

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

HB 6519	PA 698	1969
House	4939-4945	(7)
Senate	3226	(1)
Education	533-534, 536-539, 544-553	(16)
		Total - 24 p

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives Proceedings

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CONNECTICUT  
GEN. ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS  
1969

VOL. 13

PART 11

4893-5297

Saturday, May 31, 1969

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Della Vecchia of the 26th District.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 26th.

MR. DELLA VECCHIA: (26th)

Mr. Speaker, the town of Southington purchased this land in question in the late 40's from a private individual for about \$7,000. The land was given to the State for the customary \$1.00. In September of 1962 while I was serving as a member of the Board of Selectmen, the town gave to the State ten acres of prime land which is to be used to build the proposed new armory. I feel that it is right that the Town of Southington be given the opportunity to repurchase this land which they presented to the State in 1948. The Town Counsel of Southington is receptive to this purchase. I urge that this bill be approved. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark further? If not, the question is on adoption of the bill. All those in favor, say Aye. Those opposed, No. The Ayes have it, and the bill is PASSED.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 1392. Substitute for House Bill No. 6519. An Act concerning Revision of the Laws Governing the Establishment and Operation of Regional School Districts.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 73rd.

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

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THE SPEAKER:

The question is on acceptance of the Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Will you remark?

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an Amendment.

THE SPEAKER:

The Clerk will please read the Amendment.

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A", offered by Mr. Mondani and Mr.

LaGrotta;

In Section 1, line 63 add the following: (e) Any temporary regional school study committee established before the passage of this act shall continue its study in accordance with the procedures and mandates of this act, but shall not be required to change its membership. The provisions of section 4 shall apply.

In section 16, line 53, strike the first sentence following "(b)" and insert the following in lieu thereof: "Annual receipts from taxation means the receipts from taxation of the member towns for the fiscal year next preceding the close of the last fiscal year of such regional school district."

In line 73, strike "average" and "reported".

Delete line 74.

In line 75, strike the material before "or".

In line 78, strike "average".

In line 81, strike "average".

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MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A".

THE SPEAKER:

The question is on the adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A".

Will you remark?

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, the first part of House Amendment Schedule "A" would insure that any regional school study committee now operative before the passage of this act, would be allowed to continue their work and would not be interrupted, and would then report, and their report would check into the proceedings set forth in this act. The second major section of the Amendment would amend the law to give regional school districts the benefits the municipalities receive under House Bill No. 6588, File 1449, which just passed this afternoon. Instead of using a three-year average of receipts for taxation to figure the debt limit, the average receipts of taxation of the member towns for the preceding fiscal year would be used. I urge support of this Amendment.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark further on the Amendment? The gentleman from the 170th.

MR. LaGROTTA: (170th)

Mr. Speaker, I support the Amendment.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark further on the Amendment? If not, all those in favor of House Amendment Schedule "A" say Aye. Those opposed, No. The Ayes have it. The Amendment is ADOPTED. It is technical. You may proceed.

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THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 73rd.

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, in urging passage of the bill now amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", this is a major revision to the school code relating to regional school districts. The bill represents a culmination of almost two years of research and discussion of the laws concerning regional school districts. The interim Education Committee studied the problems, and made certain recommendations for improvement in these laws in December 1968. I think that the interim committee and sub-committee would like to make special commendation to Mrs. Mary Lou Allen who, herself, is a member of a Regional Board of Education, and who contributed greatly to this study and helped us in preparing the bill now before us. I would like to yield, Mr. Speaker, to Representative LaGrotta, who also worked with us very diligently on this committee.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 170th.

MR. LaGROTTA: (170yh)

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill. It has been my pleasure to work with Mr. Mondani and many other members of the Education Committee upon what would be called a giant housekeeping bill. Two years ago we offered inducements to have towns join together in regional school districts, and perhaps we moved a little too fast, because some of the conditions allowing for the dissolution of the boards after they had formed the regional K through 12 had no statutory basis. We endeavored on the interim Education Committee to face these problems and try to resolve them in what we think

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is a reasonable manner. Substantially, the bill addressed themselves to that problem, and also to the problem of when three towns decide to join together in a K through 12, the various equities that the towns owned in connection with their school plans would have to be adjusted. The bill basically sets up the structure to form study committees who would reach mutual agreements on some of these problems. After they have reached the agreements, the bill structures a system of properly held hearings so that towns individually can hearing the findings of their study, and collectively and individually can vote on them. It does not in any way change the power of the town in connection with its authority to join regions, and any grants that are as involved as construction, ADM, will, under this bill, be going to the region. It is a mammoth bill, as you see, before you, and I would defer to Mr. Mondani to explain further areas of it.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 73rd.

