

VSEA Survey on the Proposed Creation of an Agency of Public Safety

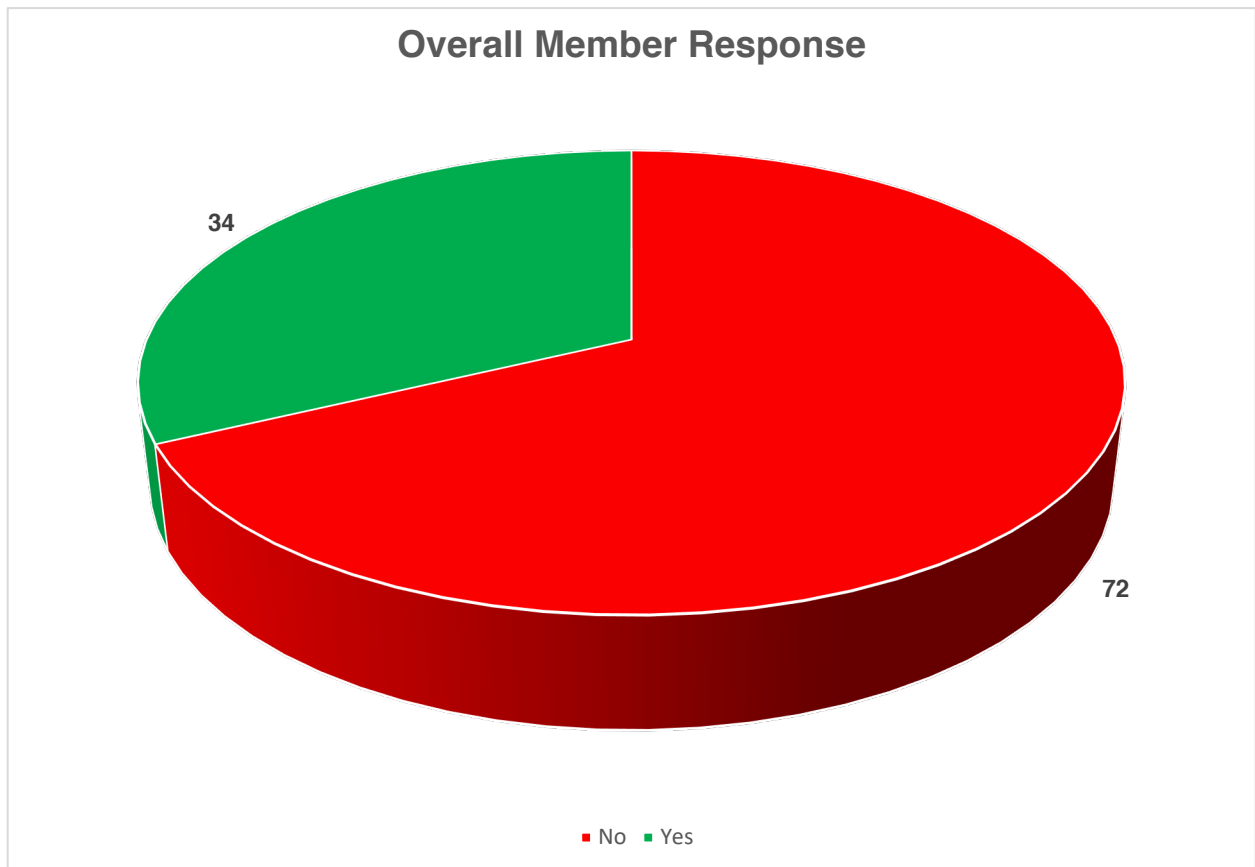
October 2020

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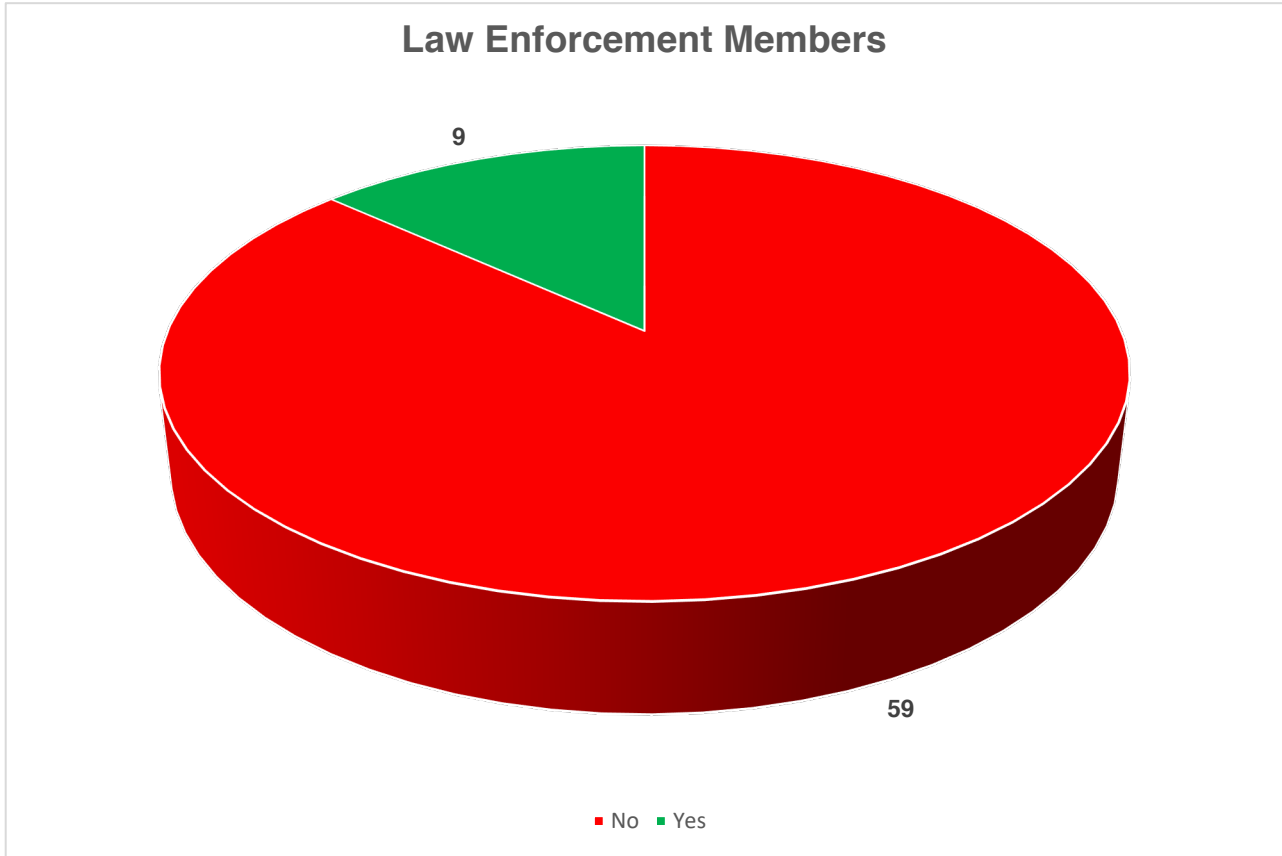
Members were asked: *“Would you support your position