



### **Vermonters Say YES to H.512**

*Below are some of the stories shared by Vermonters who have experienced predatory ticket resale scams. They urge you to support H.512 to ensure a fair, transparent ticket resale market for everyone.*

#### **Brian Carroll, Film in Vermont (Corinth)**

“It’s not just the bots buying up tickets and selling them at astronomical prices, it’s the constant bombardment when you are trying to reach your fans and network that get flooded with related ‘fake posts’ and misleading promises of tickets for face value or less. You almost have to have a full-time person to combat/delete/remind actual humans following you on social media that these are fake accounts with fake promises and to please ignore them and DO NOT buy tickets from them.”

#### **Janel Soren, Paramount Theatre (Rutland)**

“Unfortunately, I have thousands of stories as I have worked with patrons that thought they were on The Paramount website but were tricked by the deceptive practices by third party resellers into paying often 100-500% of the ticket value.”

#### **Daniel Kasnitz, Latchis Theatre / Latchis Arts (Brattleboro)**

“Some of our customers have purchased overpriced tickets through unauthorized 3rd parties.”

#### **David Pearson (Hinesburg)**

“Ticket reseller took my order and charged my credit card. After I had made arrangements to attend, the ticket reseller said they couldn't obtain the tickets.”

#### **Jon Megas-Russell (Brattleboro)**

“As a frequent art fan, concert goer, and musician, pricing often times can be prohibitive from going. Look around, many bands who played to audiences of 5,000 before covid can no longer due to ticket prices at launch or aftermarket. The music and art industry is at a huge point to which we can begin standing up to the ticket sellers owned by billionaires or back down. What will we do? I support any bill that puts money in the pockets of musicians, creates access for fans, and limits what billionaires can do to take more then they deserve.”



**Scott Holliman (Tinmouth)**

“I don't have a story, but I certainly feel dubious even considering going the resale route.”

**Andrew Britt, Lyric Theatre Company (Burlington)**

“Many of our patrons have been victim to overpriced, scammy resale ticket platforms. It is harmful to our entire region and we appreciate the attention to this important issue.”

**Lily Webb (Middlebury)**

“I just moved from Maine and worked at a Box Office. Our community Theater Tickets ran about \$20-40, and people would routinely successfully resell them to unknowing purchasers for upwards of \$300. It just isn't right.”

**Joanna May, Moonshadow Music Therapy LLC (Richmond)**

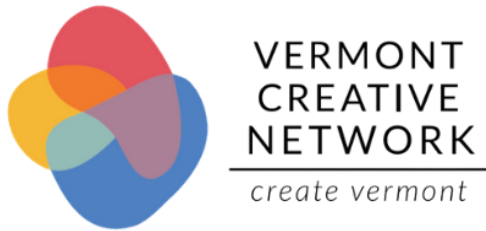
“I went to see Natalie Merchant, a sold-out show at Spruce Peak, and a big chunk of seats were unfilled. This show sold out in less than an hour, and the only way to get tickets was to pay a reseller at least 5x the original price. She called it out, as shameful and obvious that the resellers were the reason for the empty seats. She is an artist who intentionally keeps her ticket prices reasonable, because she'd rather have people enjoying her music filling the house. We can do better for audiences and artists.”

**Rockingham Entertainment Development / Bellows Falls Opera House (Rockingham / Bellows Falls)**

“We get customer complaints that we are charging upwards of \$100 per ticket for shows that - in actuality- are priced at less than half that. What happens is that people search for an event and click on results turned up by their search engines that point them to these third-party sites. The consumer gets ripped off and the sponsoring organization—which played no part whatsoever in the deception—is the recipient of their anger.”

**Rebecca McMeekin (Braintree)**

“In my attempt to purchase tickets for a performance by Upper Valley Baroque, I was unknowingly (my fault, I admit) directed to a secondary site. I was in a hurry and purchasing tickets for myself and a friend and the site indicated it was almost sold out. I jumped and ended up paying 100% more than the cost of the ticket.”



