

**FROM MAYOR RENDO TO THE CITIZENS SERVED BY
THE PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Last month, the mayor of Hillsdale issued public statements condemning the efforts by the Borough of Woodcliff Lake to address the disproportionate tax burden hoisted on two of the four communities served by the Pascack Valley Regional High School District ("PVRHSD"). Given the misleading nature of some of the statements, Woodcliff Lake would like to speak to the actual facts.

First, for decades, Woodcliff Lake has been concerned about the disproportionate tax levy used by PVRHSD. As a result of that tax levy, the citizens of Woodcliff Lake and Montvale spend millions of dollars every year to subsidize the high school education of the students from River Vale and Hillsdale. While we recognize the quality of the educational services provided by PVRHSD, those educational services would be untouched by anything that has ever been proposed by Woodcliff Lake; we would simply have the district funded on a per pupil basis, with each community paying for the education of its own students, as was the intent when the district was founded.

As a result of the change in the law which took place over 40 years ago, the State forced a now-disfavored formula on PVRHSD and regional school districts throughout the State which converted all of them to an equalized property value tax-levy formula. As a result, if you have relatively fewer pupils and relatively higher equalized property values, a constituent in a regional school district can wind up subsidizing other communities' students' education, exactly what is happening here. For the past few years, the mayor and counsel of Woodcliff Lake have been fighting to exercise their right, provided by law, to allow the voters in the four communities served by PVRHSD to decide how their children should be educated and how their tax dollars should be spent. Hillsdale has spent tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees fighting against the fundamental notion that the voters should decide what happens here, before anything else occurs. Hillsdale has been unsuccessful, and the voters will be heard.

The disproportionate funding forced on members of regional school districts is a problem being felt throughout the State of New Jersey. Legislature has had an opportunity to fix this problem and has not done so. As a result, communities are turning to the voters and even to the courts to try to provide for some relief. School taxes are high enough in New Jersey so that we should not have to pay to help educate children in other communities.

If Woodcliff Lake can "withdraw" from PVRHSD , it is withdrawing only as a member of the region. We have repeatedly stated that it is our desire to remain in the school district through a sending-receiving relationship, where we would pay per pupil exactly as voters wanted from the point when the district was formed. The same children would be educated at the same schools by the same teachers, the only thing that would change is the nature of the tax levy. Therefore, the scare tactics describing threats to educational offerings and other imagined horrors, should be ignored. We are asking for communities simply to pay to educate their own children rather than have two communities forcibly subsidizing other communities in a way which the voters never intended when the district was formed.

Much more will be shared as the referendum date approaches, but the fundamental facts are clear. Facts, rather than misguided fear, should be the guideposts for our voters.