

Lynne Cleveland Vitzthum
Cleveland Vitzthum Consulting
23 St Paul St
Montpelier, VT 05602
802 595-3930
clevelandvitz1@gmail.com

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony in regards to S.308. Although I am in this building every day as lobbyist for disability rights, my testimony today is not client driven but based instead on my personal experience.

Since I was 12 years old I have bought and sold antique and estate jewelry - giving me 43 years of experience in this field. I hold colored stone certification from the Gemological Institute of America and have, at various times in my life, owned an antique store, been a member of antique group shops, and worked for a prominent Vermont estate jewelry firm.

The antique world has changed dramatically since the rise of the internet and selling online has become a viable market.. Today, millions of dollars worth of goods are bought and sold on sites such as Ebay, Etsy and Rubylane, to name just a few. Money changes hands through online payments sites such as Paypal.

If the proposed legislation were to include the purchase and sale of antique jewelry, the provisions of the bill simply do not work for online buying and selling. There is no way for me, as a buyer, to obtain:

- Sellers date of birth
- a photo ID
- signed declaration of legal ownership
- license plate number
- telephone number of the seller

When making a transaction through a third party platform (such as Ebay) personal information is maintained by that third party in order to protect both buyer and seller from internet identity theft. It is conceivable that law enforcement could obtain that information from Ebay or Paypal, as the payment source, but as the antique dealer, I cannot. Ebay would prohibit me from asking for that personal information.

My guess is that sellers looking to fence stolen goods quickly for cash are not going to take the time to photograph the pieces, list them on Ebay or Etsy, wait a minimum of one week for them to sell, register with Paypal (giving bank account information) so they can accept online payment, package the goods, and take them to the Post Office. This is not a way to make fast cash.

There is also the issue of the sheer number of individuals in Vermont who conduct business this way. There are hundreds of Vermonters who do a small amount of online buying and selling but because of the costly nature of precious metals, would rapidly reach the \$1,000 threshold in the bill even if jewelry was not their predominant field. Would each of them need to register with the State, paying a very fairly hefty certification fee every two years so they can be able to purchase jewelry if the opportunity presents itself? How would the law deal with someone who buys a box lot of jewelry online that is a mixture of older costume and antique jewelry and discovers as he or she goes through the lot they have purchased jewelry with a worth in excess of \$1,000 (this has happened to me more than once)?

I would ask the committee to continue to support the exemption of antique jewelry from the provisions of this bill and also to consider an exemption for online purchase and sale of all jewelry, including antique and estate.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you.