

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for your efforts to make policing in Vermont fair and impartial and to create a police force that serves as guardians of all people living in or visiting Vermont. I live in Lamoille County and our town contracts for police services with the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department.

I am part of a small group of concerned citizens in Lamoille County who are concerned with the evident racial bias in the traffic stop data for the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department (LCSD).

We have been meeting with the Sheriff of Lamoille County over the past several months to understand their policies and practices with regard to use of force, training and community policing.

It is clear from our discussions with the LCSD that officers need additional training in racial bias, the legacy of the history of race in America which has resulted in the huge wealth gap between African Americans and whites and the history of racial violence by police. Law enforcement organizations need to help their officers become aware of their innate biases as well as have the tools to track and prevent the hiring of overtly racist and/or violent officers. The Lamoille County Sheriff's Department tells us that the inability of their officers to participate in the State Employee Pension fund limits their ability to retain good officers, provide competitive salaries and provide more training.

We hope that the legislature will enact H.464, H.284 and the provisions laid out in the Law Enforcement Modernization in Vermont as drafted on June 10, 2020. We also hope the legislature will allow all law enforcement personnel to participate in the state pension program.

Thank you for your work and attention to these issues.

With regards, Dorigen Keeney, Johnson VT

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