

Dear Rep. Pugh,

I understand you have asked DCF to contact us at DAIL to get our thoughts on the proposed change to Sec. 6 of the bill, as it pertains to the authority of the Special Investigative Units (SIUs). As you know, 24 V.S.A. § 1940 provides that the SIUs are authorized to investigate “sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence, or crimes against those with physical or developmental disabilities.” As passed by the Senate, the bill strikes this language and enumerates the crimes which shall and may be investigated by the Units.

It is our understanding that few investigations involving crimes perpetrated against vulnerable adults are being handled by the SIUs; however, it is this fact that persuades us that the existing language in § 1940 should be retained. If there is little demand on the SIU resources as a result of these investigations involving vulnerable adults, it makes little sense to us to strike the authority of the Units to investigate these crimes when deemed appropriate. At a minimum, DAIL would ask that 24 V.S.A. § 1940(a)(2)(B) be amended to authorize the SIUs to investigate potential violations of 13 V.S.A. Chapter 28, which covers crimes involving the abuse/sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

Please do not hesitate to communicate with me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Stuart

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