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—Contributor..... Deena Chadwick
—Contributor email.....fallonfern35@gmail.com
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....43014



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Secret ballot encourages more honest participation

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2

####END SUBHED####

3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 I am writing to express my strong support for adopting
5 the Australian ballot in Brattleboro.

6 First, the Australian ballot ensures that every individual
7 vote truly counts, rather than leaving major decisions to a small
8 number of town representatives whose views may not reflect our
9 whole community. We all carry our own biases, shaped by
10 lifelong social and cultural conditioning, and those biases can
11 overshadow common sense in a public setting. A private, written

12 ballot protects each person's independent judgment and leads to
13 a fairer, more balanced outcome.

14 Second, it levels the playing field for residents who
15 cannot attend an open Town Meeting. Many people have work
16 schedules, child care responsibilities, health concerns, or
17 discomfort with speaking and voting in a crowded room. The
18 hours required to sit through a meeting can be a real barrier.
19 Australian ballot voting allows more of our neighbors to
20 participate, not just those who can stay at a meeting all day.

21 Finally, we are living in a time often described as "cancel
22 culture," where people can face social or economic backlash for
23 their views. In a close-knit community like Brattleboro, where we
24 know our small-business owners and neighbors personally,
25 people may fear that a public vote could lead to boycotts or
26 damaged relationships.

27 A secret ballot protects residents from this pressure and
28 encourages more honest participation. When more people feel
29 safe to vote their conscience, we are more likely to accept the
30 outcome and come together as a community, knowing the
31 decision reflects the will of the many, not just the few.

32 I urge Brattleboro to adopt the Australian ballot and give
33 all citizens a fair, accessible, and secure way to have their voices
34 heard.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

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####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

36

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

37

####BEGIN LINKS####

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

38

####BEGIN VIDEO####

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

39

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

####END LOGLINE####