

March 3, 2023

Draft 3.1 - H. 55 Testimony
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Emma Paradis, Common Good VT

Chair Marcotte,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Draft 3.1 of H. 55.

We have a just a couple brief comments on the latest draft:

- First, we appreciate the additional language in Sec. 3(c) requiring informational sessions. Thank you.
- Regarding Sec. 3(a)(4), we understand the VDOL is not able to provide information about how employers can plan and budget for the potential expenses.
 - We typically hire and refer organizations to vetted consultants and practitioners when providing legal or financial guidance to nonprofits. Without an appropriation, we are limited in what services we can provide the sector. Regardless, we will make our best effort to provide with limited resources and time.
- Lastly, while we are grateful for the opportunity to provide input and support this work, we want to draw attention the equity challenges the current practice of not paying organizations/individuals for their time – be it consulting, developing deliverables, or attending meetings – presents. The expectation that “interested parties” provide these services unpaid creates a barrier to participation for those with limited resources that may be best suited for the task. We urge the legislature to standardize the practice of compensating stakeholders for their input and expertise.

Thank you for your consideration and work on this bill.

Respectfully,

Emma Paradis
Senior Policy Coordinator, Common Good Vermont