

The Coalition Communities

Alton, Bridgewater, Carroll, Center Harbor, Dublin, Easton, Eaton, Franconia, Freedom, Grantham, Greenland, Hampton, Hampton Falls, Hanover

Hart's Location, Hebron, Holderness, Jackson, Lincoln, Marlow, Meredith, Moultonborough, Newbury, New Castle, New London, Newington

North Hampton, Pittsburg, Portsmouth, Rye, Sandwich, Seabrook, Sugar Hill, Sunapee, Tuftonboro, Waterville Valley

January 22, 2018

Re: Letter in Opposition to HB 1802 on behalf of the Coalition Communities:

Chairman Norman Major and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The Coalition Communities are a group of 36 communities that fought hard and successfully in the past to repeal legislation that created what was commonly referred to as "negative aid" or "donor towns", an education funding mechanism that forced "donor" towns to pay for education funding for children in "receiver" towns. This form of funding was divisive, pitting "donor" town against "receiver" town, neighbor against neighbor. This is an era in our State's history on education funding that we do not want to revisit.

Property values and tax rates do not tell the whole story in any town. The "donor" towns are rich in appraised property value but many of these communities have modest and low income populations that struggle to pay their bills. Tax rates would be raised or educational services would be cut for those communities required to send SWEPT collected in excess of its adequacy costs to the State for deposition in the general fund for distribution to "receiver" towns. This is unfair to residents of "donor" communities that may be riding the current wave of high real estate values, but still struggle to pay their bills. Some of you may recall the data submitted over a decade ago regarding the median income and population of school children receiving free and reduced lunch in the "donor" communities versus "receiver" communities, which demonstrated the unfairness and disproportionality of the prior "donor" bills. I have submitted today written testimony from Bridgewater, Moultonborough and Rye, several "donor" towns that give current examples of how this bill would have a negative impact on their populations.

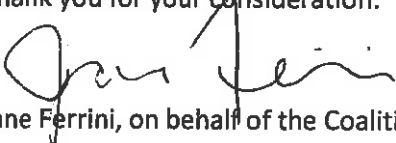
This is a bill that is NOT based on education policy. It is only based on budget policy.

We all agree that every schoolchild in New Hampshire deserves an equal education opportunity. The constitution requires the State to provide it. Currently there is a study committee to study education funding and the cost of an opportunity for an adequate education. This committee has been meeting monthly and will work through the Fall of 2018, hearing testimony from diverse stakeholders in order to study and make recommendations on the complicated issue of education funding and adequacy. It would be prudent to wait to see what the committee reports after its exhaustive research on this complicated issue.

The following towns that comprise the Coalition Communities urge the Ways and Means Committee to vote HB 1802 Inexpedient to Legislate.

ALTON, BRIDGEWATER, CARROLL, CENTER HARBOR, DUBLIN, EASTON, EATON, FRANCONIA, FREEDOM, GRANTHAM, GREENLAND, HAMPTON, HAMPTON FALLS, HANOVER, HART'S LOCATION, HEBRON, HOLDERNESS, JACKSON, LINCOLN, MARLOW, MEREDITH, MOULTONBOROUGH, NEWBURY, NEW CASTLE, NEW LONDON, NEWINGTON, NORTH HAMPTON, PITTSBURG, PORTSMOUTH, RYE, SANDWICH, SEABROOK, SUGAR HILL, SUNAPEE, TUFTONBORO, WATERVILLE VALLEY

Thank you for your consideration.



Jane Ferrini, on behalf of the Coalition Communities