

March 19, 2021

Vermont House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: J.R.H.2 - Joint resolution sincerely apologizing and expressing sorrow and regret to all individual Vermonters and their families and descendants who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned eugenics policies and practices

Dear Chair Stevens and Members of the Committee,

As the Interim Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Vermont Chapter. I am writing to express our unequivocal support for J.R.H 2.

Policies and practices of state-sanctioned eugenics and sterilization sought to affect the cultural and social genocide of whole classes of people, based on their race, ethnicity, or mental health status. In particular, these policies were aimed at the erasure of the Abenaki people, by violently attempting to arrest one generation's ability to beget the next generation, and so perpetuate their cultural, social, and familial bonds, inheritances, and legacies. These heinous and violent actions have caused immeasurable harm, and initiated a legacy of generational trauma, stigma, and social exclusion. The state of Vermont, and the institutions and individuals that participated in and practiced these policies must be accountable for their actions. Apologizing, and acknowledging the injustice, and inhumanity of these crimes is a crucial step in the journey of accountability, and repair.

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. This joint resolution will be a crucial acknowledgement of the violence perpetrated against so many innocent and vulnerable people. Additionally, it will serve to remind us all that violence and injustice are the consequence of human action and choice, and that we must always choose to pursue justice, peace, and the common welfare. NASW VT urges the members of the Vermont Assembly to support J.R.H. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Stanley, LICSW
Interim Executive Director
NASW-VT