



**Testimony
Robert Valentine
First Selectman, Town of Goshen
Before the Education Committee
March 1, 2019**

Good afternoon Chairman Sanchez and McCrony, members of the Education Committee.

I write today to express my opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874.

Each of the bills attempt to address preconceived inefficiencies in education as it relates to small school districts. Some by using a school district's total population; another by total student count and a third by using a combination of both. None, in my opinion, take sufficient account of the importance that our local school districts play in the fabric of our communities, or the large geographic area that makes up our more rural parts of the state. Each assumes an efficiency merely by the scale of the proposed regionalization without due consideration for the length of time a student would spend on a bus, educational outcomes and property values in our small communities.

Any proposal for change should take fully into account all of these aspects.

Cost certainly is consideration. The manner in which school districts in the State of Connecticut are organized is varied; certainly there are districts that are more efficient in managing costs than others but the reasons are as varied as our districts' geography, student populations, and local priorities.

We should and can work cooperatively to find ways to become more efficient, more cost effective, with even better outcomes than we have today. But the best way to achieve these goals is through a bottom-up dialogue on education, rather than a top-down mandate of one size fits all.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views on this very important topic.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert P. Valentine".

Robert P. Valentine
First Selectman, Goshen, Connecticut