

Erin Sigrist



April 9, 2014

America's Family Resort™

Dear Committee Members:

I am a member of the Vermont Business Roundtable Education Task Force and former Chair of the Roundtable. I am writing in support of H883.

We need to have the most highly educated citizen possible in order to contribute to the health of our economy and democracy, and this means ensuring that our children are able to fulfill their aspirations and potential. To provide that education, we must deploy our monetary resources and the human capital in the most cost effective way.

As a business person, I understand the importance of both a well-educated work force and a systems approach to efficiency and effectiveness. My experience in Vermont tells me that our current structure does not provide the best opportunities for children educationally, nor does it provide those opportunities as efficiently as possible.

I support H883 for the following reasons:

- 1) H883 provides for a transformation of our public education system from one made up of nearly 300 disparate units to one of fewer than 60 pre-k to grade 12 school systems. These systems will be comprised of communities that currently exist in all forms of relationships.
- 2) The bill provides for a clearer educational mission, better continuity in the learning process for our children and a better deployment of resources. It is a win, win, win situation.
- 3) My passion is early education. The more systematic approach to public education envisioned in H883 will create an opportunity to connect both private early education and higher education to the K12 education system.
- 4) Enacting the bill will have a dramatic effect on the opportunities provided to future generations of Vermont children. The time for the General Assembly to enact H883 is now.

As a business person, it is clear to me that into the foreseeable future the Legislature will face tremendous pressures to secure taxpayer funding for Vermont's growing social and business environment needs. The prospect of meaningful increases in taxes as a funding mechanism is clearly both politically and practically not desirable.

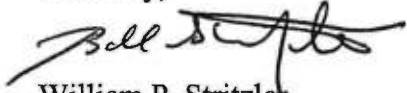
The clear path to increased State revenues is to increase income for Vermonters. All evidence points to a first class education as the most reliable way to increase income both for individuals and business. In fact, we believe that education is Vermont's most effective economic development weapon.

A first class education requires the management of a significant number of complex issues ranging from teacher and administrator excellence to modern facilities. A leading candidate for improvement is the effectiveness of the governance structure of Vermont's pre-k-12 education system.

H 833 proposes changes in our current governance structure that will lead to increased effectiveness and improved outcomes for students. Raising the education level of Vermont students will complete the circle of fulfilling the needs of all Vermont citizens.

We need to start the process of improving outcomes now and the governance structure proposed in H 833 is a sensible and necessary place to start.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Stritzler", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William P. Stritzler
Managing Director