

## **Written Testimony on SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874**

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### **To all members of the Education Committee:**

I am writing this email to express my strong opposition to forced regionalization of school districts in Connecticut (SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874). I am a parent of three boys and the only reason my husband and I invested our savings to buy a house in Wilton was to provide an excellent education for our children. I believe that opening the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools is a gross injustice to punish our town and dozens of other small communities like Wilton that over the years have built very successful school programs.

We realize that Connecticut is facing dire financial issues, but forcibly consolidating schools will not reverse the decades of financial mismanagement. Instead of toying with our children's education, our state leaders should take a hard, honest look at what got us here in the first place. None of these bills include even one mention of education quality. For any bill that effects education – first and foremost, we should look what the outcome is for our kids before we consider any financial savings. Further, no empirical evidence was submitted (based on prior studies and similar actions in other states) that forcing school districts to consolidate will result in any economic benefits. However, there is no doubt that forcing school districts to consolidate will create a greater distance between the district's boards of education and administrators on the one hand and the parents in the smaller communities on the other, destroying the board's accountability and the local parental control over our children's education.

The school districts of Darien, New Cannon, Wilton, Ridgefield and other small CT towns have proven high quality of education and financial stability. Why change something that works so well. Why punish our kids to experiment with an idea that fails time and time again?

We urge you to find bipartisan solutions to our state's financial problems, rather than using the latest election results to force a very unpopular legislation that will put our children's education at risk. Don't play with our children's education! It will result in an irreparable damage to our schools and by extension will have grave consequences for the entire state of Connecticut. Our town of Wilton has never been so united in opposition to a proposed legislation as it has been in the last few weeks in opposition to the proposed forced school regionalization. This is one truly non-partisan issue for every single resident of Wilton. The same is true for many other towns in Connecticut. We urge you to heed our voices and oppose the proposed bills SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

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