

Good afternoon ,I'm Mike Mrowicki, state Representative from Putney, representing the Windham 4 District of Putney Dummerston and Westminster. This Legislative district covers two current supervisory unions, Windham Southeast and Northeast Supervisory Unions.

I'm here primarily wearing my other work hat.

The hat I wear when working with our children, both in school settings and out.

The hat I wear working in our states Family Services Division of the Dept for Children and Families, what in other states is more succinctly referred to as Child Protection.

I'm here also to affirm that whether I'm at work here, or at work outside the Statehouse- my life and work is dedicated to keeping our children at the center of the circle of what I care about.

Switching hats, I am also here on behalf of a Tri Partisan group of legislators , Republicans, Progressives, Democrats ... and we urge approval of pushing back the deadlines for compliance to Act 46, for those schools who are needing more time to find a solution that's best for our kids .

For those schools that have merged, we're not looking to change anything.

They've merged, they gotten their incentives, they've moved ahead of the pack, and we're not interested in affecting their work or situations.

The schools and districts that are not settled though need more time to better serve our kids.

We are at the stage of enactment with Act 46 that might be similar to Last mile broadband service. It's difficult at best, sometimes there's no easy solution, and it takes time...and that's the main point we're making here...We need more time to find solutions. The low hanging fruit has been picked and the difficult situations are remaining. Making this even more difficult is that the Flexibility that many of us feel was written in to Acts 46 and 49 have not been evident in the rollout, causing our county delegation to write the State Board of Ed stating essentially, that , even among those of who voted for Act 46, the rollout and implementation is NOT what they voted for.

We are hoping that with more time ,we can utilize the flexibility that the Act 46 and 49, in fact, have.

Putting my other hat back on, I am especially here as someone who now counts the time I have worked with children and families in decades. I'm here because everyday , I put our children in the center of the circle of all things I care about, when I go to work both here, and away from the Statehouse.

Working with young children who's lives are filled with trauma that, unless you work in child protection, you would be shocked to hear the details of

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These children are why I am hoping we can get more time to work things out regarding Act 46

These children need a variety and level of services we would all hope our own children would never need but again when their lives are one trauma after another it is necessary.

Here's why I ask , how are these children in Vernon going to be best served, when the town of Vernon is being told to merge with a district an hours drive away.

Think about that...contemplate how you would feel if for instance,

Shelburne was told , you are merging with St Albans

Rutland w Randolph

Cornwall w Northfield

Starksboro w Stowe

Essex w Hardwick

Manchester w Springfield

Randolph w/ Rutland

Milton w Morrisville

St Albans w Vergennes

We can do better than the state board's suggestion that the town of Vernon join up with a supervisory union an hours drive away.

Back with my Childs advocate hat on, I ask,
How does that serve our children better?

These children of trauma with special needs in Vernon, Right now they can get special services through the Brattleboro District the next town over, and not have to worry that the center-of their services being an hour away.

Some of the children I work with are getting an array of services in school and some services out of school in nearby Brattleboro.

One of the desired outcomes for this child and others like him/her are keeping this child local. By that I mean , not having to move this child to an out of town or out of state placement.

How is this child , who's life is already chaotic enough ...how is this child best served by moving his town school into Merger with a district an hours drive away. Will those same services still be available in the next town or when specialists are needed do they have to drive and hour or do the children?

This is why I am here .

To keep this child and others in the center of the circle of what we care about.

A delay may bring some inconvenience with some administrators and some business managers, but frankly, that's not why I'm here.

I am here to advocate for our children and most especially for the children I work with and the many more children in similar situations.

It's those children that are in the center of the circle of what I care about and why I'm here asking for some more time to get to the best place for how we can serve these children.