

Melissa Weipert

From: John Anthony La Pietra <jalp5dai@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 7:41 PM
To: Melissa Weipert
Subject: Personal Statement of Opposition to Proposed Legislation Removing Direct Voter Oversight of Statewide Education Boards

I write as an individual to oppose five of the six pieces of legislation on the agenda of tomorrow morning's meeting of the House Elections and Ethics Standing Committee.

Four of the five -- HB 5515, HB 5516, HJR DD, & HJR EE -- aim to remove direct voter oversight of four statewide educational governing bodies:
the State Board of Education, the U-M Board of Regents, the MSU Board of Trustees, and the Wayne State Board of Governors.

Eliminating these boards as elective positions would empower political appointments instead -- which won't help make our state government less partisan . . . but will make it less democratic.

The fifth, HB 5533, would shorten the terms of board members and put them always in the same non-Presidential election as races for governor and lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and attorney general.

These proposals are not the way to improve public oversight of the boards and the institutions they manage -- or to avoid the crises that have hit those institutions over the past several years. Making seats on these boards depend on who is in the governor's seat -- either by appointment or by subjecting them always to the sway of gubernatorial campaigns and elections -- means taking political power away from the people, who are declared at the start of our state constitution to be its source.

I ask the committee to reject these five bills and resolutions.

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