

From: [Cyrus Ghaemi](#)
To: [Melinda Lautner](#)
Cc: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Regarding tonight's meeting
Date: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 1:00:55 PM

Attn clerk: I would like this email to be entered into the official record for tonight's board of commissioners meeting, please. Thank you.

Dear Commissioner Lautner,

I write to you regarding tonight's board of commissioners vote on the millage to fund early childhood development programs in Leelanau County. I work as a primary care physician in Empire, taking care of newborns, young children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly. I live in Cedar, in Solon Township, your district. Many times in my work as a physician I care for children who would clearly benefit from access to early childhood programs, and who many times cannot access them close to home due to lack of availability, access, and funding. Not being able to access resources such as what this millage could offer is a hindrance to healthy child development, and an added burden on family in our township and county. I was in favor of this millage when it was on the ballot, wholeheartedly endorsing the modest increase in millage funds that would affect me, so that others could have substantial benefit. Early childhood development programs provide huge support for children and families that reach well beyond the individual in that moment; the benefits are felt throughout communities, and last for years. Leelanau County is lacking in support for early childhood programs, and this makes it very difficult on young families with young children to find a viable life here, especially they do not have an extensive personal support network available. Additionally, families with children who have special needs are in an even more difficult situation when they lack access to early childhood programs. The role of government is to help provide safety and support for our most vulnerable, and that includes our children specifically. I know that Leelanau County, and Solon Township in particular, prides itself on its low taxes; however I feel very strongly as a physician and an uncle that there are certain programs and services that are worth investing in, and this is absolutely one of them. Voting to reduce this millage rate at all, but especially to 0 mills, is a slap in the face of families who live in Solon Township, and throughout Leelanau County. It is a slap in the face of the children who need a little extra help to grow up into healthy and happy young adults who want to stay in the area and help keep our communities alive and well. Please don't vote to defund the children and families of Leelanau County.

Finally, I am extremely concerned at the fact that you and other certain County Commissioners felt it appropriate to overturn the will of the voters who voted for and passed this millage. We all have the right to disagree, but when something was voted for by the community in a valid election, for the Commissioners to consider nullifying that vote by reducing the millage rate to zero is a direct threat to the will of the voters, and a threat to the validity of our democracy and government. I urge you not to undermine our governance, not to threaten our communities, by willfully denying the will of the voters in your neighborhood.

The children and families of our communities deserve the support that this millage provides, and the voters spoke to this effect. Follow through on that, as is your duty.

Cyrus Ghaemi