

To the Editor:

Reading the opinion of some who find no difference between the Borough and the Township, I'm reminded of a European acquaintance who, having lived for some years on Palmer Square, moved into the Township just a mile away. After a suitable period I asked him how he liked his new home. "Oh, I love it," he replied in all seriousness. "I've never lived in the country before."

I, now having lived more than 10 years in the Township after 20 in the Borough, can appreciate the distinction he was making between the inner directed life of a small city and the outer directed life of its suburbs, a distinction that creates a different mind-set and different priorities. It is a distinction that raises questions of governance that have been addressed more than once in thoughtful letters but ignored by those who would prefer it didn't exist. If there is any persuasive argument that would reassure those concerned with loss of representation, I haven't seen it.

Much too much has been made of the issue of efficiency, I think. Having a single governing body would, no doubt, simplify the decision-making process in cases that now require two voices, and consolidation of services would remove costly redundancies. As desirable as that sounds, there are crucial times when in the search for efficiency, diligence, and thoroughness are at risk, and having two voices and two viewpoints are the only protection against serious error. Also, there may be redundancies that make our lives safer and more secure. Those ought not to be lost, regardless of the cost in efficiency.

Outweighing my concerns would be a clear showing of benefit to the communities involved. But even the report of the Consolidation Commission fails to present a fully convincing case. The savings they cite in support of consolidation could easily be overwhelmed down the road by "unanticipated costs", some of which have already been pointed out. One needn't question their objectivity to fault the result. A team of experienced professionals would have found the complexity of the project demanding.

Finally, I know some of my Township neighbors see good reason to consolidate. And I admire the carefully crafted and aggressive campaign that encourages that view. I might even agree, looking through my Township eyes, but my loyalty still lies with the Borough. I see little upside there, and far too much to lose. I will vote no.

*Leo Arons
Chambers Street*