**Kate Longmaid (Essex Junction)**

“On Instagram, I encountered an announcement of tickets going on sale for Alabama Shakes, a Ben and Jerry's Concert at Shelburne Museum this summer. I immediately went online and the first two sites advertising tickets indicated limited supply and were priced over \$200 per ticket. I had to scroll down to find the site associated with Higher Ground and then had to figure out whether it was a legitimate site before buying the tickets. Had I had to purchase the tickets through one of these resale sites, I wouldn't have been able to afford them. The resale sites seemed misleading and the whole experience felt unnecessarily stressful. It also seemed patently unfair that these resale sites could buy up tickets, jack up the prices, and profit at the expense of people wanting to purchase tickets, the artists, and the venue.”

**Charlotte Galley (Ludlow)**

“This has been a problem for years - would be great to take one crappy thing off our list of concerns.”

**Salome Milstead (Newfane)**

“I bought junk tickets online and couldn't get into the venue and couldn't get my money back. We all have that story.”

**Liza Sacheli, Mahaney Arts Center (Middlebury)**

“I have heard stories from peer arts centers who have had customers contact them when they've paid exorbitant prices for tickets, only to learn that they'd been duped by a secondary seller. This hurts the consumer AND damages the customer rapport for the original venue. It's unethical, unfair, and just not like Vermont! Thank you.”

**Olivia Milens, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (Burlington)**

“The most recent outrageous overcharge was for \$2,198 for Diana Krall who appeared at The Flynn on Mar 30. If purchased on our website, the total would have been \$507. I work in the Box Office and, sadly, are only too familiar with the burden third party resellers has placed on The Flynn. It is not limited to on our side, our patrons register anger, disappointment, or embarrassment that they have been ‘scalped.’”

**Diane L. Mills, Paramount Theatre (Rutland)**

“Yes, I work in the box office at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland and have witnessed patrons who have unknowingly bought tickets from resellers. These innocent people get charged huge fees and end up at times finding out that the tickets don't even exist when they get to the



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theatre. I JUST had a call from a patron who had paid \$1000 for 5 tickets from a reseller. If he had bought them from us, it would have cost him \$350!! Something has to be done. These resellers are emptying innocent people's pockets and at times ruining their relationship with us.”

**Nina Spencer, Robber Robber (Burlington)**

“I’ve been playing live music in Vermont for 13 years and in the post-COVID landscape where people are in need of third spaces and collective experiences, allowing ticketing to take advantage of people’s desire to connect is unconscionable. We should do everything we can to increase accessibility to these spaces for the benefit of both patrons and musicians.”

**Nancy W. Trombley (Proctor)**

“I have witnessed a number of people pay significantly more for tickets and fees for tickets through resellers at Paramount Theater and other Vermont theaters.”

**Kathleen Wanner (Chittenden)**

"I am a volunteer in the box office at the Paramount Theater in Rutland and the stories of people who have unknowingly purchased overpriced or fraudulent tickets are heartbreaking. My first experience was more than a year ago when a mom was coming to see her daughter's first recital. She had wanted all of her family to attend but at \$150/ticket, it was impossible. She was incredibly disappointed and couldn't imagine why we had charged so much for tickets. Paramount tickets were actually \$30, and she had been duped into believing that she was purchasing from the theater.

The same stories occur week after week and often end the same way - with either angry or heartbroken consumers. I do understand that there is a free market, and I support that concept. But there is also a fair market, and that's what this bill is intended to ensure. Please pass H.512, as written, to help protect our venues and our public from the unscrupulous actions of resellers."

**Colleen Beal (St. Albans)**

“I've been misled by other sites and almost purchased really expensive tickets when I didn't need to. Seems like common sense to regulate vendors/sites that upsell and take revenue from venues.”



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**Brian DLB (Shelburne)**

“I’m a performer and I heard that someone spent \$75 on tickets to my show even though the tickets were \$10. The scalping website was promoted at the first result on google and they assumed that is where to get tickets.”

