Nate Biscotti

From: Testimony
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 11:20 AM
To: khmvt01; Testimony
Cc: jennifer.morrison@vermont.gov; jennifer.poehlmann@ccvs.vermont.gov; joannekortendick@gmail.com; James Ehlers; Robert Norris; Nader Hashim; Martin LaLonde; Tom Burditt; Kenneth Goslant; Mary Morrissey; Michael Nigro; Alice Emmons; Will Greer; Jill Krowinski; Philip Baruth; Virginia Lyons
Subject: RE: [External] Written Testimony for March 31 Public Safety Hearing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Thank you, Kelly. I will make sure this is posted to the Judiciary Committee pages.

Best,
Megan

Megan Cannella | she/her
Supervisor of Committee Services
Senate Transportation Committee, Room 3
Office of Legislative Counsel
Vermont General Assembly

Attention Witnesses: If you have documents to accompany testimony, please submit as a PDF at least 24 hours in advance of your scheduled testimony. Should you require accessibility services, please click here and note that requests should be made 48 hours in advance of testimony.
First time testifying? See Information for Witnesses here.

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Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 11:17 AM
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Subject: [External] Written Testimony for March 31 Public Safety Hearing

[External]

Hello,

I respectfully submit the following for the public record for the public hearing being held in the VT Statehouse on March 31, 2026 at 5 pm. Thank you.

Vermont's Legislature has clear statutory deadlines for committee work, including crossover requirements intended to ensure that time-sensitive legislation is addressed in a timely and organized manner. These timelines exist to prioritize the work that directly impacts Vermonters.

At a time when critical issues such as public safety, mental health, education, affordability, homelessness, substance abuse and land use (including Act 181) require focused attention, it is concerning to see significant legislative time devoted to matters that are already being actively addressed at the local level.

The March 19 Judiciary hearing regarding the Burlington incident, which included testimony from Commissioner Jennifer Morrison, the Vermont State Police, and the Burlington area Police Departments, addressed issues that are already under review by the Burlington City Council and the Burlington Police Commission. Burlington has established processes, including an oversight board, to examine these matters thoroughly and appropriately. The Vermont State Police have the State Police Advisory Commission (SPAC), which serves a similar oversight function.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Vermont law enforcement for their role in managing the situation. We are fortunate that the outcome did not escalate into a tragic situation. There is an important distinction between peaceful protest and actions that obstruct or escalate risk, and based on available reporting, Vermont avoided that outcome.

Given this, it raises an important question: why are legislative committees prioritizing additional hearings on these issues, while other urgent statewide concerns are not receiving the same level of public engagement from them?

Where are the legislative committee hearings on Vermont's mental health system gaps?
Where are the legislative committee hearings on public safety policies affecting communities across the state?
Where are the legislative committee hearings on affordability, property tax increases, education, substance use, homelessness and land use impacts that Vermonters are experiencing every day?

The appearance, from a public perspective, is that legislative priorities are being influenced by issues that draw broader attention, rather than those that most directly affect Vermonters.

This concern is reinforced by how S.193 — a bill addressing critical public safety and mental health gaps — has progressed. While it has moved forward to third reading, the bill was not been given the same expedited or prioritized treatment seen with other measures, such as SR 25. This raises further questions about how legislative urgency is determined and whether priority is being placed on issues that most directly impact Vermonters.

I also want to be clear that I do not support the use of immigration as a political tool by any party. Issues of this magnitude deserve thoughtful, balanced discussion — not division or amplification for attention.

It is time for the Vermont Legislature to focus on what is actually happening here in Vermont — not federal headlines, not photo opportunities, and not opportunities for political gain. Public safety is not political. It is personal, and it is long overdue for real attention.

Vermonters deserve elected officials who serve their communities, not themselves.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Carroll

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