

MEDIA ALERT: VLCT Membership Passes Resolutions on Discrimination and a VT Constitutional Amendment

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On Wednesday in South Burlington, Vermont, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns' membership departed from its usual annual meeting business to unanimously approve two resolutions: one condemning recent events both in Vermont and nationally, and a second one calling on the legislature to pass a constitutional amendment eliminating residual language still in Article 1. of the Vermont Constitution that allows a person to be held as a servant, slave or apprentice if that person is below the age of 21.

1. "Resolved: that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns condemns in the strongest possible terms, discrimination in all its manifestations, that is publically or privately directed against public officials in particular, or generally toward any and all people."
2. "Resolved: that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns calls on the legislature to amend Chapter 1, Article 1 of the Vermont Constitution to read 'That all persons are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. Slavery and involuntary servitude in all forms are prohibited.'"

"Clearly, these are overarching issues on which Vermont's local officials believe it is imperative to take a stand," said Public Policy Director Karen Horn. "Calling them out at the same time VLCT adopts it Municipal Policy is entirely appropriate."

The membership also adopted VLCT's Municipal Policy, which will guide staff, board and member advocacy efforts for the 2019-2020 legislative biennium. The members – who comprise local officials from every corner of the state – debated and adopted policy platforms that included a call for self-governance, long -term funding for water quality obligations, addressing the continuing opioid crisis, whole community health efforts, and implementing rail service from Bennington to Burlington.

Members once again called on the legislature to create and implement a simple and transparent education finance system that reduces and reforms the property tax burden so the education property tax no longer constrains the capacity to fund vital municipal services.

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