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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42970



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 'We cannot afford to live in Brattleboro or Vermont
2 anymore'

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 My husband and I are lifelong residents of Brattleboro.
6 We thought about moving out of town when we were in our
7 early 20s.

8 We purchased a book, *The Best 100 Small Towns in*
9 *America*, which ranked Brattleboro at No. 5. We decided after
10 visiting a few places in the book that Brattleboro would be a
11 great place for us to stay and settle down to raise a family.

12 Brattleboro is close to the city and ocean, and we have the
13 mountains right in our backyard for hiking and mountain biking.

14 We now have two children: a 19-year-old daughter, who
15 has a great job at a local bank, and a 17-year-old son, who has
16 one year left at Brattleboro Union High School. Our son has
17 taken two years of forestry, which he really enjoys, at the
18 Windham Regional Career Center. He was just connected with a
19 local forester, which may lead to a future career in forestry.

20 We are now looking at three years in a row of double-
21 digit property tax increases, leaving us with a tax bill of over
22 \$10,000 a year. We are very sadly at the point of knowing we
23 cannot afford to live in Brattleboro or Vermont anymore.

24 This breaks my heart, because my whole life is here.

25 Leaving means abandoning everything we have worked
26 so hard to create. We would be leaving the best friends I have
27 had in my life. We would be leaving my family, who are also
28 lifelong residents of Brattleboro and the surrounding areas;
29 leaving our home.

30 And the hardest of all, we would be leaving our
31 daughter, who has now started to build a life of her own in
32 Brattleboro with a great job and partner. It may also mean leaving
33 our son, who may have an amazing opportunity doing a career
34 he would enjoy.

35 We have gotten really involved with going to Selectboard
36 meetings to be more informed of what is happening and try to
37 make our town a better and more affordable place to live. My
38 husband joined Representative Town Meeting (RTM) three years
39 ago. I joined last year to have a voice in what happens with our
40 town budget and other town matters.

41 As RTM members ourselves, we see this system is not
42 serving our town. We hear from friends who are not RTM
43 members who are also struggling to afford the high taxes here.
44 We need to have the input of all eligible voters on our budget.

45 I am voting for the elimination of RTM and to replace it
46 with Australian (secret) ballot, and I urge you all to do the same.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

47

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

48

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

49

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

50

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

51

####END LOGLINE####