

**Ross Tartell, Town of Wilton: Statement in Opposition of
Bill No. 7350 & Governor's Bill 874**

Ross Tartell: Testimony to eliminate bill No. 7350 An act concerning regional cooperation and the sharing of services among regional educational service centers and member boards of education.

The idea of identifying resources that might be shared and best practices is very appropriate. But, I have two issues with Bill 7350. The bill never mentions improving educational outcomes. Second, it appears that this bill is redundant in Section 4 of the Governor's bill 874 AAC Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut.

I oppose sections 1 – 3 of Governor's Bill 874 AAC Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut.

Section 1 establishes a study commission. Section 1 states, "There is established a Commission on Shared School Services for the purpose of developing a plan for the redistricting or consolidation of school services and school districts." This first sentence in the section demonstrates the assumption that the plan is for implementation, not recommendation. This removes the capacity of towns and local school districts to influence and customize initiatives to create economies of scale. This section clearly delineates that the decision-making responsibility rests solely with the state, and all local control is effectively eliminated.

Forced mergers have a failure rate of approximately 70%. It is likely that very high failure rate will remain for the forced consolidation of school districts. Each town or city in Connecticut is different, and each region is different. Extending a study committee into regionalization of school districts prevents the local influence that separates potential success from certain failure. I would like to see rejection of sections 1 – 3 of Governor's Bill 874.

One last suggestion for this bill. The stipulations for compliance for this bill are so detailed that I do not see how any adjustments could be made to respond to unique local circumstances. For example, (line 246) "Employment of a superintendent shall be by election of the board of education. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, no person shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent until the board receives written confirmation from the Commissioner of Education that the person to be employed is properly certified or has had such certification waived by the commissioner pursuant to subsection (c) of this section."

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