
THE OBSERVATION DECK

School vote rules are not anti-voter

By [Letters to the editor](#) on December 2, 2016 at 3:00 AM

Voters are deciding on important local school construction proposals in the next few months. These proposals are single-issue ballots for a variety of reasons, but in no instance were they designed to limit voter participation as was raised in the article "School vote timing at issue," Nov. 13. School construction voting follows strict rules designed to keep the public informed while keeping costs low.

Vote timing varies among nearly 700 school districts based on numerous state and local factors. Holding all project ballots during May school budget voting adds months to construction. A project approved in May, followed by mandatory bidding for architects and contractors, could not begin until the following summer.

Holding capital project votes one day statewide would raise costs. Supply-and-demand drives construction and, if every district bids drywall, cement and architects at the same time, prices skyrocket. Projects passed by voters need state Department of Education approval. Bringing all projects in at once would push the state approval backlog well beyond the current six to eight months.

Holding capital project votes on Election Day in November presents other challenges. Many school district boundaries cover more than one municipality. November election ballots are complex enough. School capital construction projects are important local decisions that need singular attention.

School districts schedule capital project votes to save money, time and to minimize disruption to the student learning environment. Our communities benefit from these opportunities for singular focus on the future quality of our schools.

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