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To: Testimony <testimony@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: Subject line Proposition 2

Good morning,

I am sorry I did not provide testimony last night regarding passage of this weighty historical proposition as it will go far to do good for our state righting a long overdue wrong as well as helping to repair and signal that we are a state that stands fully behind individual freedom and the right to self determination.

I would also like to expand on what Professor Teachout testified regarding indentured servitude, as I heard echoed yesterday, that indentured servitude is like our modern day apprenticeship program.

Being a woman of Irish roots, I would respectfully disagree with that narrative as many of my Irish ancestors, due to famine brought on by the English government, were abused by the system. Seems poverty bears fruit for many in power to benefit from in the form of cheap labor. I cannot not categorize the labor as free given indentured servants were purchased. If you take a quick Google, takes under a minute to see there were incredible abuses that came about because of our constitution codifying the practice:

Several instances of [kidnapping](#)^[7] for transportation to the Americas are recorded, such as that of [Peter Williamson](#) (1730–1799). As historian [Richard Hofstadter](#) pointed out, "Although efforts were made to regulate or check their activities, and they diminished in importance in the eighteenth century, it remains true that a certain small part of the European colonial population of America was brought by force, and a much larger portion came in response to deceit and misrepresentation on the part of the spirits [recruiting agents]."^[8] One "spirit" named William Thiene was known to have spirited away^[9] 840 people from Britain to the colonies in a single year.^[10] Historian [Lerone Bennett Jr.](#) notes that "Masters given to flogging often did not care whether their victims were black or white."^[11]

Also, during the 18th and early 19th centuries, children from the UK were often kidnapped and sold into indentured labor in the American and Caribbean colonies (often without any indentures).^{[12][13]}

Indentured servitude was also used by governments in Britain as a punishment for captured [prisoners of war](#) in rebellions and civil wars. [Oliver Cromwell](#) sent into indentured service thousands of prisoners captured in the 1648 [Battle of Preston](#) and the 1651 [Battle of Worcester](#). [King James II](#) acted similarly after the [Monmouth Rebellion](#) in 1685, and use of such measures continued into the 18th century.^[citation needed]

Indentured servants could not marry without the permission of their master, were sometimes subject to physical punishment and did not receive legal favor from the courts. Female indentured servants in particular might be raped and/or sexually abused by their masters. If children were produced the labour would be extended by 2 years.^[14] Cases of successful prosecution for these crimes were very uncommon, as indentured servants were unlikely to have access to a magistrate, and social pressure to avoid such brutality could vary by geography and cultural norm. The situation was particularly difficult for indentured women, because in both low social class and gender, they were believed to be particularly prone to vice, making legal redress unusual.

This is a stain on Vermont's history that requires amendment of our living constitution. I also support the testimony of others last night so will not belabor their points but would like to point out that this change signals that we stand for freedom and protection of our inalienable rights, which in turn will help attract much needed bodies to our state. I see you are all familiar with the severe employment shortages we are experiencing. This will go a long way in helping to attract folks here as we unravel missteps taken in our long arc of history.

I am proud to call myself a Vermonter as we are a culture of understanding that we benefit from looking out for each other. One never knows here when we will need help changing a flat in subzero weather at midnight on the side of a snowy Vermont road.

PROPOSAL 2 AS PASSED BY SENATE

Sec. 2. Article 1 of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is amended to read:

Article 1. [All persons born free; their natural rights; slavery and indentured servitude prohibited] 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; therefore no person born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after arriving to the age of twenty-one years, unless bound by the person's own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Lorraine Zaloom
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