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**Date:** March 1, 2019 at 12:23:20 PM EST  
**To:** [edtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:edtestimony@cga.ct.gov)  
**Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, SB 874**

Testimony for the Education Committee hearing March 1, 2019.

Dear Honorable members of the Committee:

We are writing you to express our ardent and profound opposition to the Bills SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 before you.

These Bills represent the regionalization of school districts within the State of Connecticut.

The independence of individual school districts is a cornerstone of Connecticut local home rule. When we rejected county government many years ago, local control of town expenditures and particularly the educational expenditures became the responsibility of local governments. State mandates in recent years have eroded much of that independence and detracted from the ability of local authorities to do what is best for its citizens. Each current district has established local priorities and allocated school decisions to best serve the local community as they are closest to the needs and wants of individual students and the district as a whole.

The regionalization of school districts removes the closeness of government to the needs and requirements of students, families and the citizenry and adds another layer on expense, control and administration to an already complex system. Longer term implications show that regionalization does not reduce costs, in the long term, as the exponential growth of administration detracts dramatically from the funding of actual teachers and the ability to educate the students.

Connecticut has prided itself on its educational system, and these attempted proposals for regionalization run counter to the ability to improve and maintain the system. Local control is critical containing costs and providing the individual needs of the local students and student bodies as a whole.

We are in a funding crisis. Taxes, State Regulation, and the basic macro economic developments have detracted from the ability of Connecticut to attract and maintain key elements of our economic base. We are suffering net decreases in population as a result of policies that have made Connecticut a less attractive state to reside, do business and educate our children. In this regard state interference with local education reduces the attractiveness of the State and the individual districts, particularly those which highly prize education. Regionalization, falsely stresses economy of scale as a cost saver, yet the net result is only to add another bureaucratic level detracting from the primary purpose of providing a decent education to the students within the individual districts. In addition, several municipalities, rather than addressing their own priorities have chosen an attempt to export their runaway costs, lack of educational priority and misadministration to more efficient and responsive local schools and school districts.

These Bills SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874, are just more of an attempt to deprive local districts of home rule and degrade successful school districts by detracting from the best, not raising the worst.

In addition, regions are much less capable to respond to local needs and changes in the population and student needs.

These Bills are also a prelude for an attempted saddling of local districts with the mistakes of the State in the maladministration and underfunding of state employee and teacher pension plans.

Your job as our representatives is to improve the general welfare and the attractiveness of our state. You are also charged improve the quality of our education and provide a suitable macro economic environment. You need to slow the exit of productive resources and people from our state. These Bills are not the way to do that.

Sincerely,

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