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I am writing in opposition to three pending bills:

- SB 738 - An Act Concerning the Creation of Regional School Districts
- SB 457 - An Act Concerning the Size of School Districts
- SB 874 - An Act Concerning Educational Initiatives and Services in CT

As a member of the Canton Board of Education and as a retired long time educator in Connecticut, any education law passed by the state legislature ought to have the goal of improving the quality of education for our students. If the cost of educating our students can be reduced at the same time this would be an added benefit. The three bills listed above would neither improve the quality of education nor reduce the cost of education for our students.

The Canton student population is approximately 1500 students. Our town and our Board of Education works very diligently to provide quality education and be efficient at the same time. In fact our per pupil cost is significantly lower than the state average and is lower than all but three of the current regionalized districts in the state.

We share services with other towns where possible; we utilize cooperative purchasing agreements whenever available; we share special education transportation costs when possible; and we share services with our town government when possible.

Most importantly we voluntarily welcome 100 Open Choice students to our schools each day.

People move to a town like Canton to have their children attend the schools that our town controls and makes decisions in the best interests of those students. Local control improves the quality of our schools, allows parents ready contact with the schools and produces excellent results.

Forced regionalization by the state for a town like Canton offers no indication of improved education and no plan that would reduce costs. It does offer the possibility of larger schools and less personalization of instruction, endless time on busses for children, less opportunity for students to participate in extracurricular activities and a greater chance for a child to "fall through the cracks."

Regionalization should be a voluntary decision made by towns when it makes good educational and economic sense. Please do not pass these bills.

Sincerely,
Joseph P. Scheideler