

From: Pat Autilio <pifzid@gmail.com>

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To: Testimony <testimony@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: Written Testimony on Vermont PR-2 - Patrick Autilio - 20-Jan-2022

My name is Patrick Autilio from Quechee VT.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to speak today.

I support the passage of PR-2 and I would like to briefly give my own perspective on why this committee should support its passage.

We live in uncertain times. The political climate in Vermont and the US grows ever more polarized and contentious. Our founding documents serve as the basis for many such disagreements. They are receiving ever more scrutiny by our courts and politicians in attempts to make a case either for reform or for bringing us back to the "good old days." In spite of their age, the US and Vermont constitutions are essential, living documents we all reference and rely on to support our democratic principles.

The US constitution and bill of rights provide many examples of ambiguous language that have resulted in markedly different competing interpretations in the public square.

The Vermont constitution is clearly not immune from this kind of dispute. Years of clear court precedent flowing from Article 1 supports the assertion that slavery is illegal in Vermont. But the language of Article 1 is unclear and confusing to our modern ears.

So in our uncertain times, we should embrace clarity and certainty where we can find it by making this change to Article 1. The cost of making this is low. But it will put minds at ease. By doing so, we can perhaps shed a little light, put this behind us and then move on to other important concerns.

I ask this committee approve PR-2 to be brought for a vote but the full House.

Thank you again for your time.

Patrick Autilio

diversifiedpat@gmail.com

Quechee, VT