



H. 729 – Miscellaneous Judiciary
Amendment to Statute of Limitations for Discrimination Claims
Sarah Robinson, Deputy Director
House Judiciary Committee, May 2, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on a proposed amendment to H. 729 to expand the statutes of limitations to 6 years for claims of discrimination.

The proposed expansion to the statutes of limitations for claims of discrimination originated in a separate bill, H. 329 which seeks to amend several facets of law regarding claims of discrimination. The Vermont Network has been working in coalition with other partners on H. 329 and we strongly support the proposed amendment.

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence. Sexual harassment can take many different forms including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and sexually explicit and offensive conduct. Like many forms of sexual violence, often the people who perpetrate these acts are both known to their victims and also in a position of formal or informal power. This can make bringing forth complaints and/or claims of sexual harassment exceedingly difficult. As with many forms of sexual violence, individuals occupying more than one marginalized identity (such as race or gender identity) are impacted by issues of harassment in more severe and complex ways.

In recent years, the General Assembly has affirmed its support for expanding statutes of limitations for individuals to bring forward claims by expanding the timeline for claims related to child sexual and child physical abuse. These changes have proven to be needed and positive reforms, allowing plaintiffs to bring forward meritorious claims to be heard. We believe this expansion to the statute of limitations for claims of discrimination is a modest but very important improvement to the law to open the pathways to justice for victims of harassment.