



Date: May 1, 2017

To: Mayors, Town and City Managers, Selectboard Members

From: Karen B. Horn, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy (khorn@vlct.org)

Re: Amendment on H.509, Calculation of Education Tax Rates

Tomorrow morning (Tuesday), the House is scheduled to take up [H.509](#), the bill that establishes the property dollar yield, the income dollar yield, and non-residential property tax rate for education spending.

This year, all school employees are transitioning to new health care plans as a result of the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI) replacing current health plans with new ones to take effect January 1, 2018. Health insurance is one of the main drivers of increasing school budgets. Those plans are being negotiated now in school districts statewide. The potential exists to realize up to \$26 million in savings and also keep school employees out-of-pocket expenses at current levels. Those savings would be reflected in school budgets going forward and in reduced strain on the Education Fund.

An amendment to be offered on the House floor tomorrow morning would direct the administration to negotiate health insurance benefits for teachers in one negotiation as is currently the case for teachers' retirement benefits. A negotiated agreement would be ratified by a statewide majority vote of teachers, administrators and municipal school employees.

The amendment is on page 2,480 of the [House Calendar for Monday, May 1](#).

For reference, read our April 27, 2017 [Legislative Alert](#) on this issue and the budget (H.518).

Please urge your representatives to support the teachers' health insurance negotiation amendment tomorrow morning. To contact your representatives, find their email at the legislative website (<http://legislature.vermont.gov>) or call the Sergeant at Arms at 802-828-2228 to leave a message.

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