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. LaGrotta pointed out, there are many, many technical sections that needed to be changed, and in changing them we provided a system whereby the local community would be allowed to make many, many choices in terms of the election of the board of education, the size of the board of education, and the distribution of capital property. The State in no way requires one system over the other, and leaves the option open. The problems of transfer within districts, requests for withdrawals, requests for addition of new towns, again will operate very smoothly. We think that this measure before us now has amended the statutes relating to regional districts in such a way that we will find many more K through 12 districts

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on the books when we come back in two years. I urge its adoption, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark further? The lady from the 93rd.

MRS. GREEN: (93rd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will very briefly state that about what I was going to say has already been said, but I do believe that this establishes much clearer guidelines for the organization of these school districts, and the fact that the towns will be voting on not only to join the districts, but also on the plans, will certainly eliminate confusion after the region is formed.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 40th.

MR. MAYER: (40th)

Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of the legislative intent to the gentleman from the 73rd, through you, sir, a question. In Section 8, line 89, there is mention there "In a case of a tie vote in the balloting for any officers, such tie vote shall be broken by lot." Is it true, sir, that this is referred to the tie mentioned in this particular section is an unbreakable tie?

THE SPEAKER:

Does the gentleman from the 73rd care to answer?

MR. MONDANI: (73rd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, it is understood that this would be an unbreakable tie, and that all efforts would be made to resolve it before going to the lot.

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MR. MAYER: (40th)

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER:

Will you remark further on the bill? The question is on passage of the bill as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A". All those in favor, say Aye. Those opposed, No. The Ayes have it. The bill is PASSED.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 1393. Substitute for House Bill No. 8670. An Act concerning State Grants and Loans for School Building Projects.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 1st.

MR. KENNELLY: (1st)

Mr. Speaker, may Calendar 1393, Substitute for House Bill No. 8670, File 1484 be passed retaining its place on the Calendar?

THE SPEAKER:

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 1394. Modified House Bill No. 7972. An Act concerning the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation Law.

THE SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 132nd.

MR. McLOUGHLIN: (132nd)

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE SPEAKER:

The question is on acceptance of the committee's favorable

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THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further. If not, as many who are in favor signify by saying aye, opposed. The aye's have it and the bill is passed.

THE CLERK:

Calendar No. 1389, File No. 1478. Favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on Education on Substitute House Bill No. 6519. An Act concerning Revision of the Laws Governing the Establishment and Operation of Regional School Districts, as amended by House Amendment Schedule A.

SENATOR SCHAFFER:

Mr. President, I move for acceptance of the Committees favorable report and passage of the bill, as amended.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage of this bill as amended. Will you remark.

SENATOR SCHAFFER:

Mr. President, while this is a very long bill, what it actually does, it clarifies the existing regional school district laws. It makes no actual changes in the philosophies and functions of the law but does re-word it so that it reads in a more understandable and efficient fashion.

THE CHAIR:

Are there further remarks on this bill. If not, as many who are in favor signify by saying aye, opposed. The aye's have it and the bill is passed.

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proposed legislation it concerns me that within the bills I see no mention of the participation of non-public schools and, therefore, no benefits would accrue to the 122,000 children attending non-public schools.

Since I feel that the proposed bills represent a thrust towards greater emphasis on regionalization of education services and programs, a thrust which will most likely accelerate in the future, and since non-public schools have the desire to participate in such a thrust towards regional cooperation, I respectfully bring this matter to the Education Committee's attention at this time in the hope that out of their concern for the education of all children in Connecticut, the Committee will be cognizant of the non-public schools desire for involvement and participation.

The precedent for such involvement and participation has already been established by the non-public schools' mandatory involvement in Title III Programs under the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Since House Bill 6481 and House Bill 6497 will help to permit programs initiated with Title III funds to continue, and will assist in their more effective operation - programs, I reiterate, in which non-public schools have been and will continue to be involved - I sincerely hope that the Committee will give serious consideration to their involvement in the legislation you are considering here this morning. Thank you.

