

Testimony on Hate Crime Bill (Senate)

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Addressing hate crimes in Vermont

- This conversation is important to me/communities I belong. The story of a family in Barre.
- Impacted not only this family but the Latinx community in VT. Palestinian students were shot in Burlington while speaking Arabic and wearing keffiyehs.

**Historically marginalized communities
across VT suddenly questioned their
safety in what they considered home.**

Statistics for Hate Crime in VT

According to the U.S Department of Justice



In Vermont, hate crimes have risen from 41 incidents in 2021 to 52 in 2023, affecting the **whole community**.



Race, ethnicity, and ancestry-based crimes increased from 30 to 34 incidents.



The importance of recognizing group impact.

- Hate crimes not only target an individual – they're sending a message to every member of that community.
- We appreciate the shift toward person-centric terminology

This is one step in the long-line of steps

to preventing hate crimes and supporting historically
excluded communities in VT.



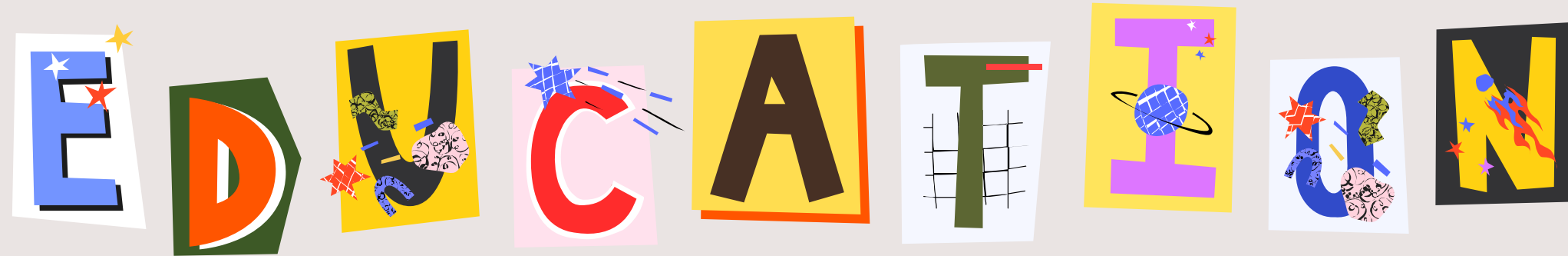
How to prevent hate crimes from happening? What are the next steps?

- White supremacy
- Gun violence
- Hate speech can lead to hate crimes



1. White supremacy

- "**White supremacy** has been noted as a potential driving force **escalating hate and discrimination** at disproportionate levels, especially for communities of color." (Briscoe ,2024, p.425)
- We must acknowledge this reality while working to create systemic change.



- [The Human Rights Campaign](#) emphasizes that while tough laws can help, they must be complemented with "education and training initiatives designed to reduce prejudice" (Human Rights Campaign, 2014).

- A critical next step is **bringing new voices** into these conversations and supporting immigrants and asylum-seeking families.
- Support legislation. H.375/S.56 creating an **Office of New Americans** and H.169 **addressing discrimination in public accommodations** and housing

How can we attract diverse talent if people who look and sound like me don't feel safe here?

Making VT truly welcoming isn't just the right thing to do
– it's economically vital for our state's future.



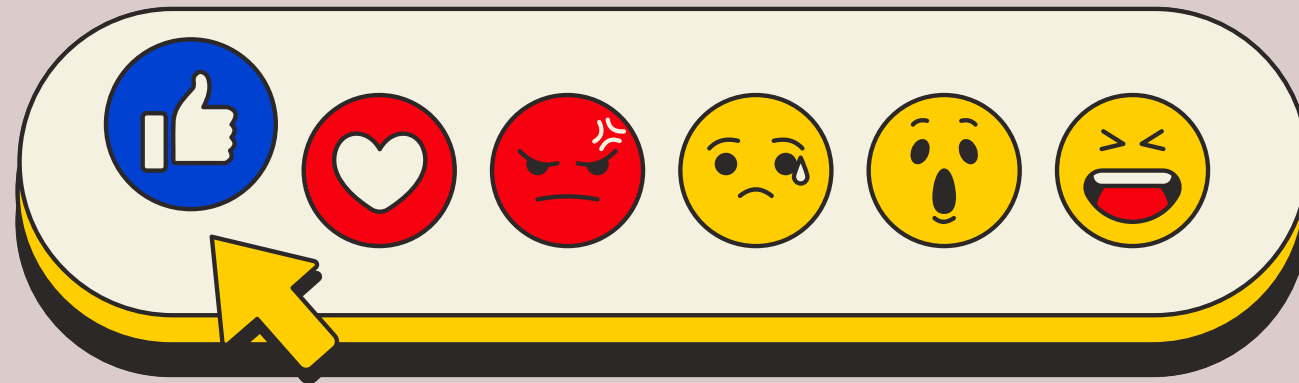
2. Addressing gun violence

- From 2013 to 2022, the overall gun death rate increased 30% in Vermont (Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions).

The **Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions:**

- Firearm purchaser licensing requirements
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Extreme Risk Protection Orders
- Safe and secure gun storage practices
- Regulating the public carry of firearms
- Community violence intervention programs focusing on those most at risk

3. Hate Speech can lead to violence



- The rise of online hate speech has been amplified
- [The Sentinel Project](#) have demonstrated that monitoring hate speech online can provide early warning indicators.
- Hatebase initiative tracks trigger words on social media platforms /real-world violence

The power of counter-narrative



- According to experts at the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, creating counter-narratives is key
- The [United Nations](#) (2023) specifically recommends that states should: "Use counter-narratives to address and combat hate speech, including by promoting diverse and pluralistic journalism"

The Path Forward on Hate Crime Prevention

White supremacy

Evidence-based gun violence
prevention measures

Better monitoring and counter-
narratives against hate speech

Expanded education and training
initiatives

All hate is harmful

I want to close by expressing solidarity with all victims of hate crimes in VT. (Race, religion, gender identity, disability, ethnic origin, immigration status, or national origin)





When we make VT safer and more inclusive for historically marginalized communities, we create a better state for everyone.