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**From:** Rama Schneider <[rama@ramabahama.net](mailto:rama@ramabahama.net)>

**Sent:** Monday, January 29, 2018 6:38 AM

**To:** Maida Townsend; Rob LaClair; Warren Kitzmiller; Jessica Brumsted; Dennis Devereux; John Gannon; Marcia Gardner; James Harrison; Patti Lewis; Tristan Toleno; Cindy Weed

**Subject:** Regrading committee bill 18-0015 – draft 1.3

January 29, 2018

Follow up testimony to that provided by me on 01/24/2018 regarding House Committee on Government Operations draft bill 18-0015.

For the record: my name is Rama Schneider, and I live in Williamstown, VT. I am an elected member of the Williamstown School District and Central Vermont Unified Union School District boards of directors; and I am an appointed member to the Orange North and Central Vermont supervisory unions.

I have taken the time to review the ORCA video recording of the committee's 01/24 morning session paying particular attention to the statements and questions that followed my having to leave. I have found no reason to change any of my views as expressed in my oral presentation regarding changes to the definition of a meeting of a public body, and I have found at least one item of extreme concern to add to my list of objections to the proposed legislation.

This new and extreme concern relates to comments provided by Deputy Secretary of State Winters: specifically where he describes a "chain meeting" in which a school district's superintendent allegedly went from one individual school board member to the next in order to facilitate discussion regarding some common action without the public benefit of an open meeting. My extreme concern is the damage that will occur in the proper operations of a supervisory union or school district should this relationship be damaged by a lack of ability to at all times communicate with my own superintendent in an open and honest manner.

The relationship of a school or supervisory union board and a superintendent is that of an executive board and chief executive officer. 16 VSA § 242, "Duties of superintendents", begins with that fact by stating "The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer for the supervisory union board and for each school board within the supervisory union, ...". It is the duty of the superintendent/CEO to keep board members, who are representing the public, fully informed.

Draft bill 18-0015, especially as advocated by Mr Winters, will beyond a shadow of a doubt interfere with the boards', and thus the publics', free and open access to the affairs of supervisory unions and school districts.

Once again I hope you will remove the language referring to the meeting of a public body. My suggestion would be to either leave that portion of the law as is or include the language from New Hampshire regarding attempting to avoid the open meeting law.

I would be very happy to come in and present my views as formal testimony if anybody feels it would help, and I thank you all for your time.

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