being moved from your current department into a newly-created, unified, Agency of Public Safety?”* Here are their responses:

Overall



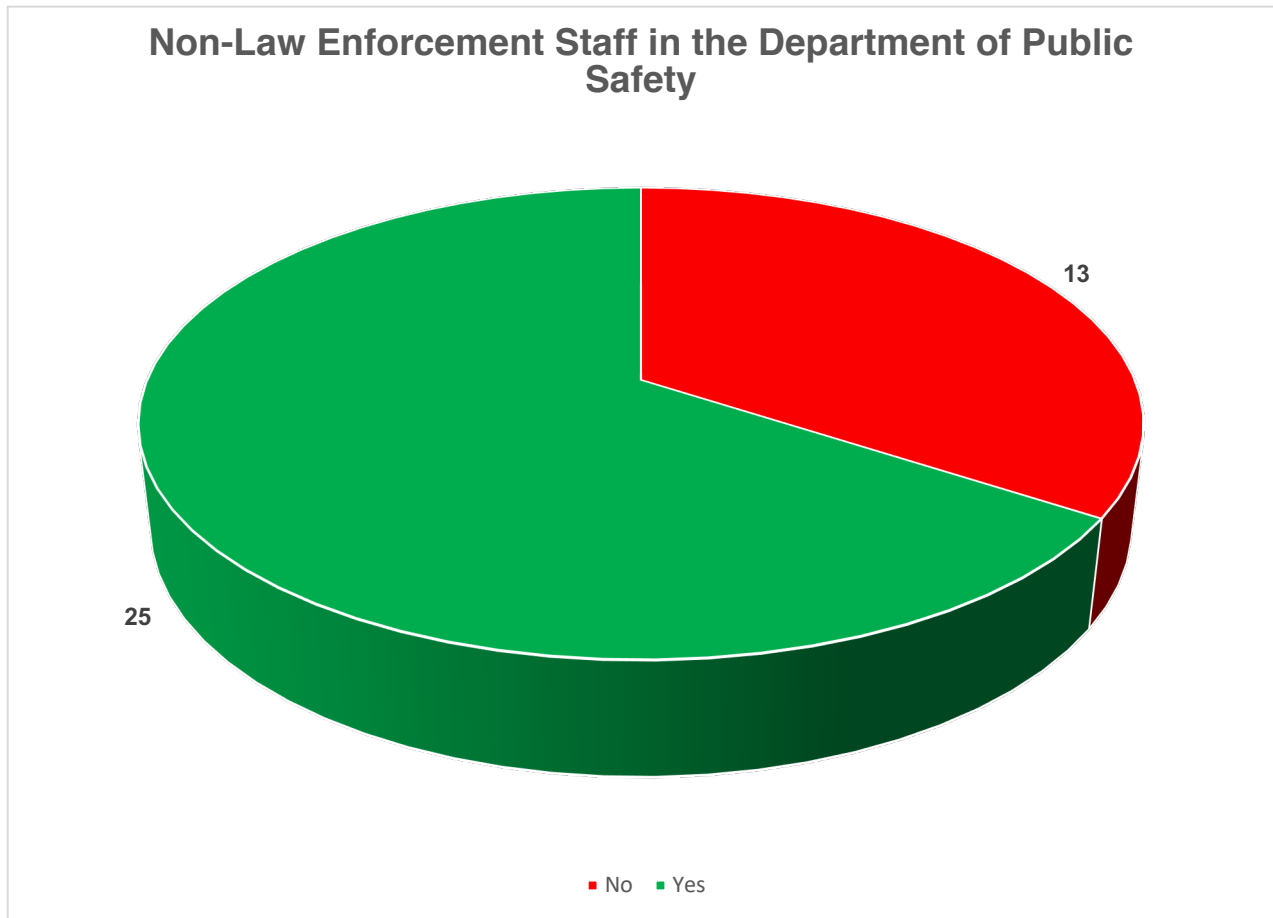
68% of all members surveyed opposed the change.
32% of all members surveyed supported the change.

