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August 22, 2007

Dear Maine School Committee Chairs and other valued friends,

Let me introduce myself by telling you that I am Co-Chair of the Deer Isle-Stonington CSD 13 School Committee. Since 1983, I have had the privilege of serving on the School Committee for 19 of those 24 years. From 1973 through 1978, I served in the Maine House of Representatives. I have also served on two school funding commissions- one in 1975 and one in 1992.

I AM WRITING TO SEEK YOUR ADVICE ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF INITIATING A CITIZEN'S REFERENDUM TO REPEAL THE SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION LAW. MY PRIMARY CONCERN IS THAT THE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE WHICH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED FOR OUR CHILDREN WILL BE AT RISK. WE WILL LOSE LOCAL CONTROL OF OUR SCHOOLS WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR MAINE CULTURE.

My sense is that the Maine electorate will reject school consolidation town by town. The reasons are obvious. It will cost much more than it saves. Consolidation may result in cost savings at the central administrative level, but there will be a huge bill to pay when salaries for faculty and staff are negotiated if "regional school units" (RSU) are forced. If we can figure that out, why didn't Augusta?

If the Maine electorate does reject consolidation, Governor Baldacci may ask the Legislature to amend the law and give the Commissioner of Education authority to command consolidation without a local vote. There may be also an effort to close small community schools and consolidate area high schools, again without a local vote. We must act now before more damage is done.

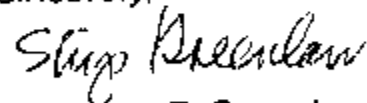
Since the majority of our elected Senators and Representatives did not represent our views in opposition to school consolidation as expressed at the public hearing in Augusta on February 5, 2007, I hold little hope that they would be disposed to vote against future amendments to the school consolidation law. Hence, the time has come for Maine people to be heard on this issue by repealing the law through the initiated referendum process.

The message I hope we send to the Governor and Legislature goes something like this: "We understand the need to make certain that all of our tax dollars are spent wisely. We are willing to work with you towards mutually agreed upon goals. However, we are not going to have forced down our throats a draconian law which destroys all that is good about public education in Maine."

Will you join in this effort? In order for it to be successful, we must involve not only school committee members, but also parents and citizens from all over Maine. Please answer the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. I would also appreciate it very much if you would copy the letter and questionnaire and share them with members of your School Committee or other interested individuals. Thank you for your cooperation.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, AND LET'S KEEP "MAINE-- THE WAY LIFE SHOULD BE"

Sincerely,



Lawrence P. Greenlaw, Jr.

P.S. Monday afternoon I had a delightful conversation with a lawyer, knowledgeable about school law, who is willing to draft the referendum for us.

Please return this questionnaire to :Lawrence P. Greenlaw, Jr.,
PO BOX 52, Stonington, ME 04681

My name and address are:

Name:

Mailing Address:

Town and Zip:

Telephone:

E-mail:

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you favor repeal of the school consolidation legislation?

YES _____ NO _____

2. Will you be a member of this committee?

YES _____ NO _____

3. Will you take responsibility of circulating the referendum petition in your community by going door to door? YES _____ NO _____

4. Will you ask other school board members and/or members of your community to circulate the petition? YES _____ NO _____

5. Are you willing to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the referendum? YES _____ NO _____

6. What skills do you have to offer? A short list includes officers-- chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer. a person who can write press releases, a person who can design a website and/or manage e-mail communications, fundraisers (plural), coordinators of referendum distribution and collection Please list any other skills you are willing to contribute. Thank you.
