

Lueders-Dumont, Timothy

From: Lueders-Dumont, Timothy
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 11:31 AM
To: Martin LaLonde
Cc: Nate Biscotti; tburditt; McManus, Kim
Subject: RE: RTA - SAS (1.22.25 testimony)

Mr. Chair,

I would ask that this email be posted on the Committee page to supplement our testimony today.

I wanted to take a moment to provide clarity concerning today's discussion on "Raise the Age." My comments below are in response to questions and comments that took place during this morning's hearing.

First, the position of the Department was reached by the Office of the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs (SAS) AND the Executive Committee of State's Attorneys after a review of feedback from the SAS field of juvenile and Family Court practitioners. The Executive Committee of State's Attorneys provides direction, guidance, and assistance to the Office of the Executive Director in shaping SAS policy priorities. The Executive Committee of State's Attorneys is currently comprised of the following:

1. Bennington County SA (Chair)
2. Rutland County SA
3. Windsor County SA
4. Orleans County SA
5. Franklin County SA

Second, the SAS survey discussed today was sent to you and the Legislative Committee on Joint Justice Oversight (LCJJO) in September, 2024. At that time, SAS presented the survey and posted the survey to LCJJO webpage.

It should be noted that the survey was a response from a question that LCJJO had sent to SAS. Specifically, the LCJJO had asked: "Can you help explain how Raise the Age works *from a prosecutor's perspective* – how someone gets referred to family court or how the process can commence in family court, and how a prosecutor can decide how to proceed?" In response to the inquiry from the LCJJO concerning Raise the Age moving into the next phase, SAS reached out to SAS juvenile and youth practitioners that work in Vermont's family courts. The responses provided are submitted in the Department's ongoing effort to offer insight from inside of Vermont's Family Courts.

It should be noted that names and counties have been removed to protect the confidentiality of Vermont's Family Courts.

Respondents that provided comment to SAS were provided by both State's Attorneys and Deputy State's Attorneys. It should be noted that responses that were provided do not necessarily represent the views of all State's Attorneys or individual State's Attorneys. That said, the responses provided in this document, summarized by SAS staff during the September 18, 2024, hearing, are intended to provide value in the Legislature's review of this topic.

In the opinion of the SAS Executive Director, the responses provided represent the majority view of SAS practitioners, at this time.

Again, responses below were submitted to LCJJO in September in an ongoing effort to provide nuanced insight from inside of Vermont's Family Court, without forfeiting the protections of a space that is confidential under Vermont law. SAS conducted a survey directed at those within SAS who have the most direct experience with Family Court cases—particularly those who handle the highest volume of cases that are impacted by phase one of the "Raise the Age" legislation. We understand that those practicing in this area are the most affected by these changes, and their insights were

crucial in shaping the views and perspective of the Office of the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of State's Attorneys. The survey was sent out after questions were sent by LCJJO to SAS asking SAS for the perspective from prosecutors on Raise the Age.

In response to a question from Representative Rachelson, for the record, the survey was sent to the two DSAs that work in the Office of the Chittenden County State's Attorney that work in Family Court. And, SAS did receive a response back from that office, reflected in the survey.

The feedback gathered through this survey, along with direct input from field professionals, and the expertise of SAS leadership, informed the SAS position. We believe that our collective experience and expertise provide valuable guidance as we move forward. Further, and as noted above, in the opinion of the Office of the Executive Director, the survey reflects the majority opinion of both our SAs and our DSAs.

If you have any further questions or would like more detailed information on the matter, please feel free to reach out. We appreciate your continued engagement on this important issue.

Best,

Timothy Lueders-Dumont, Esq.
Executive Director
Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs
110 State Street | Montpelier, VT 05633-6401