Carol Cook, Washington, Connecticut. I am here primarily as a parent. I have five children in grades kindergarten through 12. I've also been a member of CAFE's Regionalization Committee and I am a member of the Board of Education of Regional District No. 12. I have come here primarily to speak on Bill 6519 which is the revision of laws concerning the establishment and operation of regional school districts.

Having seen what regionalization has done in the past year and a half for our educational system and what it proposes to do in the future, I am an ardent proponent of K-12 regionalization. The larger district (we now have 1,200 pupils) has enabled us to get top-quality administrators who see in the small town not the backwater of educational programs but the opportunity for significant progress.

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What can be done to encourage more small towns to regionalize on a K-12 basis? Because it seems as though most of our Connecticut towns are very jealous of their local control of education and do not easily or lightly give up entirely their local school boards. There is little question but that the "carrot" of additional state aid helps. But I believe that you as legislators must think through very carefully what you intended when you held out that "carrot." Did you intend these regionalization grants for the very small towns such as mine, or are larger towns (in which increased size of the school system will produce no educational improvement) going to be allowed to regionalize merely for the extra aid?

There are in Connecticut approximately sixty towns with fewer than 1,000 children in the local schools, and there are another forty-seven towns with from 1,000 to 3,000 children. I believe that it should be these towns which are helped and encouraged to regionalize on a K-12 basis. If you allow towns with school populations of up to 10,000 children to regionalize with the same monetary aids as the smaller towns, you appear to negate what you were originally trying to do; after all, there are only fifteen towns or cities in Connecticut with school populations of over 10,000 children.

I would like to suggest that any aids to K-12 regionalized districts be on a sliding scale, so that the smaller towns (with the smaller property tax base) get more aid and the larger towns less aid. I think that any K-12 district should have at least 1,000 students. A district then, with from 1,000 to 2,500 or 3,000 students, would get 25 percent additional ADM grant and 80 percent building grant aid; a district of 2,500 or 3,000 students to 5,000 students would get 10 percent additional ADM grant and 65 percent building grant; and towns with more than 5,000 students could regionalize but would receive no additional state aid for doing so.

I believe that at times regionalization can get out of hand. Two neighboring towns have a temporary regional school study committee and the larger of these two towns is expecting more than six hundred children in its first grade class next year; whereas, the smaller town has approximately half that number - three hundred children - in its entire school system. I am not sure that regionalization is the answer for towns of such divergent size and growth rates. I believe that regionalization will work best where the towns involved are of reasonably similar size, make-up and growth. Thank you.

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Eleanor Geiser, Member and Legislative Representative of the Glastonbury Public Schools in Glastonbury. I have been directed to speak in behalf of House Bill 6481 and also 6497.

The Glastonbury Board of Education recognizes there are needs in public education which can be best provided for through cooperative centers. We are presently utilizing such a facility in such a center by participating in METRO with a very happy experience.

The role and function of area educational service centers have been successfully demonstrated in other states, as you heard from previous speakers. We feel Connecticut is ready for this legislation and we urge your favorable action regarding area educational service centers. Thank you.

Chairman Blake: Are there other speakers whom I have not called?  
Dr. Kornbluth.

Dr. Kornbluth: I have made a statement but may I just add to that. This will be asking a question of this Committee rather than you ask me. We are in a very serious bind on needing this legislation that are not money bills that are mentioned in my prepared statement - legislation that Mr. Mondani and others have proposed. We've had our hearing with your finance committee of this legislative group and we're wondering what is the next step that can be done to get these bills passed well in advance of this April 4th date, which is our referendum date - because unless it is done, we can not go ahead with our referendum. We're just wondering what can be done to get these bills out on the floor, if that's the expression.

Representative Mondani: The bills were heard and transferred, actually referred, to the Finance Committee. It is my understanding that they are going to have a meeting on these shortly.

Chairman Blake: That clarifies the bonding problem. It wasn't clear in the law. We will try to rule that very large group, which is the legislature. We will try to get it out early.

Dr. Kornbluth: Thank you very much.

Chairman Blake: Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

Dr. W. Raymond James, Essex: I have several things to talk about. The first one is in connection with 6519 on regionalization. We have not included in our CABE

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report any of the discussions about financial aid and incentives for regional districts. The CABE has not yet established a definite policy about financial incentives in this and similar programs. I would like to drop my roll as committee member and make some remarks of my own along these lines, based on 21 years in a small town, as well as 12 years as a member of Regional School District No. 4 Board of Education, and 5 years as Chairman.

