

To: House Committee on Government Operations  
From: Keith E Goslant, 6 Cedar Street, Montpelier, VT 05602  
Re: H.385 Jurisdiction of Human Rights Commission

For a brief introduction, I am Keith E. Goslant of Montpelier. I have been an activist on behalf of LGBTQ rights and equality since 1985. In that capacity, I was one of the founders of Outright VT, an organization dedicated to ensuring rights and services for LGBTQ youth. I am sending this brief statement of support of H.385 based on these experiences.

In response to the 2016 election and dramatic shift in support, or specifically the lack thereof, coming from the Federal administration I was one of the organizers of the June 2017 Solidarity March on Montpelier for Visibility and Equality. This event was an opportunity for VT's LGBTQIA communities to stand together and to share the historic victories that have been achieved in VT and to prepare for the challenges before us.

One of the most moving events during this event was a public speak-out. I had been told before the event there were no youth who wanted to speak. However, with the microphone open to all, approximately 15 youth lined up to give personal testimony. The running theme was, a thank you to VT's aging activists for the protections achieved, but, "at times youth can be stupid", and "please do not forget us". Our youth described their experiences with bullying and harassment, all VT based experiences. I still hear their voices and hope you will as well as you debate this bill.

The CDC report on LGBTQ youth and bullying includes these results from the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (the most recent results available), of self-identified LGB students:

- 10% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
- 34% were bullied on school property
- 28% were bullied electronically

According to GLSEN:

- 42 per cent of LGBT youth have experienced cyber bullying
- 25 per cent more than once
- 35 per cent receive online threats
- 58 per cent say something bad is said to them or about them online
- Cyber bullying of LGBT youth is three times higher than other student's experience.
- 33 per cent report sexual harassment online, which is four times higher than the experience of other students.
- 27 per cent of LGBT youth do not feel safe online.
- 20 per cent report receiving harassing text messages from other students.

These statistics predate the shift in Federal administration and its systematic repeal of protections for LGBT people. This shift has created a climate in which there has been a 4% decrease (53% to 49%) in Harris Polls surveys of, "how comfortable are you with LGBT people". This shift is an unsettling fallout that began with the 2016 presidential election, and continued throughout 2016, resulting in a

permission slip for discrimination and bias that has permeated society. We only have to remember the incident in Burlington this past weekend where Patriot Front, an alt-right white supremacy group, displayed a Reclaim America banner in City Hall Park to know that hate has found its way to Vermont.

Thank you for reading my brief statement supporting H.385. I look forward to the opportunity to provide additional information as you consider this important legislation.