Daniel MacArthur, Marlboro, VT

Dear Legislators- we follow with interest your work on revising the Education Funding system in Vermont. Thank you for your time and effort.

I am here to point out the situation of poorer residents in higher-spending school districts, those who are assisted by income sensitivity. These people, perhaps, benefit most from our wonderful educational system in Vermont. They would like to support a more extensive local education for their kids but will not be able to afford to if the burden falls back more heavily on the locals, as some people have proposed.

I see your proposed legislation as having 2 conflicting goals: the goal of transferring the costs of spending above a State base amount back onto local taxpayers and the goal of providing equitable education throughout the State. I am not sure you can have it both ways, and I hope you will look carefully to see that the working Vermonter who wants to support an excellent school does not end up having to vote against school budgets which they believe will benefit their kids, or to sell their property.

We all know that some Districts have way more resources than others, the reason why we have the Brigham decision in the first place, and I hope that this proposal does not begin to slip back to the time when wealthy towns could afford anything and less property-wealthy communities had to struggle. I understand that the income portion of the proposed Education taxes on residents with household income of less than $47,000 will be zero, but the income portion of the proposed education tax is only a small percentage of the overall taxes. Many working Vermonters have been able to keep their lands in part because of the income sensitivity and I hope that that they are not now being put into a situation where they are forced to sell their land and move- this will exacerbate the rich-town poor-town paradox which already exists and which is one of the causes on inequity among our schools in Vermont. I look forward to the models which your committees are generating. Thank you.