

September 18th, 2021

Dear Leelanau County Commissioners,

I am writing this letter to share my profound disappointment in our County Commissioners, and to share my support for funding the Early Childhood Development Program as it was written when it was approved by Leelanau County voters.

Commissioners are elected to represent the people of the county, NOT to push forward their own personal agendas. There is nothing more important in our country than the right to vote. No one individual (or 4 individuals) should have the right to nullify the vote of the people because it didn't go the way they wanted it to. Will Bunek's statement that it is his job to nullify the vote of the people if he believes they "got it wrong" is an extremely dangerous position. The voters of our county have already spoken at the polls--our county commissioners need to respect our right to vote.

The Early Childhood Development Program is an extremely important program, and we are lucky to be in a county that voted to prioritize the physical, emotional, and academic health of our youth. As an elementary school teacher, I believe wholeheartedly in programs that support young children and their families. Thousands of child development studies have found that when a child's physiological and emotional needs are not met, it is extremely hard for them to have successful social relationships, to regulate their emotions, or successfully navigate the demands of an educational setting. The Early Childhood Development Program in Leelanau County provides families with the support they need to meet the physiological and emotional needs of their children. Cutting all funding for this program will be detrimental to so many young children in our community.

I urge you to consider the implications of what Will Bunek's statement means to our local government, to stand by the vote of the people, and to stand up for children and families in Leelanau County.

Sincerely,
Ellen Keen
Leland, MI 49654