

A message from Commissioner Dupre:

Representative Grad,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.141. DMH has the following thoughts about S.141:

DMH has no position on the bill; we have remained neutral. DMH did, however, comment on certain sections of the bill at the request of Senate Judiciary Committee. The sections upon which DMH has commented, and the nature of the comments, are set forth below.

Sec. 3: NH Gun Shop Project

DMH is familiar with the New Hampshire Gun Shop Project and supports the goals of the Project. That being said, DMH does not believe that a study or report is necessary in order to implement a similar project in Vermont. Moreover, if a study and report are required, funding would be necessary because DMH does not have the resources to meet the mandate set forth in the bill as proposed. If such funding were available, DMH would recommend that it be used instead to promote the Project and to educate gun shop owners, rather than to study the NH Project for a year.

Sec. 7: Relief from Disability

DMH is concerned about the language in this section requiring the respondent to notify known victims because the meaning of the word victim is unclear in the context of a civil commitment. (In addition, it is DMH's understanding that Judge Grearson testified that the process described for relief from disability could be streamlined, leaving it to the discretion of the State's Attorney or the Attorney General whether to file an objection to the petition, rather than to require a hearing each time. DMH would support that approach.)

Sec. 8: Reporting [Individuals in DMH custody on October 1, 1015]

It is important for any reporting required by this section to remain a point-in-time report, as is currently described. Anything more would be onerous and would require DMH resources that are not available.

Based on our understanding of what the Committee is seeking, DMH will rely on the comments above, rather than coming to testify. If the Committee has any questions, however, DMH would be happy to respond to them at any time. Thank you again.

Thank you,
Jen/ for Linda

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