

Testimony for House Education Committee hearing 4 April 2017

I am Dorothy Naylor, retired school teacher, new School Board member and 50 year citizen of Calais, Vermont.

Thank you for providing time for this hearing.

Many of the towns that have resisted or voted down Act 46 preferred mergers, do actually support the goals of Act 46 and the charge to focus on and redesign our governance model to reach those goals.

We want the opportunity to do it our way.

The interpretation of Act 46 by the AoE and VSBA, the biggest and strongest lobbyist for the AoE, is very narrow, even with S.122.

We don't believe our legislature, elected representatives and senators, wanted to 'disappear' small town Vermont. Strict adherence to the preferred model and S.122 enables large communities to use their majorities to change where students attend school, move teachers and principals and, worst of all, close our most valuable community resource, the locally run school.

Vermont citizens know there is more than one way to 'skin a cat.' Vermont schools are the top of the heap nationally because our local school boards have exercised their good ideas and expertise running our schools. They will use those same skills to restructure our governance to meet Act 46 goals and local goals.

Help us do it by focusing on any bill that enables total flexibility and removes sharing of debt.

Thank you.