

Testimony re: SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

As parents of public school students, my husband and I strongly oppose the above-mentioned bills, none of which places any focus on school quality, and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization of public schools currently operated by Connecticut municipalities. We are fortunate to live in Ridgefield, a town with high quality schools, with not only strong academics but also strong and varied extracurricular options. We moved to Ridgefield from another Connecticut town with local schools that offered arguably even stronger academics but lacked the community feel that we desired.

My husband and I work very hard to earn incomes to support life in Connecticut, and particularly in Fairfield County. We are in Connecticut, and in Fairfield County, in large part due to the local control and high quality of the schools. We do not have any family here. We have careers that do not require us to be here. However, we value Connecticut's educational system and thus have made the financial sacrifices necessary to remain in this very expensive state. If Ridgefield schools are forced to consolidate, whether with a school system that some would say is weaker or with a school system that some would say is stronger, we will leave. We moved to Ridgefield for its balance of academics and extracurriculars and to be among families with values similar to ours. If we wanted the schools of one of the towns or cities surrounding Ridgefield, we would have moved to one of those towns or cities. But, we did not. We moved to Ridgefield. If forced regionalization becomes a reality, we will leave the state – whether we move one (1) mile across the state line into New York or much further, we will no longer be paying Connecticut taxes or contributing to the Connecticut economy in any manner. We can live elsewhere for far less money, or with far shorter commutes due to the incredible traffic in this county, earning the same incomes. Sadly, many of our peers are in the same position – they too are in Fairfield County for the schools and local control this State offers. Without local control of the schools, far more Fairfield County taxpayers and strong economic contributors will leave. This will not help the economy, whether school regionalization is forced or not. The state's economy cannot afford to lose taxpayers in droves, sadly most of whom are likely to be the state's higher earning households that can afford to simply pack up and go.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony, and we hope that you will oppose SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874.

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