If you will think back on the history of education in Connecticut, you will realize that practically none of the motivation for public education has come from small school districts. Elementary education was usually only provided when required by the State. High school education was rarely provided until required by the State. Small district education has consisted of a second-rate program geared to a conservative view of the needs of the ruling class of middle and high income property owners with above average ability and social background. Small districts have ignored the educational needs of the mentally, physically, and socially handicapped. Even the program for the average and superior student has usually left them a year or so behind students from large districts on entering college. Experience in our district has clearly indicated that the problem of second-class education for urban children (for rural children) (I made a mistake) is perpetuated by the same type of prejudice, ignorance and misconceptions that have perpetuated second class segregated schools. It is impossible to believe that small districts will, of their own accord, either spend the money or approve the changes necessary to provide rural children with the quality of education demanded by our times. It is imperative that the State should assume responsibility, which small districts cannot and will not assume of establishing an adequate educational program for rural children.

Experience in our district, as well as all over the United States, seems to indicate that regionalization is the most practical way of developing these better rural educational programs without serious increases in cost.

Regionalization can be hastened by either edict or by provision of adequate financial incentives. The former would require the development of a state-wide plan, presumably by the State Department of Education, with reorganization of boards of education and transfers of property according to plans developed by the legislature. The problem of coercion is the major objection to this

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system and would undoubtedly result in much conflict for some time. If the alternative method of financial incentives is to work, the incentives will have to be much more significant than those now offered. In order to prevent haphazard districts, more state control may be necessary, even in this method. As far as the effectiveness of financial incentives, it should be pointed out that present districts were all formed as a result of the need of a new high school.

Although the ball for regionalization is usually carried by the idealist, the success of regionalizational referendums has depended on the considerable financial advantage in building one high school instead of three or four. I believe ours is the only district to employ a common superintendent for both the elementary and high schools and to operate cooperative programs through a supervisory district. We are probably the only one to try to convert from 7 to 12 to K to 12. In spite of the 10% added ADM and increased building grants available, plus the well established educational and administrative advantages to be gained, our referendum went down to resounding defeat. It will take a very sizeable financial incentive to overcome the local prejudices, misconceptions, fears, and ignorance that have characterized most of the campaigns against regionalization.

Perhaps the 10% additional ADM influenced the last four districts formed, but it is not a sufficient incentive to cause many, if any, existing K to 12 districts to change. To be significant in entrenched districts or to encourage new districts (which do not have the incentive of a new high school) this figure should be at least 50%. This still amounts to only 45% state aid and, I believe, it is still below national average. There are only four K to 12 districts eligible at present and the mechanism of change is so time consuming that it will be years before this might become an expensive item. Perhaps instead of a percentage, the ADM could be set at 45% of the state average and over the years state grants will gradually catch up.

To summarize:

1. Children in small school districts are not offered an adequate educational program.
2. Regionalization offers a means of improving this program within our present educational structure.
3. The State must assume a much stronger role in promoting regionalization.

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Now, in working on the CABE Committee on Regionalization, we in our district worked up some recommendations that I am not going to read but I will leave some copies with you. But I would like to read the main areas in which we are proposing changes. These are:

1. New act indicating the intent of the legislature in enacting regional legislation and directing the Connecticut State Department of Education to set up standards.
2. To simplify, clarify and organize sections to do with study committees, and extend the use of the study committees.
3. To clarify and standardize procedures for regional referenda for all purposes including bond issues.
4. To specify procedures involving transfer of property in formation and modification of regional districts.
5. To increase ADM incentives for K to 12 regionalization perhaps by instituting a 45% of previous year's per pupil costs as a pilot project in this method of determining state grants.
6. To clarify subsection 2 of Section 10-282 as to the relationship between initiation and completion of construction and the computation of state grants for construction.
7. To change procedure for application for state grants to allow either the regional board of education or town officials to apply. It might also be better to pay the grants directly to the regional boards and save one step.

