

**STATEMENT OF THE VERMONT SECRETARY OF STATE
19-1195 (An act relating to the closing of postsecondary schools)**

I apologize for sending this to you by email – I am at a CSG Overseas & Military Voting Initiative co-chaired by the Washington Secretary of State and me. Deputy Secretary of State Chris Winters and State Archivist Tanya Marshall are available to assist in this discussion.

I fully recognize the closing of any postsecondary school is a troubling situation and that the State of Vermont has not done a good job historically. I also recognize that this Committee wants to do the best thing.

In that regard, the Secretary of State's Office appreciates the concerns of the Committee and the need to resolve matters associated with the closing of postsecondary schools.

However, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration division of our Office is not the answer.

We do not and cannot support any legislation that requires the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) division to provide services, or in this case, long-term management obligations to private sector organizations and their records.

VSARA was created in 2008 to provide services specifically and only to public agencies and the scope of their work is strictly for public records. In addition, the facilities and systems managed by VSARA are only for records created by state public agencies.

Since assuming operations of one existing facility (the State Records Center) from the Agency of Administration, our staff has worked very hard to resolve previous misuses of facilities by all three branches of state government, including the discovery of postsecondary school records for which the Board of Education and former Department of Education took custody of and then abandoned.

VSARA still has a lot of work to do with other abandoned records and 19-1195 (An act relating to the closing of postsecondary schools) would be a serious step backward.

I know this committee feels that AOE is the most understaffed and overworked agency in state government but VSARA is also maxed out as we serve all of state government and municipalities. It is also not as simple as just outsourcing to a 3rd party.

Our Office is willing to provide advice or recommendations to the Committee or serve as a consultant on a committee to propose legislation; however, **we cannot take custody or management responsibilities of any postsecondary school records.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Condos
Vermont Secretary of State