



April 13th, 2023

H. 482 – Law Enforcement Training

Senate Government Operations Committee

Sarah Robinson, Deputy Director

Thank you for taking up testimony on H. 482, related to recommendations for law enforcement training. The Vermont Network supports H. 482.

The Vermont Network serves on the Vermont Criminal Justice Council, and on the Fair and Impartial Policing subcommittee. We support the proposed changes and moving our training of law enforcement officers from a time-based training protocol to a skills and competency-based training protocol and understand about the importance of training Vermont’s law enforcement officers to be the most competent and best possible public servants. To do this, it is vitally important the law enforcement officers receive their first and foundational academy training with an emphasis on skills and competencies.

In 2009 the Vermont Network promoted mandatory, time-based training for all law enforcement officers. At that time, we posited that 2 hours of training every two years on issues related to domestic and sexual violence responses would be the ideal. Today we are actively engaged in advocacy for a modified approach, one that focuses on skills and competencies. We believe that such training could actually result in better outcomes for the victims of these crimes. Domestic violence calls represent an outsized share of all law enforcement calls in Vermont. Recently, the Department of Public Safety’s has begun to collect data on a so-called “heat map” dashboard. This preliminary data indicates that domestic and sexual violence are some of Vermont’s most frequently reported violent crimes. We are actively working with the VCJC and training academy to create a curriculum that improves measured outcomes and metrics. We know that training that focuses on skills and competencies may take more time, perhaps much more time than a rigid time-based standard. Removing time requirements provides us with the opportunity to focus on the quality of the training and the impact of the training rather than on an attachment to the idea that time has a relationship to competency.

We support H. 482 and thank you for your consideration on this topic.