

Dear House Committee on Government Operations Members,

I have been following the progress of the Systemic Racism Mitigation Bill with such hope, as I believe it is a well-crafted and critical piece of legislation for our state and, by extension, for our whole country.. We are all -- even those of us who are white -- surely aware of how entrenched, and often invisible, the historic and ongoing effects of racism are. These effects have been demonstrated to be active in Vermont too. We need to be honest and clear-eyed about this and seek ways to improve. This legislation creates a path to a better and more just future through critical data collection, racism awareness training, an independent Director, and a centralized governance authority responsible for overseeing and taking responsibility for this important work. This is not something to fear; it is something to enact and support!

I am distressed to hear that your committee has considered amendments that compromise and weaken the effective bill passed by the Senate. I am writing to urge you to please do the right (and historic) thing now, at this critical moment, and report out the bill in its original form.

Sincerely,

Janet Van Fleet

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