

From: [Michelle Crocker](#)
To: [Alison Middleton](#)
Cc: [Chet Janik](#)
Subject: FW: Citizen Submission for Tomorrow's BoC Packet
Date: Monday, September 20, 2021 9:10:30 PM

Please post for 9/21.
Michelle

From: Doug Whitley <dwhitley14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 20, 2021 6:53 PM
To: Michelle Crocker <mcrocker@leelanau.gov>
Cc: Rick Robbins <rrobbins@leelanau.gov>; Debra Rushton <drushton@leelanau.gov>; Will Bunek <wbunek@leelanau.gov>; Ty Wessell <twessell@leelanau.gov>; Gwenne Allgaier <gallgaier@leelanau.gov>; Melinda Lautner <mlautner@leelanau.gov>; Chet Janik <cjanik@leelanau.gov>
Subject: Citizen Submission for Tomorrow's BoC Packet

Dear Madam Clerk:

I am advised that a message to you will result in having my submission of comment on pending Board action being added to the board materials distributed in advance of the meeting and for public consumption. Thus, I offer the following commentary and hope you will add it to the other written comments offered in response to the motion to strike funding for Early Childhood programs administered by the Department of Public Health in the next fiscal year. Thank you.

Douglas Whitley
Northport

Dear Commissioners:

I am not personally affected by the early childhood program. Nor do I consider it an issue I generally care about.

But I care immensely about democracy and government operations.

The pending action of commissioners to discount and discard the results of a legitimate voter approved referendum is an affront to every voter and a blatant disregard for democratic rule. Respecting the will of the voting public is fundamental to our democracy.

I am appalled to learn some elected officials are prepared to ignore the affirming judgment of over 3000 voters because they didn't like the outcome. Such arrogance in office is offensive because Leelanau County voters were asked to support or reject a new tax and they consented to be taxed. The Voters demonstrated their

affirmative will. The electorate's judgment should not be ignored, denied or cancelled by a unilateral decision of only four Commissioners.

A swift, preemptive move to “Defund Kids” shows the commissioners’ lack of commitment to do the hard work of process, oversight, and management. The proper tact for the “Defund Kids” team would be to do their homework, set forth their objections to how the Department of Health is managing the program and present their alternatives. Denying the voter approved taxing authority is lazy and dishonest. It’s also strikingly short sighted given the fact that the early childhood programming is still in the first year of a startup phase and the launch was undertaken in an era when attention to the Covid Pandemic dominates the Department’s responsibilities.

The decision to “Defund Kids” should rest with the voters three years on when the renewal referendum appears on the ballot.

Meanwhile, the department and program advocates deserve the grace and opportunity to prove the tax dollars voters have granted to nurture our county’s most vulnerable children have been effectively programmed and well spent. Administrators and proponents deserve the opportunity to demonstrate their success and make a case for renewal. If they fail to do so the Voters can take corrective action.

Commissioners should trust the electorate to evaluate the program and make their own decision about the future of the county's early childhood tax rate and programs.

Doug Whitley
Northport