

Nate Biscotti

From: Martin LaLonde
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 3:16 PM
To: Nate Biscotti
Subject: Fw: H.27 - DV Fatality Review Commission

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Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 2:45 PM
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Subject: H.27 - DV Fatality Review Commission

Dear Chair LaLonde, Vice Chair Burditt and Members of the House Judiciary Committee, I understand that the Committee has taken up H.27: An Act relating to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission. During testimony, it was brought to my attention that consideration of the Center for membership on the proposed expanded Commission was offered.

As this Committee knows, in addition to our direct service programs (the Victim's Compensation and Restitution units) we administer approximately 265 individual subgrants throughout the state. These grants are not just to domestic and sexual violence programs, but also support restorative justice and legal service programming and entities supporting underserved communities – such as Disability Rights and the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. Our responsibilities include providing technical assistance and support and conducting site visits that include reviewing services provided. In addition to the many seats the Center holds on various task forces and commissions, the Center currently has a seat on the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence (formerly the Governor's Council on Domestic Violence).

We understand it was suggested that under the current draft, the Center would have the ability to establish a connection to this group through the appointment of an advocate employed by the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs. We do not believe we have that authority as these advocates are employees of the Department and are supervised and funded by them. We certainly agree that an advocate from their Department should be included on the Commission.

While a question was raised as to whether the Center had the capacity to serve as a member, if the Legislature saw fit to include the Center, I have no doubt that we would undertake this responsibility in the same way that we do with all our responsibilities in service to victims and survivors. We certainly recognize that most members serving and proposed have a lot on their plate as well.

We appreciate the good work of this Commission over the years and strongly support the expanding the cases that are eligible for consideration and review.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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