

Friday, March 19, 2021

Testimony: Town of Clarendon vs MRUUSD / Authority to appoint vacancy / Act 46

The main reason we are at this juncture in Clarendon, is we have been displaced from the foundational structure of our Republic, leaving us to conduct the functions of governance from a perspective of diminished integrity with respect to a town's sovereignty.

In other words, some of us change laws and policy to achieve their goals!

Perhaps this is human nature, but in reality, manipulation only fosters division in its quest for power and control!

When the focus of our endeavor is weighted too heavily toward things like ideologies, personalities or even special interest agendas, we will stray from the blueprint of foundational parameters established to maintain our chosen form of government. Though these principles of founding may seem irrelevant to the issues of the day, we must understand they are an integral part of their successful resolution and serve as a barrier to nefarious motives.

It is not just Clarendon that loses sovereign authority of representation by the creation of Act 46, it's every town in the state participating in this shared structure of educational governance. Vermonters once revered local control, all while proudly adhering to a structured process of protocol and chain of command. Now as evolution finds new challenges to pursue, some are resorting to simply changing rules and policy to advantage the system they preside over. This is perhaps born out of good intentions, but with little or no thought given to the damage that can be done when a proper sequence of authority is ignored or changed.

Removing the power of appointment from selectboards, exemplifies a power struggle within governance that wrestles the assignment of basic foundational authority away from the peoples grasp. This phenomenon seeks to frustrate their authority for its own advantage, yet it has no ideology other than its insistence for controlling the narrative.

What just happened in Clarendon is a classic confiscation of fundamental authority, but what makes it unique is it became visible with the implementation of Act 46 when structural changes exposed it.

Sure, voters are frustrated over losing more control, but rarely is the problem so obviously detected, or so easily fixed by remedy of reinstatement to its previous status.

Usually, deviations from authority remain stealth and undetectable, left only to perpetuate a feeling of mistrust as they fester and cause a choosing of sides. These are the true impediments to the spirit of the collaboration we seek; they are at the root of the divisiveness that can imprint our students, perhaps causing them to emulate this very same manipulative behavior later in life.

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As an old saying goes, actions speak louder than words, and young ears and eyes are in close proximity to the school environments where this struggle is currently taking place.

This is absolutely why we should not presume vacancies of this nature are a rare occurrence or conclude no further action is indeed necessary. We must understand, respect for authority is illustrated by the importance we place on following protocols and procedures. Unity of purpose requires discipline and commitment to a process that cannot be achieved by manipulation.

The structure of adherence to a proper chain of command is ultimately important!

The authority in question here, must return to every town in Vermont and reside within the structure of governance that is closest to the people, in most cases this would be the Selectboard it was taken from.

But beyond that the statute must not be ambiguous by design to facilitate a construct of loose interpretation.

It has long been my contention, that statutes in matters of the people's authority, should be crystal clear and not require or imply legal consultation for implementation!

This is critical for building healthy relationships of cooperation and respect between those governing and those being governed.

A successful Republic requires only the discipline to resist manipulation!

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