

# Manchester Journal

## Let's fix our taxes, schools and our darned cellphones

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By Rep. Linda Joy Sullivan

This should prove to be an interesting session in Montpelier. There are some very well-intended legislative proposals we are going to need to study with some deliberation in order to avoid unintended negative consequences. The sentiment to increase our minimum wage has a lot of facial appeal. Why wouldn't we want to increase the paychecks of working Vermonters and put more consumer money into the economy? However, some worry about our ability to increase the wage base in an economy in large measure built around smaller family and entrepreneurial businesses. Our economy is unique and we need to make sure our efforts to increase the prosperity of Vermont families is appropriately calibrated.

Likewise, who can argue against a proposal designed to change the way we finance education so as to lower property taxes? If education costs remain the same, though, some argue all we will be doing is shifting tax burdens from one form to another. Having worked in the tax field for many years, I know that small changes in the way government taxes businesses and people can have a dramatic impact on how businesses and people invest and spend. We also, of course, need to continue to work to make our educational spending more efficient. I hear proposals from the administration designed to curb spending. Those proposals, too, could significantly impact local school budgets and we need to be careful in how we pare down our spending.

Study and deliberateness in our committee work, then, is good and to be encouraged. Sometimes, though, the Legislature determines not to study a proposal. DR 18-180; Act 250 Revisions is one example. This is a very fine bill that was recently introduced and designed to fix in very specific ways our land use "Act 250" processes in order to streamline and make more efficient the administrative processes associated with how Vermonters can use and develop their lands. This is a somewhat complicated subject on which I have written in the past (copies of my articles are on my website), but the proposals put forward in here are modest and tailored to address specific concerns that have been raised for years. They make a lot of sense to me. By all indications, though, it appears that the legislature will not take up and study those proposals. Why? Because there exists a separate legislative study committee that will be doing a public road show this summer, preliminary to making recommendations about Act 250 later in the year, likely after the November elections.

To me, Act 250 presents difficult economic development challenges that are important enough to be studied not only by this select Act 250 committee but as well by the Legislature during this session. It's difficult to make the case that we will be embarking on too much study of these issues. They are in my opinion absolutely critical to the economic future of Vermont and Vermonters. I encourage everyone to watch for news of the work of the Act 250 Commission and to take advantage of opportunities to engage with individual legislators this session and with the commission during the roadshows this summer.

Finally, I am asked regularly by neighbors and constituents what we can do to have better and more reliable internet service in Vermont. I know there has been a lot of talk about the need to make internet better available throughout Vermont and I know for certain that, from an economic development standpoint, ensuring widespread broadband and wireless service is critical to the future of not only our businesses and communities but of our young people. However, when I'm asked, I honestly don't know exactly what we as a state are truly doing about improving conditions. I know that the Federal Communications Commission has done some rural internet financing projects around the country, but I have heard nothing at all about any proposed national infrastructure investments. This leads me to conclude that it's every state for itself. I am not hearing about any Vermont-specific initiatives.

### LOCAL NEWS

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**Board: Raze old bowling alley**  
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Therefore, I have asked committee leadership in the House and the governor's office, very pointedly — what are we in Vermont doing as a state to improve our lot? Turns out, while there is huge legislative and administrative appetite for addressing this issue, there is nothing concrete in the works. I'm happy to report that as a result of my inquiries, Secretary Michael Schirling (Agency of Commerce and Community Development) has agreed to come to Dorset for a listening and discussion session this Spring and I am in communications with the Energy & Technology House Committee.

I meet with my constituents the first two weekends of every month. Please join me. Please feel free to email or telephone me as well.

Rep. Linda Joy Sullivan, D-Dorset, represents Danby, Dorset, Landgrove, Mount Tabor and Peru in the Vermont House of Representatives. Contact via [www.lindajoyullivan4vermont.com](http://www.lindajoyullivan4vermont.com) or [lsullivan@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:lsullivan@leg.state.vt.us).

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### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

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#### College Basketball (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berksh>)

Colgate advances to title game for first time since 2007-08  
 (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/article/c-advances-title-game-first-time-2007-08>)

Duke's Bagley, UVA's Bennett earn top awards from ACC  
 (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/article/c-bagley-uvas-bennett-earn-top-awards-acc>)

Jones' 3-pointer lifts Radford past Liberty, 55-52  
 (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/article/j-pointer-lifts-radford-past-liberty-55-52>)

Chealey scores 22, sparks Charleston in CAA quarterfinal  
 (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/article/c-scores-22-sparks-charleston-caa-quarterfinals>)

Western Carolina basketball coach Larry Hunter steps down  
 (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/article/v>)

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#### AP Top 25 Poll (<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berksh>) Poll Released: Feb 26

RANK	TEAM	PV RANK
1	Virginia (48)	1
2	Michigan State (17)	2
3	Xavier	4
4	Villanova	3
5	Duke	5

(<https://collegebasketball.ap.org/berkshireagle/poll>)  
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