

Dear Editor

February 3, 2026

This year's Town Meeting will be like no other. For the first time, Truro citizens will be able to vote without fear or favor. Electronic voting finally gives us privacy, accurate counts, and a real chance to finish the meeting without people leaving before the most important articles are heard.

Voting privacy matters more than some want to admit. Many of us have felt pressured — even bullied — on the ATM floor. We've been called racist for wanting to preserve Truro's rural character and protect our water and fragile environment. We've been dismissed as uninformed when we ask legitimate questions or labeled unrealistic for wanting capital projects and staffing levels that match our town's scale and our wallets. After a while, who wants to stand up and speak if it means being shouted down or shamed? Some people stopped showing up altogether.

Electronic voting changes that — but only if we all show up and vote.

For too long, a vocal minority has hijacked Truro's agenda. While Town leadership has improved, that same minority still seems determined to reshape Truro in ways most of us never asked for and don't want. Some of this happens in the open on Truro TV. Other efforts are hidden — and that's I want to talk about.

You may be wondering who I am and why I'm saying this. Yes, I'm the guy you've seen waving signs on Route 6. I feel passionately about Truro. My family has been in Truro since the 1930s. I grew up here starting in the 1950s, returned full time after careers as a doctor and a lawyer, and served five years on the Planning Board. I love this town, and I feel a responsibility to speak up.

Many of you remember the 2023 Special and Regular Town Meetings — the cancellations, the crowds, the energy. A real citizen movement emerged, and turnout in May 2024 was historic. Voters made themselves clear: stay rural; leave Route 6 alone; cap Walsh development at 160 units with phased development and strong water and environmental protections; keep the DPW on Town Hall Hill and under \$28.3 million; slow down, stay small, spend less.

After those meetings, I was stunned to see a 2023 email titled: [Warning Signs from Truro Town Meeting](#). Its purpose was explicitly to suppress the vote at that Special Town Meeting. It was written by a Finance Committee member — now Vice Chair — to a political consultant paid more than \$2,000 a month by a State Senator in an off-election year. The email was copied to two P'town Select Board members, housing nonprofit representatives, and a THA official (also phone banking in Truro under that same Senator's direction). It was forwarded by the then Select Board Chair to numerous Town officials who openly aided this agenda. It was a big family affair.

The email targeted many new voters and described them as “negative to our goals.” The author deferred to the Senator and consultant, writing, “...**we will look to you...**” for guidance on how to achieve “our goals.”

“Our goals”? Whose goals?

Certainly not the goals of Truro voters expressed at Town Meeting.

That email raised red flags because it echoed something I remembered from earlier public comment: a hidden motive for removing the DPW from Town Hall Hill — something repeatedly denied until public records proved otherwise. Too much that affects our votes happens out of sight.

Outside Forces Still Shape Our Town Meeting – and Shouldn't

Nearly a year ago, I filed a public records request seeking more information. Despite repeated assurances, nothing substantive had been released – until today. Following the State granting my appeal, I have received some documents. I do not yet know if they are responsive or complete, but I do appreciate that I have finally gotten a response. Truro residents deserve to know why a paid political operator, backed by a State Senator and joined by Provincetown officials, was working behind the scenes to influence Truro's Town Meeting votes.

This isn't new. Last September, Provincetown's Select Board Chair said publicly that former Town Manager Darrin Tangeman asked them not to mention water concerns before Truro's Walsh Overlay District vote because it might negatively influence the outcome. She was explicit that she was "Not sure what he was afraid of...He told us to be quiet about it..." and that "They knew before going to Town Meeting" and the Town Manager "wanted to keep it quiet and push WOD through." Provincetown cooperated. As the legal adage says, "Silence gives consent." Months later, citizens asked the obvious question: "What were they trying to hide?" **My question, too.**

A lot, it turns out. Truro voters approved WOD without knowing the real facts about water, wells, and wastewater; traffic and safety; environmental impacts including wastewater contamination to residential areas west of Route 6; costs of all kinds. We also approved WOD with reassurances by the Town Planner that WOD was in alignment with the Walsh 2024 votes - capped at 160 units, phased and with smart approaches to water, traffic and the environment. Yet the discrepancies are significant and impactful – for example, we were not told how much residential and commercial development it actually allows – it is massive! Even so, **45% of voters opposed it last year on a majority-only vote.** Imagine if we'd known then what we know now — that water impact, the true scale of development, and major inconsistencies with prior Walsh votes were deliberately obscured on WOD before our votes last year.

Voting wisely requires communication among citizens - and the facts. It is our right.

Being informed matters. That's why I've warned people about our State Senator's advocacy for the so-called "**Dark Money at Town Meeting**" bill (S506). It claims to stop undisclosed influence, but in reality it suppresses grassroots dissent while exempting State officials from disclosure acting in their "official or private capacity" as noted in a letter responding to [The Boston Globe](#), after it was denied outright when the *Provincetown Independent* asked about it.

If passed, even two neighbors paying for one educational mailer would have to register as a PAC and report monthly. Meanwhile, anyone seeking hidden influence could simply bankroll a State legislator, who is exempt from disclosure. **S506 needs to be stopped.**

This is not coincidence. It's part of a broader push to transform Truro – especially North Truro - toward becoming an unrecognizable, speculator-friendly, bedroom community for Provincetown if the North Truro Overlay District passes.

We Are the Legislature

Despite objections from some officials who wanted “to see how people voted,” electronic voting finally protects privacy. As one former official said, **“You are the legislature.”** He was right.

We can only keep Truro as Truro if we show up and vote. We began setting priorities in 2024. We must reaffirm them now and as often as necessary — or risk massive development, escalating costs, and a point of no return.

As renowned author Nan Avery says, **“Talk is cheap, voting is free. Take it to the polls.”** But in case you are inclined to stay away, Attorney General Keith Ellison of the valiant state of Minnesota reminds us, **“Not voting is not a protest. It is surrender.”**

Show up on May 16 at 2026 ATM. Stay until the end. Vote proudly, privately, and for the Truro you love. **Do not surrender our way of life, our character or our environment** – instead claim them, protect them, and enjoy them.

We ARE the legislature. Who shows up decides.

Peter Herridge,
Truro