

Katherine Doton  
240 Schoolhouse Hill  
Woodstock, VT 05091

March 18, 2016

Good Morning Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and  
General Affairs,

We come before you today to respectfully request that bill H-565 be  
rejected. Representative Lucke states that this bill will only change two little  
words-two thirds. Those two little words have the power to forever alter the  
landscape of Vermont.

- Policies and laws are enacted to protect the most vulnerable  
populations. Passage of bill H-565 will eliminate any system of  
checks and balances in place to protect the remaining iconic and  
historic Methodist Churches in the State of Vermont from being sold  
or razed to accommodate development by individuals with a financial  
vested interest.
- The current law requiring a two-thirds majority vote provides  
necessary protection. Had this law not been in place, our structurally  
sound, iconic church would no longer be standing, and the historic

landscape of downtown White River Junction would be forever changed. This law ensures protection for historic buildings statewide and prevents the destruction of landmarks that define our beautiful state.

- As an elected official, Representative Gabrielle Lucke has a responsibility to be transparent to her constituency, regardless of party affiliation.
- We are astonished that Freshman Representative Lucke brought this bill before the house, and now before this committee based on evidence presented by only one half of the constituency she was elected to represent, and inaccurate accounts published in the local media. This paid, elected, official failed to inform and seek input from both sides involved in this well publicized, community altering controversy. Representative Lucke only sought input from the other 50% who opposed passage of this bill on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016-well after the bill had passed the house. The members of the House of Representatives were entitled to hear testimony from both sides in order to make an informed decision.
- The United Methodist Church in White River Junction is a well preserved, and historic building-a landmark in our community. It is of

great concern that members of the greater community were not invited to testify against bill H-565, but that written support from the outside developer was presented.

- In closing, we respectfully request that your committee, and the Vermont State Senate at large, consider the introduction of law requiring a two-thirds majority vote prior to the sale or destruction of churches of all denominations.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Doton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Katherine Doton

Lifetime Member-United Methodist Church of White River Junction