With this, I have the changes that we were proposing and we prepared this to take to our CABE Committee as to what changes would - specific act would bring this about. I would like to comment briefly on Bill No. 7248, I believe it is, which Representative Merritt Comstock, who is also from Essex and happens to be our Republican Representative - I am also a Republican member of our School Board - has prepared on preparation of budget of regional school districts. You probably know there is something of a problem in presenting our budget to public hearings. It is called a public hearing but actually it is a combined town meeting of the three towns and we've had crowds of something over 600 and down to what we had the year before last, which was less than 20 members, consisting mostly of Board member, wives, come to this budget hearing. It is very difficult in a large district to have a significant representation at such a budget hearing. So we do have a problem. The

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give serious consideration to Bill 6519. I have no specific recommendations as to the financial incentive. Rather we should see if we can't find some balance to have these towns have an inner stimulus to regionalize. Thank you very much.

Representative Mondani: Dr. DeMar, in this strive for local control, do the elementary schools run a program different from each other in the district that they are preserving a difference?

Dr. DeMar: Ten years ago when I became Superintendent of Schools, I tried to do the following: (1) to have identical Board policies and regulations. They are the same. Secondly, we have the identical budget procedures. (3) In the internal organization and operation and management of the school, they are the same. With reference to the staff, we have the same personnel policies. In other words, I handle the four schools and the five Boards of Education as if they were a single administrative unit. The cooperation between the staff and within the staff are fine. I have never tried to have an identical educational program within a particular school. Being trained at Yale, it was my philosophy which I adopted that we should not try to have a commonness but rather to exploit the differences in individuals, having different rather than the same mold so that our educational programs are similar but different. However, in our testing programs in the performance of the children educationally, there is no significant statistical difference.

Senator Hammer: You say that you've been there ten years as Superintendent for the regional high school and the town board. Well, as long ago as ten years did we have something on the statute books that permitted towns to do this? I thought it was a more recent development.

Dr. DeMar: No. There was Public Act 544 in which granted us the right to act jointly to provide common, agreed upon services and programs. It might have been eight years ago, I am not sure of that date. I think that we are the only school district to have taken advantage of this.

Representative Truex: How are your finances actually worked out? Do you pool or do you each share a program - I mean pay for a program and share the services?

Dr. DeMar: In the supervisory district, I assume you meant. In the preparation of the budget, for example, for my salary, and the bulk of the items within the budget, it is allocated by towns according to average daily membership. However, there are some items and two in particular that are not on ADM; namely, we have this unified bus system and we charge that

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Board of Education to the mileage that the bus runs. The contract calls for 47¢ per mile. In some instances we charge on the basis of time. For example, in the clinical services for a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist, the small school; namely, Chester, with approximately 400 pupils versus a school that has 1,000, we bill on the basis of time.

Representative Truex: So each individual Board of Education gets billed for actually the amount of service which he uses. You don't pool your services.

Mrs. Mary Lou Allen, speaking as Chairman of the CABA Committee on Regional Organization and as a member of the Regional District 14, Board of Education.

The Regional Organization Committee of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education was appointed in November of 1968 to study revision of the laws governing regional school districts and other forms of regional cooperation among boards of education. We had hoped to have specific legislation to present to you, but have had the same difficulties in this regard as were experienced by Subcommittee III of the Interim Education Committee. Thus, today I can only summarize the import of our studies to date and suggest that our CABA committee would like very much to work with a sub-committee of the Joint Education Committee and a member of the State Department of Education to develop House Bill 6519 entitled "An Act Concerning Revision of the Laws Governing the Establishment and Operation of Regional School Districts."

These laws need to be revised from beginning to end. The purpose of regionalization should be made clear; the standards for regional school districts established; the procedures for studying and initiating a regional school district clarified and the composition and powers of regional school boards up-dated. The laws should also be up-dated to permit dissolution of regional districts which experience rapid population growth which would take us beyond the standards established for regional school districts.

To establish the range of issues involved and indicate some of the positions we have developed after much discussion, I would like to outline briefly some of our suggestions.

First, concerning the purpose of regional school districts. Although there are mounting pressures to solve racial imbalance in the schools through regionalization of suburban

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and urban school districts, our committee has been concerned only with the educational benefits to be derived through regionalization. We do not recommend jeopardizing the regionalization movement by injecting social reform into the rationale underlying state aid to encourage regionalization, but such a possibility can not be ignored. The thrust of this legislation, in our opinion, should be to encourage the consolidation of small school districts into regional school districts large enough to provide good public schools.

Second, concerning standards. The present laws do not provide provide adequate standards for the formation of regional school districts. As a starting point, our committee recommends consideration of the criteria established by the State Board of Education for the purposes of granting construction aid to regional school districts. The regulations, sections 10-286c-1 to 10-286c-5 inclusive, are attached to this statement.