Among Law Enforcement Officer Members



87% of all LEO members surveyed opposed the change.
13% of all LEO members surveyed supported the change.

Among Non-Law Enforcement Officer Members in the Department of Public Safety



34% of these members opposed the change.

66% of these members supported the change.

Additionally, a request was made to ask this group of non-LEO DPS members why they did, or did not, support a change. What follows are the responses from the non-law enforcement members in the Department of Public Safety who answered the question *“Why do you support, or not support, this proposed change?”*

Among those who oppose the change:

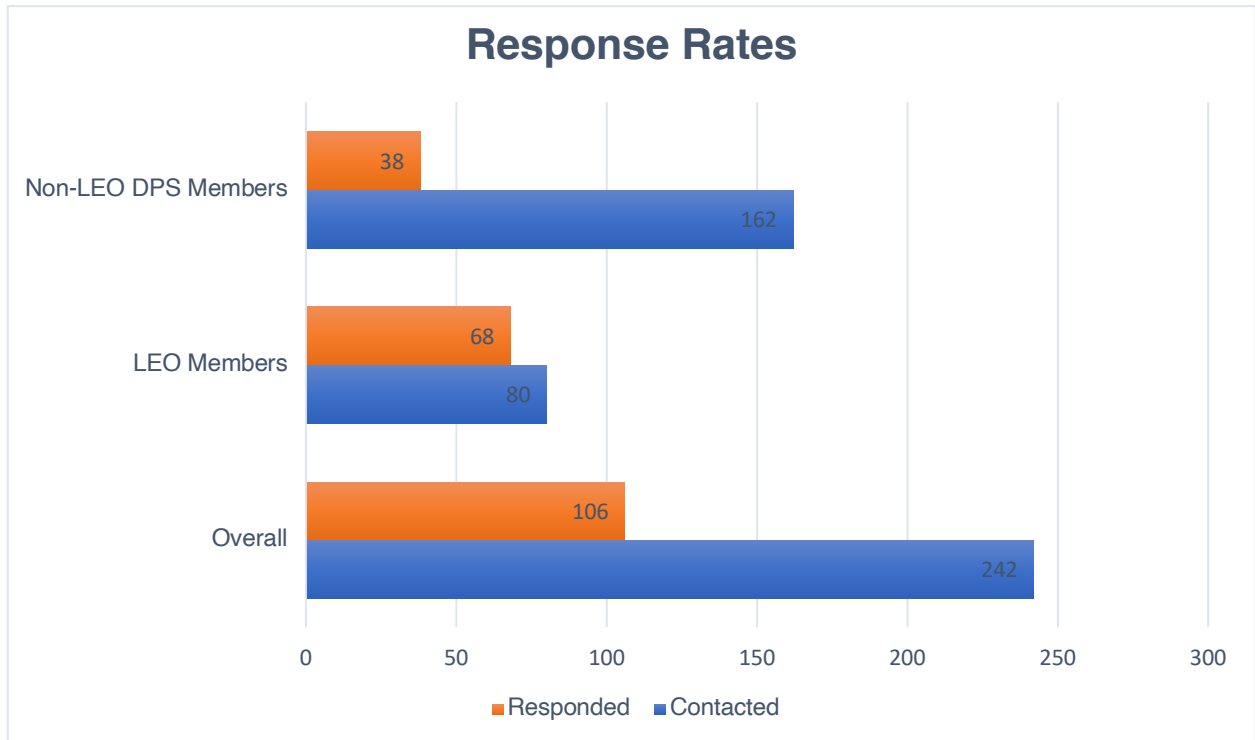
- "I'm not 100v percent either way. Would need facts"
- "dont fix what's not broken!"
- "This restructuring of Public Safety would give the Directors more power to rule their respective Agencies with minimal oversight (if any) by the head of the Agency of Public Safety (I believe this position would be titled "Secretary of Public Safety"). As things are now in Public Safety, the Commissioner does not have the ability to properly oversee all of the Divisions below him. This has allowed Directors the ability to run their Divisions with minimal oversight, and in some case miss manage the Division to the point the service it provides is counterproductive to the State and it's citizens. Before the Department is 'expanded', it must first get the existing components fixed and functional before taking on more components and making matters worse."
- "They have enough on their plate now. If they become an law enforcement agency that will negatively impact the non-law enforcement sections. They will definitely need at least 2 more attorneys and another public records specialist. I don't think the budget will allow for an increase in staffing next year."
- "Don't trust dps"
- "They have enough on their plate now. If they become an law enforcement agency that will negatively impact the non-law enforcement sections. They will definitely need at least 2 more attorneys and another public records specialist. I don't think the budget will allow for an increase in staffing next year."
- "VSP has been trying to do this for years. It's all about money and not employees. They have also been trying to get 911 under this agency as well as another money grab. Giving DPS this much control is not a good idea for the state and surely not for the employees that currently work for DPS."
- "too many unknown side effects"

