

H.765
Senate Government Operations meeting
April 15, 2014

- My name is James McKnight and I am a part-time certified officer of over 23 years. I have worked for the VSP, Middlebury Police, Vergennes Police, VT F&W (Deputy Warden), and the Shelburne Police Dept. I have saved lives, investigated brutal crimes, told families they had lost loved ones, served as a federally certified CMV inspector, and made many significant arrests. I have logged more than a thousand hours of training and applied that training in real life scenarios played out in our towns and communities. I have been awarded the Silver Star for bravery for entering a burning building and pulling someone to safety, and I've watched rescuers give a young girl CPR as I raced my patrol boat to awaiting ambulances. During the flood of 1992, I was right here in the state's capital, guarding this very city from criminal activity. I tell you these things not because I want praise, but instead so you may put a face to one of the many officers who will most likely be out of a job if this bill passes without grandfathering us to Level III officers.
- Mr. Gauthier wants us to believe that there will be very little we cannot do as Level II officers, but if that is the case, why isn't it defined? Make no mistake - if Level II law enforcement is any less than what I am currently practicing, then it is not acceptable. It won't be acceptable to me or to my department who will have to increase its budget by almost \$200,000.00 to hire two full-time officers to fill the gaps left by the loss of its 5 part-time patrolmen.
- This bill may help law enforcement at some point in the future but restructuring the scope of part-time law enforcement to an undefined scope puts my job, my family, and my way of life totally into the hands of the VCJTC and that scares the hell out of me.
- Before this bill is passed, I would like to see incorporated a way to either grandfather or transition experienced part-time officers to Level III officer positions. If this cannot be done then I urge you to not support sending this bill, H.765, any further.