

Emma Cappelluti
House Education Committee Testimony
April 12, 2026

Good morning, members of the House Education Committee.

My name is Emma Cappelluti, and I am an 11th grade student at Essex High School and one of our School Board Student Representatives.

I am here today to share my concerns about how Act 73 could negatively impact one of Vermont's greatest strengths: community engagement.

One of the things I love most about living in Vermont is how deeply people care about their schools and communities. Our teachers, families, neighbors, and local board members are not distant figures — they are people we know personally, people who show up at meetings, vote at town meetings, come to our school's theater productions and soccer games, and work together to support students.

In EWSD, we have parent and community volunteers teaching science with the Four Winds program. We have the Essex Boosters who are community volunteers who raise money to support Essex High School athletics and after school clubs. We have Parent Teacher Organizations, a Special Education Parent Advisory Coalition, the Equity Advisory Committee, the Multilingual Advisory Council, parent volunteers who support theater productions, and so much more. Additionally, local businesses provide internships and guidance to current students.

As a student, I see every day that decisions made at the local level are not just numbers on a spreadsheet. My concern is that Act 73, by reducing local representation and moving decision-making farther from the communities it affects, risks weakening the involvement that makes Vermont schools unique. Vermont's schools are strongest when communities have a voice. When families, educators, and students feel heard and invested in the outcome. If that connection is lost, we run the risk of turning education to something that happens to communities, and not something that builds communities.

We urge you to protect that local engagement as you move forward.

Thank you for your time.