin J. O'Connor
42 Jefferson Dr
Ridgefield, CT 06877