

February 25, 2019

Dear Education Committee Members:

I am a parent of children in the public school system, and I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools, or any attempt to penalize public schools for not regionalizing.

I am a Democrat. I voted for Governor Lamont and campaigned for all the Democrats in my district, making phone calls and writing postcards. My husband is a Republican, as are many of my friends. I convinced many of them to vote Democrat. The fact that these bills are some of the first that you are coming out with is embarrassing and frustrating.

As a Democrat, I welcome discussion and action on poverty, racism, and educational disparity. School consolidation is an idea from the past and it's been studied and it does not work.

Regionalization will not fix the problems in lower performing schools, and it will make our schools worse. Bigger is not always better, especially when it comes to education. Impoverished regions benefit from smaller schools and districts. Regionalization would go in the opposite direction.

Connecticut's one last remaining appeal is its small towns and good schools. People are already leaving. Connecticut has a net-out migration. They are leaving to find jobs in other, more affordable states. If you regionalize our local school districts, there will be nothing left to promote. More people will leave, it's inevitable. There will be almost no reason for them to stay.

We need to look ahead, not backwards. Instead of regionalization, your efforts would be better served by getting tolls up on our roads with software protecting residents, improving transportation for commuters, developing cities as urban hubs to bring back the middle class, and helping develop Fairfield and New Haven counties as desirable places for startups and new businesses.

These bills are bad for Connecticut. I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874. If these are the solutions we're advancing as Democrats, we will understandably lose in 2020.

Sincerely,

Barbara Rucci
New Canaan, CT