

April 11, 2022

To: Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee Members

From: Janet Ward (state board member, LWVNH)

Re: **HB1393, tax caps on municipal education budgets.**

I respectfully ask that you oppose HB 1393 which flies in the face of our nation's history as a democratic republic and the very reasons why a system of public education was originally proposed and established. Our system of public education was created to provide young citizens of our nation with critical knowledge about our system of democratic government and also to provide them with practice in living IN COMMUNITY with their fellow citizens of different backgrounds and perspectives. Instead of putting youngsters into educational "silos," public schools provide opportunities to practice democracy within their classrooms.

Consider this quotation from the League of Women Voters of NH's history of American public education which is available on the League's website: "American public education was born of fear. Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and many other founders of our nation saw republics as 'the least stable forms of government and were always collapsing from their internal antagonisms and self-seeking citizens.'"

HB 1393 proposes that school districts be allowed to set arbitrary budget caps. The intent of this bill is clear. This bill knowingly and deliberately seeks to undermine the financial viability of our NH public school system. It represents precisely the sort of threat to our democratic republic that our Founding Fathers feared. Public schools do NOT champion socialism as so many supporters of school vouchers and bills like HB 1393 claim. Public schools do NOT teach socialism. Public schools teach COMMUNITY. Our public schools belong to NH communities. Every parent and taxpayer has a right to participate in the shaping and running of the public schools their tax dollars support. Each and every public school is run by the community in which it exists. Public schools are shared public spaces where many different perspectives are discussed and considered. They represent an essential foundation of our democratic republic.

Please, regardless of your political affiliation, consider the essential role of public education identified by our Founding Fathers and absolutely essential to the survival of our nation as a UNITED nation today. Please **OPPOSE HB 1393** or risk participating in the incremental destruction of our democracy.