

## Vermont Education Funding – Testimony

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I am writing to share my thoughts around the education funding debate and it will be hard to do that without exhibiting emotion and candor with my feelings.

Frankly – costs in Vermont are out of control – yes, out of control from our legislature ! We continue to see school enrollment decline however costs continue to rise. There is clear resistance to control costs in a timely manner to allow “local control”. I want cost control, not local control !

The current debate about a new way to tax to fund education is nothing but a silly new game to get the same amount of money, or more, just in a different way. The little game is to take much education funding from the property tax and put it into income tax. That way we can say we reduced property taxes. I guess we won't mention that we increased income taxes to get that money back will we? Do you really think that is what Vermonters want, just a shell game? Please people – give us some credit. So the idea is to further tax those who make more – in essence we are saying that we really do not want good-paying jobs in Vermont, and if you have one, you will be taxed more so send those jobs to another state...

Is it not time we address the real problem – the cost of education and the death-grip from the union. It's time the people just say NO! No to unfunded state mandates! No to increases! NO NO NO – No more, enough is enough as Bernie says! I also find it appalling that public employees enjoy far better benefits (medical and retirement) than nearly everyone in the private sector who funds their paycheck (with our taxes) – thanks unions! It's time that stops.

To me, this is all just common sense – and I'm sure it is too many of you in the legislature. Yet you are unwilling to do real work because it may not be politically popular with your party. I am a registered democrat in VT however I feel more alliance to VT Republican values – perhaps I will change. I will likely relocate out of VT in the next couple of years – it's simply too expensive to live here, especially as you approach retirement. Changing the source of funding does not solve the root-problem = the costs are out of control and need to get under control. If you want more tax revenue – it is not through higher tax rates – it is by generating economic growth that brings new jobs and revenues and thereby taxes. That takes real work and different policies – something this legislature, and the legislative leadership avoids. Perhaps it's time you do your jobs and earn your pay, not just give us platonic words that are worthless! Mitzi Johnson seems to think higher taxes will bring more economic activity, sorry Mitzi – that does not work for me, no matter what type of spin you try. We are not stupid.