

**From:** Neil Odell  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 9, 2021 8:35 AM  
**To:** Tom Stevens  
**Subject:** H.81

Dear Chair Stevens and Members of the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs,

We understand that your committee may be voting on H.81 today. Please consider the following in connection with H.81:

- Although it has been marketed as “technical changes,” H.81 represents a major policy decision: striking the provision for uniform cost-sharing arrangements for premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Uniform cost sharing arrangements is a major provision of the existing law and was negotiated and intentionally included in Act 11.
- If implemented, this policy decision will have financial implications for Vermont taxpayers.
- You have heard from school officials around the state that cost containment is needed in order to avoid further jeopardizing educational opportunities for students and maintenance of facilities.
- Cost containment is consistent with the provision of high quality health care benefits for Vermont’s school employees (in effect, bending the curve of future increases in cost) and the sustainability of the plans.
- The language in H.63 (see pages 10-11 of the side-by-side) provides cost containment measures by balancing appropriate access to health care benefits and reasonable cost containment to ensure the financial sustainability of the plans and setting out criteria for the arbitrator’s decision.
- Although the Committee cannot control the rise in health care costs generally, it can bend the curve of future increases by including H.63’s cost control language in H.81. Please provide full consideration to including this language in the bill.
- VSBA supports the Administration’s recommendation that the House Committee on Education and House Committee on Ways and Means review this bill before it goes to vote before the House as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vermont School Boards Association Executive Committee  
Neil Odell, President  
Flor Diaz Smith, Vice President  
Kim Gleason, Treasurer  
Jim Salsgiver  
Adrienne Raymond