**Mary Burnham, Tenney Memorial Library (Newbury)**

“Tickets to a David Sedaris show were more than \$100 and I wanted two tickets. I hesitated then decided to buy the tickets, but by then they were over \$200 and I could not buy them. Ridiculous!”

**Janet Fredericks (Lincoln)**

“I have been a victim of fraudulent ticket sales when I ordered tickets online that appeared to be the Flynn Theater in Burlington. I was charged about \$300 for \$60 tickets.”

**Highland Center for the Arts (Greensboro)**

“We had a few people approach us that told us that they bought much more expensive tickets through what they thought was our official ticket website, but wasn't.”

**Susan Leckey, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (Burlington)**

“Although I work in the theater and understand how these predators work, I was headed to Maine to see friends and attend a concert. They purchased my tix, and when I asked them the cost, they said it was just over \$200, and at that time I knew she they had been scammed. I asked them to look at the name on the tickets, and it was not theirs. We were able to buy 3 more tickets, and work with our box office to walk my friends through the process of getting their money back. It was such a hassle, and infuriating! We need to stop this nonsense!”

**CashorTrade (Burlington)**

“For 17 years we have been operating CashorTrade as the world's only social network where fans buy, sell and trade tickets at face value and avoid scalping. We are happy to support this legislation to protect fans, while providing value directly for events.”

**Alex Morgan (Colchester)**

“I’ve certainly seen insane resale prices on official ticket exchanges used in Vermont. The current service fees are high enough, seeing tickets resell for 30%+ above face value has made it difficult to afford shows and harder to release a ticket back for sale if I can’t make it. Plus



some locally used exchanges require you to sign up and provide payment information just to join a waitlist, before pricing is available. I don't trust them with my data."

**Yvonne Smiley (Burlington)**

"I cannot go to concerts of musicians I love because the resellers buy up all the tickets and I cannot afford their unreasonable prices."

**Megan Campbell (Thetford)**

"Yes, tricked into buying tickets at over three times ticket price for a ballet through a scam from a secondary seller indicating they were almost gone which wasn't true. It was humiliating."

**PJ Mead, Wild Goose Players (Bellows Falls)**

"A lot of our audience members have gotten scammed and taken advantage of with overpriced resale tickets."

**Matthew Perry, Vermont Arts Exchange (North Bennington)**

"Just a feeling of being assaulted by ticket scalpers. At first I was flattered! But then felt abused rather quickly and it cost ALOT of aggravation and time. Help."

**Tom Pilon (Colchester)**

"Yes, I have purchased tickets, and then to find out I paid 2-3x the actual ticket price, I don't even try to attend any events anymore. I guess scalping is legal in the digital world."

**Erin McKenney (Burlington)**

"I have seen resale tickets for events that are triple or quadruple the 'face' value, making it very difficult to afford a local show at the Higher Ground or otherwise."

**Tracy Haught (Stowe)**

"I don't go to events hardly ever because of the crazy ticket prices."

**Pat OBrien (Huntington)**

"I would love to attend more concerts, but affordability is an issue for retirees!"



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**Joanna Pawluk (Fayston)**

“How much time do you have? . . . In order to attend shows, I have been resigned to buy through 3rd party resale sites paying up to 2-3x the face value of the ticket.”

**Jenni Brileya (East Wallingford)**

"In my personal life I and many of my friends have been forced to buy reseller tickets too many times to count in order to see bands that we love. I've paid high prices for them all including the \$700 I paid for what turned out to be a folding chair (taken out of a closet by an attendant) in a non-existent aisle at a major sporting event. In my working life I've met too many people who have been victimized in their attempt to see an artist they love.

One standout interaction that I had was with a woman who had purchased 3 tickets to see a country performer with her special-needs daughter and her daughter's friend. The two young girls were big fans, so mom paid big bucks as a treat for them all. When she arrived for the show to pick up her tickets, she only had a bogus order number, for seat numbers that literally don't exist in our theatre. She'd paid \$300 per ticket - actual price \$85 each - and she had nothing to show for it. She was devastated. We were able to get them all into the show, but we lost the revenue on those tickets as surely as she was cheated out of hundreds of dollars.”

