

—Slug:.....COMM-0852.opin.letter.a00\_bellville  
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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special  
—Dateline.....Brattleboro  
—Article Number:.....43069



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Town Meetings are a test of endurance for those who can  
2 get there

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Having a vote on how our town is run — a vote on how  
6 tax dollars are spent — is a fundamental right, and we should  
7 make sure everyone has a vote.

8 Australian ballot, also known as secret ballot, ensures full  
9 access for everyone. You get your ballot, and *you* vote.

10 Do you need facts and information? Access is  
11 everywhere, from numerous informational meetings, town

12 reports, social and print media, discussions between neighbors  
13 and friends, letter writing campaigns, and even recorded  
14 Selectboard and committee meetings on YouTube and BCTV. You  
15 can even contact Selectboard and various town committees for  
16 information.

17 Representative Town Meeting (RTM) and open Town  
18 Meeting (OTM) effectively and efficiently deny access to *all*  
19 people to vote. The very function of these forms of decision-  
20 making are designed to exclude families without child care,  
21 people with disabilities, people with health issues, essential  
22 workers who cannot take time off work, people who can't take  
23 time off work because they would lose the day's pay or even lose  
24 their job.

25 In-person Town Meeting is a test of endurance. It requires  
26 participants to remain in a fixed location for hours and hours. It  
27 could even take days before voting on the articles is complete.

28 The assertion that decision-making is reserved for face-  
29 to-face rhetorical combat as the only option is a clear attempt at  
30 disenfranchising members of our community.

31 Vote yes to end Representative Town Meeting. Vote yes  
32 for Australian ballot. Vote no for open Town Meeting.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

33

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

34

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

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####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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####END LOGLINE####