

The Honorable Senator Sears
Vermont Senate
Montpelier, VT 05663

Dear Senator Sears,

My name is Deborah Brookfield and I am a rape victim. In the early morning hours of June 22, 1989, Mr. Todd Humphrey broke into my Hinesburg, Vermont home and threatened to harm my three young sleeping children and myself if I screamed. I was then blindfolded and held at gunpoint while I was raped in the safety of my home.

Approximately a month later, Mr. Humphrey struck again. This time, he and his friend broke into a young woman's home in South Burlington and repeatedly attempted to rape her. As she struggled, they proceeded to beat her at least a dozen times with a 3-foot pipe.

Mr. Humphrey was found guilty to the crimes he committed and was sentenced to 26 to 40 years. With the application of "good behavior", his maximum sentence was calculated to complete on January 18, 2016. Just prior to his scheduled release date from the Department of Correction, he underwent a mental evaluation and was transferred into the custody of the Department of Mental Health.

As you can imagine, as his sentence came nearer to completion my worry grew. I was incredibly relieved to know that the transfer to the Department of Mental Health would mean myself and my family could remain safe while he was secure. You see, during my rape I was told very clearly that if I should report the event, he would come back and harm my children and myself. When an individual is capable of committing such heinous crimes, I believe that he could undoubtedly make true of his threat - even now.

In the years since his transfer into the hands of the Department of Mental Health, I was aware that Mr. Humphrey was secure at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital in Berlin, Vermont. It was Monday, June 29, 2020, when I received notification from Danielle Levesque, Victims Services Specialist with the Department of Corrections, that the Vermont State Police had issued a missing persons bulletin for Mr. Humphrey over the weekend. It was only because of this bulletin that she was made aware of him absconding from this treatment setting.

Mr. Humphrey had been last seen at 10:00pm on Saturday, June 27, 2020, with the Vermont State Police being notified on Sunday, June 28, 2020 at 2:00pm. What could have happened during that time is unsettling to think about. While Ms. Levesque notified us immediately upon gaining the knowledge, I was shocked and concerned for my safety.

As it turns out, while I was tucked away "safely" at my home in South Burlington, Mr. Humphrey had hitchhiked from his mental health facility in Bradford, VT to South Burlington, less than a mile from my home, and I was finding out about this days after his disappearance!

It is for this reason that we hope that S. 3 will include safeguards to ensure that victims of individuals in the custody of the Department of Mental Health can be notified immediately if they escape or leave a setting.

Had there been any reliable notification system in place, I would have learned that some time prior to June 28, 2020, Mr. Humphrey had been transferred from a locked facility in Berlin, VT to an unsecure facility in Bradford, Vermont. While this news would create a huge sense of alarm for me, it would have allowed me to be informed that my safety could be at risk from Mr. Humphrey at any time and to keep an “eye out” for him, specifically.

I presume that after Mr. Humphrey’s unaccompanied escapade to South Burlington that ended with him being detained by the South Burlington police that he is back in a secure facility where this cannot happen. However, without a victim notification system, I am unaware if this rapist is in Berlin, Bradford or even my hometown.