

Not sure if you all are included on his google group of the committee. Back when he was putting this google group together, I had no idea who Mark was or what he was doing forming a committee google group of HGO. I even reported it to the State House IT people to check it out. When they told me that forming a committee google group was a legit thing to do, even from outside the committee, I ignored it... till now, as I see why it was formed.

Denise: Please post Mark's email to the HGO google group.

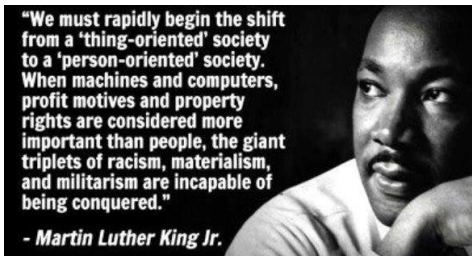
From: vermont-house-government-operations@googlegroups.com <vermont-house-government-operations@googlegroups.com> on behalf of Mark Hughes <mark@justiceforallvt.org>

Sent: Monday, April 2, 2018 12:56 PM

To: vermont-house-government-operations@googlegroups.com

Cc: racial-justice-reform-coalition@googlegroups.com

Subject: Systemic Racism Mitigation Equity Commission S.281



Madam Chair and members of the House Committee on Government Operations,

Thank you for taking up S.281 as a priority! In your deliberations, please consider the following areas of concern:

The Panel and the "Officer" do not reflect the systemic nature of the role responsibilities and could lead to confusion. *

Currently the bill refers to this body as a Civil Rights Panel and the "Civil Rights Panel is charged with hiring a "Civil Rights Officer". This sends a message implying a responsibility to address explicit racism. There could be nothing further from the truth. The Panel and the "Officer" should be renamed to suggest the systemic racism mitigation responsibilities carried with the role. Senator White said there has been talk of changing the name and they expected that the House would do so.

The duties and costs associated with this function are not clearly defined and could create misunderstandings and uncertainty, leading to inefficiency or failure. *

Senator McCormick (amongst others) have expressed concerns about not completely understanding the specific duties of this position. This is an understandable concern given it is funded and even more so due to its independence. The bill must point out with crystal clarity the specific responsibilities of this role. Senator Brock and others have mentioned that that we seem to be signing off on something, without understanding the full cost, given the requirement to return to Senate Government Operations with suggestions on funding follow-on consulting engagements. This can be resolved by making projections and appropriations over the next three years.

The bill fails to seize the opportunity to address strengthening civil liberty protections in a climate of the ongoing national dismantling of civil liberties, increased explicit racism (both nationally and in Vermont) and an underfunded and ill-equipped Human Rights Commission. *

We must do all we can to refortify the civil liberty protections of Vermonters. Civil liberty protections continue to deteriorate at the national level and we continue to see challenges in Vermont. These protections range from standardizing use of force processes to prohibiting racial profiling and updating the Human Rights Commission.

*** *Addressed in H.868***

Here is an S.281 [Q&A](#) to verse you in the bill background. Please make sure you take a look at this [Legislative Research Document](#). It is the genesis of the entire effort to advance this vital legislation.

I look forward to seeing you at testimony.

Thank you for your service!

Mark

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