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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER, NEWTOWN, CT

PRESENT: George Ferguson, Joe Girgasky, Eva Bermudez, Paul Lundquist, Bob Merola, Ryan Knapp, Neil Chaudhary, Mary Ann Jacob, Dan Amaral, Phil Carroll, Dan Honan

ABSENT: Tony Filiato,

ALSO PRESENT: Charter Revision Commission members Deborra Zukowski, Bob Hall, Eric Paradis, and Kevin Burns, Board of Education member Michelle Ku, Director of Land Use George Benson, 2 members of the press.

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Jacob called the hearing to order at 7:02pm

Public Comments: Michelle Ku, 28 Platt's Hill Rd., thanked the Charter Revision Commission members for all their work. She spoke to the issue of minority representation on the Board of Ed. Statement attached.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further comments, the hearing was adjourned at 7:08pm.

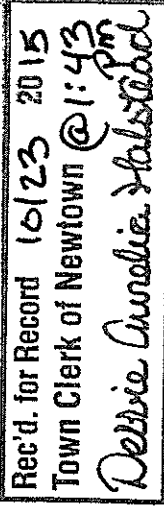
Respectfully Submitted,

Carey Schierloh

Recording Secretary

Attachment: Statement

These are draft minutes and as such are subject to correction by the Legislative Council at the next regular meeting. All corrections will be determined in minutes of the meeting at which they were corrected.



Michelle Embree Ku

Thank you to the Charter Revision Commission members.

I am here to make **one last plea** to change BOE majority representation to be no more than 4.

Partisan politics in **national** government has been **frustrating** to watch in the past couple of years

Partisan politics in our **Town** government has been **painful** to watch in the past couple of weeks.

Partisan politics in a **Board of Education has no place.**

A former superintendent said so

And I am saying so, as a boe member, representing my own opinion

We likely spend more time than any other board

There is no time for partisan politics

Of course, having a balanced board does not ensure cooperation, but at least it makes it more likely that there will be rigorous discussion.

I have heard the argument that our BOE is not partisan.

With both parties taking positions on school business, whether implicit or implied, I think that's hard to maintain.

Even if you believe that the BOE is not subject to partisan politics, you cannot legislate based on the personalities of the current board. You must consider worst case scenario.

I have heard the argument that we should allow the voters to choose.

That sounds good, except that there are already other restrictions on whom they get to choose from:

For the most part, the political parties choose candidates

And they will not put up more candidates than the number of spots potentially available

So voter choice sounds great, but our process does not truly allow voters a wide selection of candidates. Why is it only important for this one particular aspect of the process?

Education should not be unduly influenced by politics. Those who volunteer to serve and guide the district's public education must be uniquely dedicated to the betterment of the local schools. As it should be, this dedication often prevails over the influence of party affiliation. Specifying a bare majority, though, will further remove politics from the important charge of educating our children.