



Memo To: House Committee on Judiciary, Rep. Maxine Grad, Chairperson

Memo From: Auburn Watersong, Policy Director

Re: JRS 18

Date: April 28, 2017

Since the presidential election in November, 2016, there has been a substantial rise in hate crimes and bias related incidents related to LGBTQ individuals. The Southern Poverty Law center reported a total of 1094 bias-related incidents occurring in just the one month following the elections. As of April 6, 2017, the National Human Rights Campaign reports 130 bills in 30 states have introduced anti-LGBTQ bills.

The Vermont Network recognizes the significant relationship between oppression and violence. LGBTQ individuals and holders of multiple marginalized identities are even more likely to experience sexual violence. Approximately 1 in 8 lesbian women and nearly half of bisexual women experience rape in their lifetime, and statistics likely increase when a broader definition of sexual assault is used. Nearly half of bisexual men and four in ten gay men have experienced sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime, and though statistics regarding rape vary, it is likely that the rate is higher or comparable to heterosexual men. As with most hate-based violence, transgender individuals are the most likely to be affected in the LGBT community. 64% of transgender people have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

For years now, Vermont has been a national leader in the support of human rights and the rights of LGBTQ individuals. For decades Vermont's lawmakers have unfailingly supported victims of domestic and sexual violence. We are fortunate to live in a state so committed to survivors of all violence.

JRS 18 reinforces Vermont's commitment to human rights and victim protections. It reminds us that as Vermonters, we denounce hatred, support equality, and uphold the dignity of every human being.

We strongly encourage our legislators to support the passage of JRS 18.

Thank you.