



Testimony on S.45– Discharge from Probation
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Philosophically, the Vermont Network supports S.45 and its underlying intentions. We support policies that encourage individuals to comply with the conditions of their probation in order to move forward and lead productive lives. This is essential to our communities and our victims. We support the bill as passed by the Senate, especially the provision related to completion of specific treatment programming. We would, however, like to strengthen the victim notification provision.

Completion of Programming

We want to highlight the importance, and our support, of the language on page 6 in (C) around the completion of specific treatment programming. This is essential to the success of sex offender treatment and domestic violence accountability programming. Domestic Violence Accountability programs are typically around 26 weeks (or 6.5 months). Depending on the length of probation and when the individual was able to start the program, it is an entirely likely scenario that an individual could be in the midst of this treatment at the time of midpoint review. In order to be at its most effective, this programming needs to be completed in its entirety. If an individual is discharged from probation before this programming is completed, the likelihood of them remaining in this necessary treatment program is significantly lower.

Victim Notification

We are in support of the added language on Page 7 (3) regarding victim notification. It is essential that victims are notified prior to the midpoint review, so that victims who have information about an offender's noncompliance with conditions or other concerns regarding their offender's discharge can bring this information to the parole officer in a timely manner. This notification is also imperative for victim safety - victims will need to know when these conditions will be lapsing so that they can ensure adequate protections are in place for their safety, which may include filing for a civil Relief from Abuse order.

Victim notification amendment - We are requesting an amendment that strengthens the victim notification for cases yet to be sentenced. Requiring the prosecutor's office to notify victims of



this policy prior to making a plea deal or sentencing will ensure that victims understand how it may potentially impact their offender's sentence length.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.