

To the Ways and Means Committee regarding H.883:

As a Vermont parent, grandparent, and concerned community member, I ask this committee to take more time to consider what the problem is that this bill is trying to address and how, exactly, it will do so.

I know that we have a problem with the rapidly rising cost of educating our children. If this is the main concern, let's be sure we know exactly how consolidating supervisory unions and eliminating local school boards will help.

I read carefully the OpEd piece in the Addison Independent this week by Bill Mathis, the sole member of the Board of Education to vote against supporting this bill. Bill is an expert in education funding and has a broad knowledge of school organization and governance. Over the years, his ideas about public education has been right on target. I hope this committee will listen to Bill's analysis of the situation and take his advice.

For my part, I ask that you slow down this process for at least one year. First, define the problem you are trying to solve. Then, hold hearings across Vermont, talk with educators and analysts in other states, find out what governance changes have really made a difference in bringing down education costs, and then bring this back next year with a better foundation than the bill now before you. Only then will you be able to sell this idea to Vermonters and give us confidence in the path you are taking.

Respectfully submitted,

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