



**STATE OF VERMONT  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
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MONTPELIER, VT  
05609-1001**

To: Rep. Martin LaLonde, Chair – House Judiciary Committee  
Rep. Thomas Burditt, Vice Chair

From: Domenica Padula, Assistant Attorney General, Chief of the Criminal Division

Date: February 26, 2025

Re: Attorney General’s Office Criminal Division – Caseload and Responsibilities

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I am submitting this written testimony in follow-up to Attorney General Clark’s testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday, February 20, 2025. This testimony details the caseload both for the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) Criminal Division – Criminal Litigation Unit and for the Vermont Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (VT-ICAC). It also provides an outline of our plan to more robustly coordinate the prosecutions of violent crimes with the State’s Attorneys’ Offices. Beyond the scope of this memo is a variety of work unrelated to caseload (such as serving on boards and commissions, like the Criminal Justice Council).

Everyone deserves to be safe and feel safe in our communities. That is why Attorney General Clark has prioritized prosecuting the most violent complex crimes—homicides, sexual assaults, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation of children. We look forward to continuing our work with the State’s Attorneys to further this shared goal.

**I. Background**

The Criminal Division consists of three specialized units and is overseen by the Criminal Division Chief:

- Criminal Litigation Unit: handles criminal prosecutions across the state and prioritizes the most serious complex felonies (homicides, sexual assault crimes, crimes against children).
  - Six prosecutor positions (two currently open).
- VT-ICAC: is a law enforcement agency within the AGO and undertakes investigations and prosecutions of serious violent felonies of child exploitation, including those involving child sex abuse material (previously referred to as child pornography).

- Five criminal investigators and two electronic storage detection police dogs; prosecutors from the Criminal Litigation Unit perform work related to investigations, search warrants and prosecutions of cases.
- Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit (MFRAU): a federally required unit that focuses on cases of fraud and misuse of federal Medicaid funds and abuse and neglect of Vermonters accessing Medicaid or Medicare funds for their care; funded at 75% by federal dollars.
  - One Director and two attorney positions (one currently open), which by the terms of the federal grant are forbidden from performing work outside of MFRAU.

## II. Caseload for AGO Criminal Division

### *Criminal Litigation Unit Caseload:*

The table below provides the number of cases the Criminal Litigation Unit is prosecuting, as of February 24, 2025, by type of matter. Except as noted, all of these cases are felony prosecutions.

Type of Matter	Role	Number of cases
Homicide <sup>1</sup>	AGO	4
	Co-prosecuting with a State's Attorney's Office	7
Attempted Homicide	AGO	1
Officer-Involved Shooting	AGO	1
Child Sexual Abuse Materials	AGO	51
Sexual Assault	AGO	25
	Co-prosecuting with a State's Attorney's Office	2
Child Luring	AGO	9
Domestic Violence	AGO	3
Neglect/Abuse of Vulnerable Adult (two are misdemeanors)	AGO	6
DUI (misdemeanors)	AGO	2
Drug	AGO	2
Financial	AGO	6
Burglary	AGO	1
	<b>Total Cases:</b>	120

<sup>1</sup> The AGO is currently prosecuting or co-prosecuting cases in the following counties: Caledonia, Chittenden, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington.

The above table includes only charged cases. In other words, it does not include the number of active investigations (which include VT-ICAC cases) the Criminal Litigation Unit is overseeing. For example, the table does not include three pending homicide investigations in Addison, Caledonia, and Orange Counties. The Criminal Litigation Unit also manages extraditions for the entire state, which vary in level of complexity. In 2024, the Unit handled 35 extradition cases.

*VT-ICAC Caseload:*

VT-ICAC is a law enforcement agency within the Attorney General’s Office, receiving and investigating tips of child sexual abuse materials. In the course of VT-ICAC’s work, they commonly uncover sex crimes against Vermont children, and those prosecutions are also handled by the Criminal Litigation Unit. The table below details the work of VT-ICAC over the past two calendar years.<sup>2</sup>

Year	Cyber Tips	Investigations Completed	Search Warrants Executed
2023	853	237	120
2024	1082	293	98

**III. Further Work with the State’s Attorneys**

The AGO continues to value our long-standing partnership with State’s Attorneys and recognizes the significant strain all aspects of our public safety system—law enforcement, prosecutors, crime victims, the Judiciary, defense attorneys—are under at the current moment—brought on by funding constraints, the aftermath of the pandemic and the resulting judicial backlog, and a recent surge in both low-level community-based offenses (e.g., retail theft) and violent homicides.

In an effort to enhance this partnership and carry out the Attorney General’s goal of prioritizing resources to address the most serious crimes and most vulnerable victims, over the next few months the AGO will take the following steps:

1. Develop and employ a standard communication protocol going forward for all homicides reported in Vermont. Under this protocol, the Criminal Division Chief will send a standard email to the State’s Attorney for the county where the homicide allegedly occurred, requesting case information and offering additional support. The AGO will log the State’s Attorney’s response. The AGO will also use this protocol to assess whether the AGO will operate as the sole prosecuting agency for the homicide.

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<sup>2</sup> These numbers, as presented in the FY26 AGO budget presentation, were based on the State Fiscal Year, not the calendar year.

2. Hold a one-on-one meeting between the Criminal Division Chief and each State's Attorney to discuss their current homicide cases and any potential support for the prosecution of any homicides currently under investigation in their county.

Along with this work, the Attorney General continues to support the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs' (DSAS) budget request. To further collaboration, we will seek to schedule regular monthly meetings between the Executive Director of the DSAS and the AGO's Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs to discuss policy and budget matters related to public safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Domenica Padula**

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