

H. 694 Crimes and criminal procedure; sexual exploitation of a person under the supervision of the Department of Corrections; sexual exploitation of a minor

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Hello, I am Dr. Marcie Hambrick the Director of Research and Programs in the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Department of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

Thank you Chair LaLonde and Committee Members, for hearing testimony on H. 694. A bill that proposes to prohibit a broader range of sexual activity between employees of the Department of Corrections and persons under their supervision and for an adult who is in a position of power over a minor.

Since the mission of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont is to eliminate child abuse, I will constrain my comments to the segment of the bill that addresses conduct by an adult who is in a position of power over a minor.

We support H. 694, because changing the language from “sexual act” to a broad range of sexual conduct as defined in section 2821 will better protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and leave no room for loopholes by which a perpetrator could escape justice.

Research has demonstrated that sexual abuse includes a range of behaviors (not captured in the prior narrow language “sexual act”) and that the trauma of the various kinds of sexual abuse is associated with lifelong health and mental health repercussions (Mathews and Collin-Vézina, 2019).

We support this bill as introduced by Representatives Emmons and Representative Arsenault.

Thank you very much for hearing my testimony.

References

Mathews, B., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2019). Child sexual abuse: Toward a conceptual model and definition. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 20*(2), 131-148.