

—Slug:.....COMM-0854.opin.letter.a00\_morgan\_r  
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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special  
—Dateline.....Brattleboro  
—Article Number:.....43145



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Is this really a good time for us to give up our power?

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2

####END SUBHED####

3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 On Tuesday, March 3, I will be voting to preserve the  
5 institution of Representative Town Meeting, and if that vote fails I  
6 will be supporting an open Town Meeting.

7 Australian ballot does make voting to approve our  
8 budget accessible to more people, but it also completely silences  
9 the power of the people to add or subtract money from the  
10 budget, or to advise the Selectboard about our areas of concern if

11 we vote not to approve the budget. All you can do on a ballot  
12 vote is say yes or no to the budget.

13 A Town Meeting format, whether with representatives or  
14 all voters, allows people to argue for and agree on adjustments to  
15 the budget, either up or down, and to advise the Selectboard  
16 what area they want to see those cuts or additions applied to.

17 It also allows voters to express *why* they are voting  
18 against a budget, so that if the approval vote fails, the Selectboard  
19 will know what they need to change in order to create a budget  
20 that voters will approve.

21 Australian ballot doesn't allow for any of those things. It's  
22 the voting equivalent of mutely shaking your head yes or no, with  
23 no one allowing you to open your mouth and speak.

24 Removing the power of the people to share their  
25 reasoning and ability to adjust our town budgets is an  
26 antidemocratic move, as it centers power even more in the hands  
27 of the Selectboard. It takes only three board members to approve  
28 a budget to present to the voters. Do we really want just three  
29 people making all the decisions for our town, with no more voice  
30 for the rest of us than a simple yes or no?

31 Over the past two years, several actions taken by the  
32 Selectboard have been met with disapproval from many voters,  
33 such as the decision to transfer EMS services to the fire  
34 department, the Acceptable Behavior Ordinance, and last year's  
35 initial proposed budget, which would have resulted in a 12% tax  
36 increase.

37 Is this really a good time for us to give up our power as  
38 voters to amend or improve the actions of our Selectboard?

39 For these reasons, I will be voting no on Article 2, no on  
40 Article 3, and yes on Article 4, and I urge you to join me.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

41

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

42

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

43

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

44

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

45

####END LOGLINE####