

Dear Members of the a House Education Committee,

In considering the rewrite to the Chapter 11 withdrawal section please note that the current process is fundamentally founded in Vermont's democratic traditions. The current process is working. Would it benefit from minor tweaks? Perhaps, but fundamentally it is working.

Ripton has been used as the rationale for the changes in the law you are considering. But Ripton is the exception, not the rule, when it comes to withdrawal.

That's because Ripton is the one community where the democratic process written into the law have not been allowed to lead the way. On specific occasions democracy as written into the law has been thwarted.

A number of years ago residents gathered over 800 signatures from all ACSD towns requesting the electorate discuss and consider changes to the articles of agreement guiding the district. The ACSD board, with ranking member Conlon as it's chair, did not act on the petition.

Had that petition been discussed and resolved democratically, the situation would have been resolved. It has been resolved democratically in every other district in the state where it was raised as an issue. The list of districts that have received and acted on petitions like this is numerous.

Once Ripton was forced into withdrawal action because it's voices could not be heard democratically they found themselves needing supervisory union services. In every other situation in Vermont where this has been an issue it has again been resolved locally. Vermont has numerous SU with merged groups and town school districts working collaboratively side by side e.g. CCSU, WSESU plus many others.

Ripton is the poster child for changes to a law when Ripton is infact an example of not letting current law and the democratic processes embedded within it lead the way.

How ironic!

Please did deeper before acting in this issue and do not use Ripton as the rationale for changes to long standing law that is fundamentally working.

Margaret Maclean  
Peacham