**Natalie Miller, Vermont Comedy Club (Burlington)**

“Probably about once a week we have someone show up to the club with a confirmation that is fake. We have no reservation in the system AND they usually paid 4-5x what we normally charge. Having to charge someone for a ticket or turn them away from a sold-out show after they were scammed out of money stinks!”

**Michael DeSanto, Phoenix Books (Essex / Burlington / Rutland)**

“Phoenix Books sells tickets to author events across the state and on occasion across the border. We partner with arts organizations around Burlington. We support level playing fields for all.”

**Cindy Campos (Barre)**

“I am the box office manager at the Barre Opera House. We have patrons that think they cannot afford to attend our shows because they are landing on the wrong websites and many are being taken advantage of and paying the crazy high prices. Thank you for your work on this issue.”



### **Vermont Symphony Orchestra (Statewide)**

“We've had customers pay over 10 times our actual ticket price for concerts to disreputable ticket outlets, due to the professional look of the scam websites and emails. These customers may not be technically savvy and unaware that they are purchasing from an unauthorized ticket outlet. Only our customers and our organization lose in these situations - and the unauthorized ticket outlets are the only winners, at great financial and reputational cost to us and music lovers. Legislation is one clear way to help solve the problem.”

### **Jody Fried, Catamount Arts (St. Johnsbury)**

“Based on the experience of our colleagues in other states, we feel it is critical for the price cap to remain in place in the bill.”

### **Dan Casey, Barre Opera House (Barre)**

“Too many stories to recount. Since we landed on scammer radar, Barre Opera House ticket buyers are victimized on a regular basis. Every show presented here has offered predators the opportunity to take advantage of unsuspecting patrons. Thank you for taking on this issue!”

### **Jonathan Potter, Latchis Theatre / Latchis Arts (Brattleboro)**

“We've started to see ticketing issues more, including individuals and ‘businesses’ selling tickets they don't even have at exorbitant prices. It's not re-sale, it's fraud.”

### **Shena Pierce (Morrisville)**

"On 1/20/25 I ordered tickets from what I thought was the Paramount Theatre in Rutland. The website I clicked on identified itself as "Paramount Theatre"" and 'Box Office Tickets.' I spoke to a man who said his name was Chris, who told me that he had four tickets, including one which was handicapped, for \$149.00 each, which I thought was high, but know that happens. After he said that he recorded me saying 'yes' I agree that all sales are final, he told me that he charged my debit card \$747.48. The next day on 1/21/25, I received a call from Janel Soren, the Marketing Manager at the Paramount Theatre Box Office, to see if the handicapped seat needed wheelchair access. I asked her if we got the VIP tickets since the tickets were so expensive. She told me I hadn't ordered them through the Paramount Theatre. When I told Janel how much I paid, she was appalled and said the most expensive tickets through them were \$90 each. Janel suggested I contact the AG's office, which I did, and was asked to fill out this online complaint form. Janel told me that my tickets from Box Office Ticket Sales were purchased at 4:00 PM on 1/20/25, but that they had not purchased them from the Paramount until 4:59 that day.



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I received the tickets via email from Madelyn Morales at Box Office Tickets, but I was at work and it wasn't until the next day that I was able to inquire with my credit union about cancelling my debit card as I believe that I was scammed. The credit union had me call Box Office Tickets to see if they would refund my money, since I believed I was ordering from the Paramount Theatre. They refused and said that I agreed and knew they were not affiliated with the Paramount Theatre, which is not true."

**Naomi Ross (Bennington)**

"YES! I was scammed buying a ticket for my sister that was almost 5 times the face value and then it didn't work at the gate. People are trying to enjoy music and the arts. Allowing for predatory sales hurts EVERYONE and EXPLOITS the kindheartedness of Vermonters. Please don't let the crooks of the dark web harm our vibrant arts and culture scene. Venues in Vermont are already facing challenges; let's make sure that predatory ticket sales are not one of those challenges. Thank you!"