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RE: H-565

My name is Donna Wright. I am a lifetime member of the White River Junction United Methodist Church. Our church has been dealing with a very difficult situation for over a year. We were approached by a developer who wanted to purchase our church, demolish it and subsequently build a small chapel elsewhere as a replacement.

Our District Superintendent, Brigid Farrell, supported only the members of the congregation who were in favor of selling the church to the developer so that he may tear it down while ignoring the wishes of those members who wanted to save the church. She worked closely with the developer even when many members of the congregation did not support the developer's plan. In addition, she released personal contact information without obtaining members' approval. It is my belief that Rev. Farrell has not and is not now following the Book of Discipline which requires a District Supervisor to remain a neutral and unbiased advisor.

Three votes were taken at the White River Junction Methodist Church. All votes were very close and divisive. It was with great relief and

considered a blessing when I learned about the Vermont State law that required Methodists to have a % majority vote to sell church property.

This law helped end a very disruptive period in our church. It allowed our church to make a decision to preserve our historical building and move forward.

While the change in wording from the current law to the new bill is only two words-from % majority to a majority-the meaning of those words is very powerful. By approving this change, I believe other small churches would be in jeopardy just as ours was.

We have had more new members join our church in 2015 than in any recent year. Our pledges for 2016 are up and our activity in the community continues to grow.

I urge you not to support H565. In doing so you may be providing an opportunity for other churches to remain an active part of the beautiful Vermont landscape.