

Voices
for Vermont's Children



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Respectfully submitted to the House Committee on General and Housing

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Voices for Vermont's Children is pleased to see H.169 on your calendar for this afternoon. We hope that you find a path for the language within H.169 to make its way through the legislative process this year.

Vermont has the opportunity to remove barriers to finding adequate housing as we welcome immigrant families to the state. As immigrants look to make Vermont their home, they have found that many landlords require documentation status, while others will charge higher rent or additional deposits once they realize prospective tenants have limited options. These discriminatory practices push many immigrants into employer-provided housing, which is often overcrowded and substandard, and which increases vulnerability to abuse and exploitation on the job.

Voices supports adding citizenship and immigration status as a protected class to Vermont's Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act. We support creating new protections for those facing discrimination including removing the option to ask for Social Security numbers during the rental application process. We also support asking landlords to accept any government-issued identification. These changes are vital to allowing immigrant families to access housing in our state.

Vermont benefits greatly from immigrants' presence in our state and Voices supports measures that will decrease the burdens we place on them.