

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Having watched and testified before both education committees, I am convinced your committee should strike session law sections of H.727. Instead, add an amendment that exempts, for a full calendar year, towns that have been in the withdrawal process before passage of the bill.

I have reviewed Friday night's version of session law in H.727. While I commend you for the attempts to get a meaningful withdrawal process with session law, I find the provisions and sequence of steps make little sense from a practical point of view. The current version requires that Supervisory Services be determined before the petitioning town (Lincoln, in our case) elects a school board and finalizes an exit agreement with our current union district, Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD).

Why are these two steps important prior to determining supervisory services for the petitioning town?

- Save Community Schools (working to withdraw Lincoln from Mount Abraham Unified School District) is exploring the viability of forming a Supervisory Union with a neighboring town (Ripton). Ripton has already elected a school board while Lincoln has not. Save Community Schools (SCS) has no authority or standing to negotiate with a school board from another town.
- Alternatively, seeking supervisory services from an existing SU is difficult. Our experience to date is that no superintendent is willing to enter into serious conversation with Lincoln until we have a school board. We have had a few informal, off the record conversations but SCS has no standing to conduct serious negotiations to obtain SU services.
- Without an exit agreement approved by the towns in the current district (MAUSD), Lincoln cannot enter into serious and formal discussions with a Supervisory Union since Lincoln would have no ownership of a building in which to operate a school. Currently, MAUSD is having some legal concerns about selling us the building for \$1 as required by the ACT 46 consolidation agreement.

The withdrawal sections of H.727 are being developed in a hurried environment because the end of the general assembly session is close. Getting withdrawal meaningful and fair to all parties is complicated and should not be rushed.

I hope you will give serious consideration to strike session law and exempt for a year towns that were in the process of withdrawal prior to passage of the bill. By then Lincoln and neighboring towns (Ripton and Starksboro) will be far enough into the process of withdrawing that a meaningful study of the process can be done.

Sincerely,

Paul Forlenza

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