

Dear House Appropriations Committee,

I am writing in support of S.17, An act relating to sheriff reforms. I see that this has moved today to your committee.

Could you please ask the Committee Assistant to add this to the record? Thanks.

It's important that this bill amends 20 V.S.A. § 2401 under Category B conduct by adding (H) gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of duties; and (I) abuse of the powers granted through law enforcement officer certification.

The bill would also prohibit sheriffs from collecting compensation for administration of contracts or related services.

I have been concerned about this since I read this article in 2018.

[For Vermont's Sheriffs, Policing Is a Lucrative Business | Crime | Seven Days | Vermont's Independent Voice \(sevendaysvt.com\)](http://www.sevendaysvt.com/For-Vermont's-Sheriffs-Policing-Is-a-Lucrative-Business-Crime-Seven-Days-Vermont's-Independent-Voice/)

Currently state law allows sheriffs to keep up to 5 percent of their departments' contract revenue, with most of their revenue coming from contracts they sign with individual state agencies, towns, schools, courts, construction companies, and other entities.

In 2017, this allowed one sheriff to almost double his salary, earning \$67,951 from outside contracts, in addition to his \$77,672 state salary.

Clearly the sheriff received extra for administering contracts. This bill would be a big improvement because it says that a sheriff's rate of compensation shall be at a rate equivalent to other employees of the department who provide similar services under the contract.

I was also stunned to learn that Vermont sheriffs aren't required to be certified law enforcement officers.

I understand that this will be taken up in P.R.1, Elections; sheriffs; qualifications, that will take two years because it's an amendment to our Constitution.

I know that is a long process, but in the meantime, it would help if S.17 became law to at least fix some of the problems with the Vermont sheriffs' departments.

Please vote to fund S.17

Thank you.

Ann Schroeder
Dummerston, Vermont