Three, concerning the formation of the regional school district. The law should permit a variety of methods through which a study of the feasibility and desirability of regionalization can be made. Involvement of the townspeople, however, at an early date is essential to acceptance of the idea of regionalization.

Study committees should be permitted to seek such expert help as may be needed to present an accurate analysis of the educational needs in the area being studied and the costs involved in any plan for regionalization which the committee recommends.

The law should identify the information which should be included in the study committee's report, but should not limit the contents. For example, our committee recommends that the report include an indication of the type of educational program which regionalization would make feasible, a provision for assessment of existing school property, provision for transferring the title and use of such property to the regional district, the estimated cost of new construction needed in the near future and the composition of the regional school board.

The procedural aspects of the law need clarification. The present law is ambiguous concerning the approval of the proposed plan by the State Board of Education, confusing about the dissolution of the study committee and makes no distinction between the referendum procedure to be used for the formation of a regional school district and other purposes such as adding another district to the regional

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school district. If the vote is "no" in the latter case, the law seems to indicate that the town in the regional school district would have to start all over to re-establish their regional district. This result is caused by injudicious use of incorporation by reference.

Fourth, the composition of the regional board of education. One of the most debated issues tackled by our committee is the problem of whether the regional board of education membership must be proportional under the Avery versus Midland County, Texas in which the "one man, one vote" principle was applied to the composition of the County Commissioners Court. Regional School District 14, for example, and I want to point out strongly, would not have been formed if this principle had been applied. Only towns of nearly the same size would consider regionalization easily if proportional representation is required because local control of education is highly coveted. In proposed regional districts with towns of unequal size, larger towns would resist regionalization without proportional representatives and smaller towns would resist regionalization because of it.

According to the majority opinion of the United States Supreme Court in the Avery case and I quote: "The Constitution does not require that a uniform straitjacket bind citizens in devising mechanisms of local government suitable for local needs and efficient in solving local problems. Last Term, for example, the Court upheld a procedure for choosing a school board that placed the selection with school boards of component districts even though the component boards had equal votes and served unequal populations." (And they quote this case.) "The Court rested on the administrative nature of the area school board's functions and the essentially appointive form of the scheme employed."

This question was considered extensively and four of the five boards represented at the meeting recommended leaving the composition of the regional boards to the towns forming the region as currently provided, except that the decision should be made before the referendum is held.

Fifth, eligibility to vote in referenda concerning regional school districts. Another issue debated at length is whether a person who owns property in several towns should have the privilege of voting in each of those towns in referenda affecting the formation, addition to or dissolution of regional school districts comprised of those towns. Ordinarily, a property owner is permitted to vote on issues affecting his tax rates whether or not he is a registered voter in a given town. Thus during referenda to form

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regional school districts, voters have been known to vote several times on the issue. Our committee objects to permitting ownership of property to entitle any person to more than one vote. The only practical way to police this matter is to limit eligibility to vote to electors.

Sixth, debt limits and borrowing powers of regional districts. Our committee has not finished discussion of the financial powers of regional school districts, but we have agreed that regional school districts should have at least the same powers granted to them as to town school districts with respect to the duration of time for which the district may hold short term notes and the limit on amounts borrowed in anticipation of the issuance of bonds. The third area of agreement is that regional school districts which provide kindergarten through grade twelve should be permitted to issue bonds in an amount equal to the combined limits set for regional high school districts and the towns which they serve. Accordingly, we have testified in support of the principle in House Bills 5538, 5859, 5865 and may I add (because they were not in print) 6485, 7134 and Senate Bill 641.

Seventh, scope of powers of regional boards of education. One of the dangers inherent in constant reference to total regionalization as K through 12 is the implication that the board of education is responsible for only those grades. Some other designation should be coined to differentiate partial and total regionalization so that preschool and adult education activities will be understood to be within the scope of totally regionalized districts.

We want to thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts on this study with you today. Please let us know how we can best help you to develop appropriate education.

Chairman: Mrs. Allen, Representative Brown has some questions.

Representative Otha Brown: I would like to ask a question. I have been somewhat disturbed by parts of page two and I'd like to go back to page two. Under No. 1 where you indicated "although there are mounting pressures to solve racial imbalance in the schools through regionalization of suburban and urban school districts, our committee has been concerned only with the educational benefits to be derived through regionalization." Do you mean to say that the position of this organization that if racial balance were achieved through some form of regionalization that there would be no educational benefits?

