

To: Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Keith E Goslant

Re: Supporting J.R.S 18 Joint Resolution in support of combating the rise in hate crimes and bigotry.

As a brief introduction, I am Keith E Goslant, a current resident of Montpelier, a life-long Vermonter, and a civil & gay rights activist dating back to 1986 when I served as the LGBTQ Co-Liaison to the Office of Governor Madeline Kunin. I continued to serve, as an uncompensated volunteer, in this role to subsequent Governors until 2006. I recently resumed this role for the newly formed LGBTIA Alliance of VT. However, this testimony is as a private citizen.

VT has worked long and hard to ensure that equal protections and opportunities are extended to all her citizens. As is frequently stated by VT's elected officials, we are an inclusive state. However, I must admit that I had become complacent with VT's supportive environment. I may have believed the work was completed and my sense of activism could be retired. Then the election of 2016 happened, and that sense of security and protection was challenged. This was a feeling expressed frequently in conversations with my LGBTQ brothers and sisters.

I attended the inauguration of Governor Scott, because, as I told him that day, I needed to hear his words that told me that Vermont was still the home for this native son. J.R.S. 18 makes this same statement from Vermont's Legislature to all LGBTQ citizens; Vermont is indeed still their home.

As legislators, it has been your continued work, and your willingness to hear and act on the concerns of your constituents, that has created that inclusive community. You have made VT one of the top 5 states for protections extended to, and inclusive of, the LGBTQ communities. For that work I thank you, and respectfully ask you to adopt this resolution as a strong and visible commitment to the work that has been accomplished, and the challenges with which we may be confronted.

Thank you for considering these comments in your discussion on J.R.S 18