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Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns with these proposals you are considering regarding School District regionalization in Connecticut:

- [Senate Bill 457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS](#)
- [Senate Bill 738 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS](#)
- [Governor's Bill SB 874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT](#)

I am writing as a 25-year resident of CT, who lives in a town that is already part of a regional school district: Old Lyme. I also serve as an Old Lyme member of the Regional School District 18 (Old Lyme and Lyme) Board of Education.

I have lived in other states which tend to have larger schools districts, based on county government structures, unlike the structure in place in Connecticut, often the layers of bureaucracy are also large and often unwieldy and not always responsive to individual student/family needs. That said, I am certainly in favor of districts and communities combining or sharing programs and services, *where it makes sense*.

I believe most of the small communities in southeastern and shoreline Connecticut are already collaborating and engaging in regional approaches in many areas, whether through our regional educational center, LEARN, or as smaller groups. I know that our district works closely with other districts. As a few examples, we share special education services and transportation, professional development, electricity costs, and participate in a health care collaborative, as well as providing cooperative sports and extracurricular programs for students. In many cases, school districts would like to do more sharing of services and resources, but face resistance and even risk financial penalties (such as from the State's Minimum Budget Requirement rules).

One of the proposed bills would require our small regional district to break apart (no easy task after decades as a regional district) and then have each town merge with different towns to form different regional school districts. That would have a significant and negative impact on the two small towns which have shared many services over the years (we even share a zip code). I am not sure how you split up an elementary school that is physically located in one town (Lyme) which educates students from the other town (Old Lyme). And more critically, what would ultimately be accomplished by this costly process? I believe this would only detract from the high quality education that our community has worked diligently to provide for the children of Lyme and Old Lyme.

Rather than imposing seemingly arbitrary one-size-fits-all requirements on each community in Connecticut, perhaps removing or scaling back State-imposed roadblocks to regionalization and shared services and programs would be more beneficial.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely

Jean Wilczynski