Mrs. Allen: No, this is reading into our position more than is intended.

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Representative Brown: Could you tell me what your position is on it?

Mrs. Allen: Our position in this particular question has not actually been in depth covered by our committee. We took our purpose and that is as far as we have gone to date, and our study is still going on, Mr. Brown. We took the laws as they appeared on the statute books and tried to remove from them the uncertainties and the inconsistencies which are in them. It really was an approach of revision and the underlying purpose for all races is to provide good education for our children and regionalization, by combining population - small population - groups whatever their components may be, tends to give us the basis upon which to build improved education for our children.

Representative Brown: But in all due respect, you certainly haven't allayed my particular fears of whatever you were trying to do with it because, as an English teacher, I don't think I need to have any investigation of each word but it seems to me that when you use the word "only" for the educational benefits to be derived, naturally I assumed that they would not be on the other side.

Mrs. Allen: This is the larger base isn't it, Mr. Brown, to gain better educational advantages for all of our children and so approaching it on that larger base, it would include everyone.

Representative Brown: I understand but this is here in the record and I might add that not only is the statement made in the first sentence, which is a very long one, but there is a very good follow-up here which I feel necessary to be clarified because we do not recommend jeopardizing (a very strong word) jeopardizing the regionalization movement by injecting social reform into rationale underlying state aid to encourage regionalization. It seems to me for some one who has not taken a position in this particular matter, you certainly have done a very good job in this paragraph to certainly open it up. Could you explain?

Mrs. Allen: Let me go on to say that we recognize that this may be a part of the total question by saying that this possibility is not to be overlooked.

Representative Brown: So you think that would jeopardize the regionalization movement?

Mrs. Allen: No, I don't say that.

Representative Brown: But you are concerned that it might.

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Mrs. Allen: No, I don't say that.

Representative Brown: Well, what does it say - "that we do not recommend jeopardizing the regionalization movement"?

Mrs. Allen: Because of time and to get the same - the statute actually revised. See, I approach this thing as an attorney to get the words clarified.

Representative Brown: I approach it as an English teacher.

Mrs. Allen: Good. So to get the words clarified and to get the statute so that the procedure, the actual procedure, and the effect is more easily cumulated and clearer and at this point to bring in and start all over from scratch with this other basis is going to delay it. This is a continuing study and we all know this.

Representative Brown: Do you recommend any form of regionalization for elimination of racial imbalance in schools?

Mrs. Allen: Personally, you're asking me? I'm talking for CABE and I don't know what CABE's position would be. We will undoubtedly before we finish and before April and May come around, we will have considered this question in the committee.

Representative Brown: Well, we will certainly be interested, since you're the spokesman for the group, as to what is your personal opinion - since you're the one that has it in here - I assumed that we would only be talking about regionalization but obviously there must be some concern in this area because it's here and it's very pointed and as far as I'm concerned, I get the message. I just want to make sure that it is clarified so that it will not have any effect unfavorably in terms, as you call it, of the base.

Mrs. Allen: I don't see how it possibly can; if we can get the wording and the procedure of this chapter clarified, I think the other will fall in place.

Representative Brown: You believe that there can be educational benefits as a result of racial balance in the schools?

Mrs. Allen: I think this is the basis of our Constitution in our country.

Representative Brown: Then you do agree.

Mrs. Allen: I certainly am not going to take any opposite position to our Constitution.

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Representative Brown: Would you like to keep number -- this section and number one in here?

Mrs. Allen: This is something that has been written as a group and I do not feel free to amend it individually.

Dr. James: One of the principle issues that came up in our attempt to regionalization was exactly the issue that you are pointing out. Although we have stayed away in our urging regionalization from any question about equalization of race and bussing and so on, there was an active telephone campaign against regionalization which was based upon the assumption that regionalization was a method of promoting bussing and equalization of races and that this idea of regionalization was associated in the opposition's mind with all of the movements toward racial equalization.

Representative Brown: What is your position on this matter? Do you believe that educational benefits can be derived as a result of racially balancing the schools even through regionalization?

Dr. James: Yes, of course.