Among those who support the change:

- "I would support the elevation of the Department of Public Safety to an Agency as it would give the new Agency a consolidated operational structure and its leadership would change from a Commissioner to a Secretary."
- "I would need to know more information how this change would impact my position."
- "Everyone in our building would be operating on the same set of guidelines"
- "I see very little difference to my post as I'm already part of the DPS and work closely with law enforcement. The only problem I can see would be if the change brought about a greater association of the forensic lab with the police in which case there might be an appearance of bias."
- "I think it would be good as there are things we work together on and we have the same mission to protect Vermonters."

- “I hope that this change would allow for better communication, integration and working across divisions.”
- “I see no harm with what little information I have about it.”
- “I think it would be good as there are things we work together on and we have the same mission to protect Vermonters.” [*Note: this comment, which was also listed above, appeared as a response twice*]
- “I would like to see the state reduce the number of higher paid executive job positions such as deputy commissioners, etc. Combining might do this. It would allow for more employees at lower paid positions. Also, I would need to know more information to decide but would keep an open mind at this time. I would also like to see more state offices move out of rented buildings into the new state building in Waterbury. More parking. Easier access for the public, especially for offices in Montpelier. Also, if some employees continue to telework, I would like to see a bonus or communter compensation for employees that are required to work every day at their physical location, such as the VT Forensic lab, especially this winter. Employees should be compensated for travel costs while other employees work from home.”
- “I really like the idea of the training organizations being housed under one roof - I feel like it is more effective and matches the way other organizations function.”
- “I think it would help the Forensic lab to have centralized law enforcement for ease of communication and cooperation”
- “It puts all law enforcement in one agency and makes it better to standardize laws. It also helps with the bias free policies of the state. It does not consolidate it just restructures”
- “My position with VCIC works very closely with DPS.”
- “As part of the department of public safety, I have a unique position that would combine with other similar positions into a division under the newly created agency. This would help us in combine resources (people and money) and knowledge that is currently sildoed in each division.”
- “If it changes the retirement requirements to 25 years vs 30, I would be interested. I cant honestly say whether or not I'd support it otherwise without knowing more details about what would change.”
- “There is no information given that supports or opposes the action. More concrete information on the impact of this measure is needed.”
- “I am already in public safety. This should have no impact on me. However, I would like to know more specifics before I can fully support it”
- “I need to have more information. Like what would change, example payroll, time off... What are the + and - Thank you.”
- “Seems efficient but I don’t know the particular details to formulate a strong opinion.”

Response Rates



A total of 242 VSEA members were contacted for this survey; this number represents all of the LEO members and Non-LEO DPS members for whom we had home e-mail addresses. Of that 242, 106 responded— a 44% response rate.

Of the 80 LEO members contacted, 68 responded— an 88% response rate.

Of the 162 Non-LEO DPS members contacted, 38 responded— a 23% response rate.