



**S. 265 – Draft 1.2**

**Sarah Robinson, Deputy Director**

**House Judiciary Committee – April 6, 2022**

Thank you for taking up S. 265, a bill to expand the criminal threatening statute to certain third persons. We appreciate the work on this bill in both the House and the Senate, including the testimony from the Vermont Secretary of State’s Office and the Vermont Attorney General’s Office. The Vermont Network submits this brief written testimony in support of the bill.

The Vermont Network supports the inclusion of language regarding sexual assault as proposed in draft 1.2. Unfortunately, threats involving sexual assault do occur, and these threats disproportionately impact women and LGBTQ individuals. Although these threats may be serious but rare in Vermont, they do occur and are representative of a global problem. According to a 2016 global study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 44 percent of female legislators surveyed said they had received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction<sup>1</sup>. Without specific language regarding sexual assault, threats of sexual assault may not be applicable under the statute because sexual assault does not always result in “serious bodily injury”.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue and including this important language.

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<sup>1</sup> [2016 Inter-Parliamentary Union Study](#)