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[REDACTED]

**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

[REDACTED]

**HEADLINE ELEMENTS:**

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1 Town Meeting: an extremely rare direct democracy

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3 TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

4 Town Meeting, a state holiday usually held on the first  
5 Tuesday in March, is a rare form of direct democracy where  
6 residents assemble and become a legislative body.

7 This form of direct democracy has become an extremely  
8 rare endangered species, one where citizens can raise their  
9 voices directly without going through elected representatives. It  
10 only still exists in parts of Switzerland, Germany...and in  
11 Vermont.

12           Here in Newfane, it takes 85 signatures (or 5% of the  
13    town's registered voters) to add an article to the Town Meeting  
14    agenda, thus eliminating frivolous, parochial, and irrelevant  
15    topics.

16           Any additional limitation on what can and cannot be  
17    discussed at Town Meeting should be vehemently opposed — if  
18    not for our own sake, then for the sake of future generations.

19           It's never a good idea to take power away from citizens.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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