



Vermont
Superintendents
Association



To: Members of the Senate Education Committee
 From: Nicole Mace, VSBA Executive Director, Jeffrey Francis, VSA Executive Director
 Ken Page, VPA Executive Director, & Jo-Anne Unruh, VCSEA Executive Director
 Re: S.194 Letter from Jay Diaz of the ACLU
 Date: March 7, 2016

Dear Senators,

Jay Diaz of the ACLU has submitted a letter to you regarding S.194, An act relating to school discipline. In the letter, Mr. Diaz makes representations about the discussion that took place among stakeholder groups on February 18. We are writing to you to correct misstatements that are now a part of the public record regarding that bill.

In his letter, Mr. Diaz writes that we expressed "agreement that suspension and expulsion law is something that needs fixing." That statement is not accurate. Our disagreements regarding the current efforts to amend school discipline laws are not based on disagreements over language. We do not support making changes to the statutes in any form at this time, for reasons that were shared in our earlier testimony on this topic.

Mr. Diaz's letter also states that our associations believe "such changes could potentially add unforeseen costs and workload for their constituents." While these issues are among the concerns that were raised, taken alone, the statement does not fairly characterize the conversation that took place among all stakeholders.

As we indicated at the February 18 meeting, we would support legislative action that provides resources to school districts and the Agency of Education so that they may increase opportunities for training on current laws, regulations and best practices relating to school discipline.

Sincerely,

Nicole Mace
Executive Director
Vermont School Boards Association

Jeffrey Francis
Executive Director
Vermont Superintendents Association

Ken Page
Executive Director
Vermont Principals' Association

Jo-Anne Unruh
Executive Director
Vermont Council of Special Education
Administrators

Cc: Allen Gilbert, Executive Director, ACLU
 Jay Diaz, Staff Attorney, ACLU