



*Woodstock, Vermont*    *The Shire Town of Windsor County*

TOWN-VILLAGE MANAGER GOVERNMENT

Town Hall • Woodstock, Vermont 05091 • 802/457-3611

*Office of the Town Clerk*

February 23, 2017

Maida F. Townsend, Chair  
House Committee on Government Operations  
Room #49  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05633

Dear Ms. Townsend,

I am writing in regards to House Bill #111. I applaud your effort to help prevent identity theft and fraud, as well as to streamline the Vital Records process in Vermont. I am especially pleased that the proposed bill will now require both parties to sign the application for a Marriage License. There are many positive aspects to this proposed restructuring. I am concerned, however, about the changing role of the Town Clerk.

Since 1779 we have been the custodians of Vital Records pertaining to births and deaths occurring in our towns as well as births, deaths, and marriages of our residents which occurred in Vermont. To strip us of these duties will be detrimental. Additionally, a system whereby a Clerk may apply to become an agent may have unintended consequences. I can foresee many Town Clerks choosing to forego the hassle and not become agents. This would place more of a burden on those Clerks who do chose to become agents and disenfranchise citizens seeking records.

I am in support of a centralized Registry system administered by a State Registrar. I would recommend that the Town Clerks continue to act as "Authorized Agents". We are already sworn to prevent fraud and maintain security, and the penalties of this bill will reinforce the serious responsibility maintenance of these documents presents.

I thank you for your diligent work and consideration of this mater.

Sincerely,

*F. Charles Degener III*

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Town Clerk

