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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....43051



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 'We should protect and preserve our deliberative
2 democracy'

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 I strongly support Town Meeting form of government for
6 Brattleboro, because it calls on we the people to join together,
7 deliberate, and serve as a check on how the Selectboard
8 proposes to operate the town.

9 At Town Meeting, we listen carefully to each other. We
10 respectfully consider what our neighbors have to say. We

11 thoughtfully deliberate about what to do. Then we collectively
12 decide about what best serves the public interest.

13 Open Town Meeting is my preference over
14 Representative Town Meeting, because I have never seen a good
15 reason that justifies excluding people who live in Brattleboro
16 from joining in our participatory democracy.

17 I oppose replacing Town Meeting with Australian ballot,
18 because that would limit our impact on town government to
19 electing and presenting our positions to the Selectboard, and then
20 casting a secret ballot about the budget.

21 Australian ballot is not deliberative. It does not provide
22 for discussion and amendment of articles before a public vote. It
23 would further concentrate power over town government in the
24 Selectboard and shift it away from we the people.

25 Town Meeting takes time and effort to attend, but that
26 does not make it elitist or antidemocratic. Town Meeting takes
27 time because it is deliberative, because it takes time to listen to
28 our neighbors before making decisions. That is a good thing.

29 People argue that Town Meeting has not shown fiscal
30 responsibility and authorizes too much human services spending,
31 but it is the Selectboard that designs our budgets. The amount of
32 annual human services funding approved by Town Meeting pales
33 in comparison to the tax increases that the Selectboard has been
34 including in Brattleboro's annual budgets for years.

35 Particularly now, when our democratic institutions and
36 freedoms are under constant attack by the federal government,
37 we should protect and preserve our deliberative democracy by
38 supporting our Town Meeting form of government.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

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LINKS:

41 ####BEGIN LINKS####

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VIDEO:

42 ####BEGIN VIDEO####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

43 ####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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