



TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Sue Ceglowski, Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association

RE: Draft 1.1 of H.511

DATE: April 30, 2025

Good morning everyone - my name is Sue Ceglowski. I'm the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association(VSBA), and I appreciate the chance to speak with you today on draft 1.1 of H.511.

To begin, I want to emphasize that at this time of increasing tension and uncertainty, Vermont school leaders remain committed to maintaining learning environments where all students feel safe, welcome and included.

The questions we hope you will ask about the proposed language are:

1. Would it change the way schools currently operate regarding entry of federal immigration authorities?
2. Does the immunity language protect school employees from federal charges for obstructing justice if they seek to bar entry?
3. If not, will school employees understand that the immunity language is limited to state charges?

Beyond the above questions, we would like to comment on the draft bill's requirement that the Agency of Education develop a model policy on the regulation of visitor access to schools that furthers the intent of 16 V.S.A. § 1484.

[Act 29 of 2023](#) required each supervisory union board, member district, or supervisory district board to adopt an access control and visitor management policy. As a service to its members, the VSBA maintains a model policy manual containing model policies for all policies required by law and those that are recommended or should be considered based on state and federal laws. Shortly after the enactment of Act 29, the VSBA issued a model policy on access control and visitor management (copy provided to the committee with this testimony).

Draft 1.1 of H.511 requires the Agency of Education, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General, to develop a model policy on the regulation of visitor access to schools in the state. Based on past experience, we are concerned about this requirement.

[Act 29 of 2023](#) required the Agency of Education to issue, publicly post, and communicate to school districts and independent schools a model behavioral threat assessment team policy on or before December 15, 2023. Fourteen months after the deadline, the Agency of Education issued the long awaited model policy on February 28, 2025. Since that time, several school boards have contacted the VSBA with concerns that the AOE's model policy is unworkable as written. Given the concerns, VSBA approached the AOE and offered to assist in rewriting the model policy with content and a format that school boards can adopt. The AOE heard our concerns with the model policy and agreed to work on a revision with VSBA. We're currently holding meetings with the AOE, the School Safety Center and superintendents to redraft the model policy.

Given the Agency's inability to issue that model policy in a timely manner and the concerns with the content of the model policy when it was issued, the VSBA is concerned with the bill's requirement that the Agency develop and issue another safety related policy. If the committee moves forward with this draft and it does not remove that requirement, we recommend that you:

1. Provide the Agency with at least a year to develop and issue the model policy.
2. Require the Agency to collaborate with the VSBA in development of the model policy.
3. Allow school boards 4-6 months to adopt a policy after the model policy is issued. 16 V.S.A. § 563(1) requires school boards to give public notice of their intent to adopt a board policy at least ten days prior to its adoption. Some school boards have policies on policy adoption which require multiple readings of the proposed policy - this extends the time it takes them to adopt a policy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today on draft 1.1 of H.511.