

Thank you for allowing me the time to testify on S. 248.

My name is Amy Bremel. I've worked at Castleton University for over ten years as a victim's advocate. While my main role is advocating for our students, I also advocate for our staff. For the past six years, I've served as our campus' professional staff union's chair. This staff unit is the Vermont State Colleges United Professionals (VSCUP) and represents more than 200 staff on five campuses. I've enjoyed getting to know these employees as individuals and to learn their unique set of needs to work in their role. This is important in my ability to represent them in our larger capacity. We also engage employees in surveys to obtain information on individual wants, needs, issues. Our employees know they have a voice in our governance and representation.

I urge you to do the same. You have the ability to legislate that there are participants from our staff and faculty on the Vermont State Colleges' Board of Trustees. This step ensures representation of the people – employees who work day-to-day, directly with students. This is why the VSCUP supports S. 248.

I was part of the spring 2018 cuts at Castleton. Those cuts were made in a large part due to poor budget oversight and the repeated rubber-stamping of expenditures by our Board of Trustees. Instead of some past presidents "selling" the board sunshine and roses, the staff and faculty would provide a more accurate depiction of what is needed when the Board attempts to weed through the details.

Granting staff a seat at the table gives clarity and perspective in the line of checks and balances. It also unifies employees and the Board to work together for our students, where our current system is hierarchal and divides. When we are right there, working together, we are hard to discount and dismiss.

Please allow those who work with students to participate. Add staff and faculty to the governing body of our Board of Trustees.

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