Representative Brown: You see the point of it is that it seems to me this is a vital part. I sat here all the morning and very frankly, this was kind of an opening because we talk about the beauties of regionalization, about what it can do in terms of educational benefits. As far as I was concerned, this was a component part of it in terms of doing what the Constitution says. But the very fact that this is in here meant to me perhaps either some softening position or perhaps hopefully some ignoring of it. I didn't know whether it was a question of strategy or a question in terms of feeling and philosophy.

Dr. James: If you will remember in my remarks that I made a big point of the fact that small school districts ignore the problems of minorities because they're geared just to the ruling class and the welfare of their children and I didn't mention religious minorities or racial minorities but if you ever lived in a small town you know that their schools are not geared for those people unless they happen to be good basketball players or something like that.

Representative Brown: You certainly have a very fine report here. I think it is probably unfortunate that this section of it, since the door is open to it, probably will obviate some other very fine parts because unless we have you present at all times to read and interpret, as an English teacher it is very clear to me and I hope that perhaps something could be issued for clarification and even for publication.

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Chairman Blake: Mrs. Pope, do you wish to clear the air?  
She's on the list.

Mrs. Laura Pope: Representative Brown, I might comment briefly on that section of the statement from the committee. The CABE Executive Committee met last Wednesday and Mrs. Allen didn't return home until yesterday. She was unaware of any action taken by that committee. That committee is taking up the whole issue with a resolution that will go before the delegate assembly on March 22nd of this year and we prefer not to take a stand as an organization until all our members have indicated how they feel. At this point, the indication is they will be in favor of aid to help with excess costs of any plan to correct racial imbalance. The question is how far we should go with incentives and penalties. So, this will be coming up later. I might also add that as a realistic matter if we were to inject the whole problem of racial imbalance into this particular problem of revising the regional school laws, we would have to change the criteria which are recommended here because the thrust of this legislation is to consolidate small districts and if you were really going to do anything about racial imbalance, you're going to have to talk about big districts.

Representative Brown: Why do you need this paragraph in here?

Mrs. Pope: Because this is something that was discussed and it was discussed in sub-committee 3 also of the Interim Education Committee from the standpoint of what should the thrust of the revision of the regional school laws be and this is our recommendation at this point.

Representative Brown: But you can understand my concern looking at the major premise and the minor premise and then almost, it seems to me, a kind of conclusion about the matter of jeopardizing and so on is that for perhaps the untrained ear and the untrained eye and this was for publication it would seem to me that the position might be very clear. I wanted to make sure because as far as I'm concerned if it were not even in here it probably would be helpful and I do have some concern <sup>because</sup> this will be read and unfortunately perhaps you will not want to take a position in this matter. It seems to me that if I can read it and it looks like a position, I'm sure that others would do it. You may not mean to do this but this is the reason why I wanted definitely to pursue this so that, therefore, I can be assured that you have not taken a position on the matter of racial imbalance. And when it says that our committee has been

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concerned "only" with the educational benefits when up above there it talked about racial imbalance.

Mrs. Pope: That's unfortunate language perhaps and I beg your pardon on that, Otha; it's my language and you know I do not feel --

Representative Brown: No, I understand that and honest I know that working with you on the Interim Education Committee that I know some of your views. I didn't know you had done this. As a good English teacher, I would question this.

Mrs. Pope: I take my spanking, Mr. Brown, and I would suggest though that you understand that as a practical matter if we were to take in this larger concept at this point, then this regional school law revision would run into very rough waters, I think.

Representative Brown: It might be good strategy just to leave it alone at this point. We'll take care of it in Human Rights.

Mrs. Pope: We should have talked to you sooner.

Chairman Blake: Mr. Brown speaks as Chairman of the Human Rights Committee.

Mrs. Laura Pope: Well, I have another statement here on the voluntary regional cooperation and educational services areas. The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education urges this Committee to report favorably House Bill 6471 as soon as feasible. Public Act 160 of the 1967 session of the General Assembly was hailed as a leap forward in facilitating regional cooperation among boards of education to provide better public education through cooperation on a voluntary basis. Unfortunately, an opinion by the Attorney General to the effect that the legislation did not authorize subcommittees established pursuant to its terms to receive state and federal grants directly has inhibited optimal use of these arrangements.

House Bill 6471 implements the recommendations of Subcommittee III of the Interim Education Committee and has the full support of boards of education in this state. This legislation will permit any committee appointed by two or more boards of education for the purpose of carrying out their duties under the law cooperatively to hold title to real or personal property in trust for such boards of education and to receive and disburse local, state, federal, public or private funds granted or donated to