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—Contributor.....Jan Therese  
—Contributor email.....jpmeridian@yahoo.com  
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Democracy belongs to all of us. Let every voter have a  
2 direct voice.

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 For the past few weeks, many Representative Town  
6 Meeting (RTM) members have argued for restricting the vote. It's  
7 not surprising: Power always wants to justify itself.

8 They say they are better informed, more engaged, and  
9 represent those who cannot speak for themselves. I've even heard  
10 a few people say that others just don't care as much as they do.

11           These arguments are not only unconvincing — they are  
12   condescending.

13           Brattleboro’s voters are fully capable of understanding  
14   the issues that affect their taxes, their infrastructure, and their  
15   community. Go out to the laundromats, ask service workers,  
16   check in with working-class Brattleborians to see if they have an  
17   opinion. You might be surprised that their voices are varied,  
18   considered, and informed. Just ask.

19           Keep in mind: the representative system itself is broken:  
20   Residents have no idea how their “representatives” vote. At every  
21   other level of government, voting records are public and  
22   accessible. Under RTM, there is little transparency. You can vote  
23   in a name, but not their record. That’s neither representative nor  
24   fair.

25           Even more troubling is who gets shut out. RTM demands  
26   hours — sometimes days — of in-person participation. Working  
27   parents, shift workers, caregivers, people with disabilities, and  
28   seniors cannot always rearrange their lives to sit through  
29   marathon meetings. Their exclusion is built into the structure  
30   itself.

31           “One Person, One Vote” is a demand for broader  
32   participation. It is a call to trust the people of Brattleboro enough  
33   to let them vote directly on the decisions that shape their lives.

34           Democracy does not belong to a select group privileged  
35   with time. It belongs to all of us. If we truly believe in equity and  
36   inclusion, then we must open the process and let every voter  
37   have a direct voice.

38           As a lifelong Democrat, I say it’s time to practice  
39   democracy and trust the voters.

40           On Tuesday, March 3, vote yes to discontinue RTM, vote  
41   yes to approve Australian ballot, and vote no to open Town  
42   Meeting.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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