

# State of Vermont

## House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

### Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 7

Joint resolution apologizing and expressing sincere condolences to all Vermonters and their families who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned and eugenically inspired sterilization

Offered by: Representatives Webb of Shelburne, Donahue of Northfield, Lippert of Hinesburg, Copeland Hanzas of Bradford, Cina of Burlington, Young of Greensboro, Bancroft of Westford, Batchelor of Derby, Bock of Chester, Browning of Arlington, Brumsted of Shelburne, Burke of Brattleboro, Canfield of Fair Haven, Carroll of Bennington, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Christensen of Weathersfield, Christie of Hartford, Coffey of Guilford, Colburn of Burlington, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dolan of Waitsfield, Elder of Starksboro, Fegard of Berkshire, Gamache of Swanton, Goslant of Northfield, Haas of Rochester, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Houghton of Essex, James of Manchester, Killacky of South Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, McCormack of Burlington, McFaun of Barre Town, Ode of Burlington, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Partridge of Windham, Pugh of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, Ralph of Hartland, Rosenquist of Georgia, Savage of Swanton, Scheu of Middlebury, Seymour of Sutton, Sheldon of Middlebury, Smith of New Haven, Strong of Albany, Till of Jericho, Toleno of Brattleboro, Townsend of South Burlington, Wood of Waterbury, and Yantachka of Charlotte

Whereas, in 1925, UVM zoology professor Henry F. Perkins established the dubious Eugenics Survey of Vermont to measure defective behavior, “depravity,” and “immorality,” and it targeted members of Abenaki bands, Vermonters of mixed racial or French-Canadian heritage, the poor, and persons with disabilities, and

Whereas, the General Assembly adopted 1931 Acts and Resolves No. 174, “An Act for Human Betterment By Voluntary Sterilization,” to prevent the procreation of individuals belonging predominately to these groups, and

Whereas, this eugenically inspired legislation resulted in the sterilization of Vermonters, often without their fully informed voluntary consent, and

Whereas, the devastating impact on the lives of the sterilized individuals and their families was irreversible, and

Whereas, on June 21, 2019, the University of Vermont issued a formal statement of sincere apology for its “unethical and regrettable” eugenics role, and the General Assembly, on behalf of the State of Vermont, should issue a similar apology, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly apologizes and expresses its sincere sorrow to all Vermonters and their families who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned and eugenically inspired sterilization.

Attested to:

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**Mitzi Johnson**  
Speaker of the House

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**David Zuckerman**  
President of the Senate

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**William M. MaGill**  
Clerk, House of Representatives