

2/28/19

RE: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, SB 874

To Whom It May Concern:

As a parent of public school students, 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.

We chose to move to Newtown because it was a smaller community with less crime and the schools were miles better than where we lived previously. We put a high value on the quality of our childrens' education and all the services and programs that are offered which have helped our children succeed thus far.

A great concern of mine is classroom sizes and would not want my children to be crammed into a classroom with over 20 children. My son's class at this point is at 23 which is a challenge for him academically and socially. I can only imagine that forced regionalization would mean bigger class sizes which would lead to a greater number of children getting lost in the shuffle which does not help all children succeed. Instead they will fail.

When you devalue education and the quality of a good education you drive people away from a community and all the local businesses within that community will be forced to shut down without patrons to sustain them which is also a concern for me as I am a small business owner in my community. We love living in the smaller community with that close knit feeling you have with your neighbors and want our kids to experience that kind of lifestyle.

The questions we as parents will have to ask ourselves is can we live in a community with no school system for our children or are we ok with sending them to the next town or two over where they may have to endure even a long commute to and from that school and the answer is we are not. We will be forced to think about whether we want to move to a new town or even out of state that provides the quality education we are looking for. We want our children to be positive contributing members of our community when they are adults which does not happen in most cases when you have poor quality education. We are telling them that it isn't a top priority, get them in, push them through, and get them out. That is the message I believe we are sending our children.

My brother lives in the town in which we grew up and is much smaller than Newtown. The school system is horrible, not like when I attended. People don't want to move into that community nor can people sell their homes to leave the community all because the school system is terrible.

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Rachel Soto

NEWTOWN, CT