

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING S.172

REPLY TO COMMENTER FROM SENATOR JEANETTE WHITE:

Thank you for forwarding this Senator RamHinsdale. For those of you who don't know me I am chair of Senate Government Operations Committee and want to make a few comments.

Mr Odit, I was the one who brought up the Hinesburg vote. I was unaware of it, or the Rockingham vote, until a reporter contacted me about it and a citizen contacted me about the Rockingham vote.

The ability to use the AB last year, and now again this year, in no way eliminated the underlying general statute that requires a town to have a floor vote, if that is their custom, to vote on the move permanently to AB. It should have been clear that it did not allow this. So this year we made it abundantly clear that this does not allow an AB vote to permanently replace the traditional floor town meeting to AB. Although Susan Clark did weigh in when I was working with the Sec of State and VLCT on the development of this bill, the clarification was initiated by me not by Susan.

There are many who would like to do away with the floor meeting and replace it with AB. This is a different perspective on town meeting and is surely one we should address. But we needed to get this bill in place so that towns would know that they could do AB again this year. Having served for many years on my selectboard I know of the pressure towns are under to make that decision now to meet the deadlines for TM.

We can have the discussion of changing the underlying statute at some point. But this is a more indepth discussion than we could have if we were to meet the deadlines towns face for this year's town meeting.

So if anyone wants to bring up this issue to permanently change the underlying statute I will gladly put it on the agenda. Then we can really hear all the arguments both for and against.

Thanks for listening.
Jeanette

PUBLIC COMMENT:

From: **Todd Odit** <todithvt@gmavt.net>

Date: Wed, Jan 5, 2022 at 10:11 AM

Subject: Fwd: S.172

To: <wlippert@leg.state.vt.us>, <pbaruth@leg.state.vt.us>, <tchittenden@leg.state.vt.us>,

<vlyons@leg.state.vt.us>, <cpearson@leg.state.vt.us>, <kram@leg.state.vt.us>, <msirokin@leg.state.vt.us>, <myantachka@leg.state.vt.us>

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

Please see my comments below regarding S.172.

Thank you,

Todd Odit
Hinesburg Town Manager

From: "khorn" <khorn@vlct.org>
To: "Todd Odit" <todithvt@gmavt.net>
Cc: "Gwynn Zakov" <gzakov@vlct.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 8:45:36 AM
Subject: Re: S.172

Hi Todd,

The proposal was from Susan Clark, moderator in Middlesex who is all about preserving town meeting from the floor. The bill is on the Senate floor today and they hope to pass it and get it to the House. So if you sent this email to your reps and senators that would be helpful. At least they would have accurate information about the Hinesburg vote, and also possibly a Rockingham vote.

From: Todd Odit <todithvt@gmavt.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 8:36 AM
To: Karen Horn <khorn@vlct.org>
Subject: S.172

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Hi Karen,

Just writing to say that I think the Senate is wrong to exclude the question of voting by ballot from S.172. That basically freezes any municipality from voting on that question for the year unless they want to meet in person to vote on that one article. In addition, in consideration of being inclusive, this exclusion whether in S.172 or the underlying law, disenfranchises the voters who would most benefit voting by ballot from being able to vote on that question. I have heard that Hinesburg's vote came up yesterday, which is surprising because I had not been contacted by any committee member about it. But anyway, in our ballot vote in

December, we had 407 votes cast. At a traditional town meeting, we have about 150 people attend. So we had almost twice the amount of people vote by ballot on the question than we would have had people vote on it from the floor. This clearly shows that people who don't or can't attend a traditional town meeting to vote on a question from the floor took the opportunity to vote by ballot.

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Todd Odit

Town Manager

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