

To: Members of the Education Committee

Subject: OPPOSITION to SB 874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

I am writing today to share my reasons for **opposing** SB 874.

- 1) I strongly oppose changing current home school regulations. The current system is working fine and our homeschooled population is thriving in CT; in most cases they far out perform public school children in their academic achievements. The existing homeschooling statute allows parents to exercise their constitutional right to direct their child's/children's education and to submit a letter of intent, if desired, to their local school. It is reprehensible to suggest that a parent must "register" their child in person, annually, to exercise this freedom. Not only does this infringe on our rights to educate our children, it appears to be harassing in nature. Registration of public school children makes sense because the school system must keep track of the children under their care; this is simply not the case with homeschooled children.

- 2) Parents make the decision to home school for a number of reasons. For some, the decision is made to provide a higher standard of education to their child while for others it might be so they can choose a different academic approach than the public schools offer. Normally, the last thing a homeschooling parent would want is for the public education system to provide them with a model curriculum. They are fully aware of the basic educational elements that must be taught and should be allowed to make choices relative to their curriculum based on what works best for their children. They clearly don't need to have a model of curriculum provided to them. This is readily available through their local school system if desired. Parents who home school their children still pay taxes and are able to access those resources through the public school(s) in their town.

- 3) Finally, as a resident of the town of Canterbury I am deeply opposed to regionalization. Many parents purposefully chose to purchase a home in a particular town due to the town's school system. They chose where to live understanding the tax implications as they related to their child's educational opportunities. Regionalization of schools would totally negate those decisions. Parents of children in a small town maintain close oversight of their public schools. They are very active and connected to the teachers and administrators of their respective schools and are able to affect changes through their local government and school boards. The changes you propose would reduce our ability to affect change in our schools. Further, the cost to implement this proposal would have a negative effect on our town budgets while likely having a negative impact on our children's education because our tax dollars will be funneled to underperforming towns. Sadly, this is the typical scenario that we see so often in this state--- the rewarding of poor performance at the expense of those who have managed to perform well while staying within their budgets. It is simply wrong. Residents work hard at a local level to maintain educational costs while providing the best educational opportunities possible. Regionalization would be a disaster for small town schools.

Please do not move this bill out of committee as it serves no benefit to our state. I request you Vote NO on SB 874.

Respectfully,

Maria Smith, Canterbury