

# VT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

September 11, 2020

On the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, we remember the victims, the families and survivors dealing with loss and recognize the lasting consequences of 9/11 on individual lives.

The legislature is back for an abbreviated session to pass the rest of the FY21 budget and more financial relief for Vermonters. The legislature is working hard to identify ways we can use federal money to plug some of the holes in our economy that the pandemic has exposed. They are focusing on support for those with low wage jobs, without paid family medical leave, lack of affordable healthcare, and lack of childcare. This pandemic has highlighted the importance of supporting systems that ensure working families have the means to withstand a crisis. Right now, too many are living on the edge.

During economically difficult times, social injustice becomes amplified. We've seen this in Vermont at the Burlington protests demanding three police officers' resignations and at racial justice protests throughout the state. We can and must address the systems that have created these inequities and commit ourselves to this work. Changing systems that have been embedded in our culture for hundreds of years will take time and dedication. I hope you will join me for this work.

I'm happy to report that the Senate has just increased funding for the **hazard pay program**, expanding the benefits to those essential employees that were excluded in the original legislation – **retail workers, sanitation, childcare, and janitorial staff** etc. Our essential workers, from nursing home aides to grocery clerks, have risked their health to keep the rest of us comfortable and they deserve to be recognized and thanked.

Earlier this week the House approved the Governor's proposal for a program that would provide Covid-19 stimulus checks to Vermonters who didn't receive federal payments earlier this year because of their immigration status. I am proud of the Vermont House for identifying the full funding necessary to support these valuable Vermonters. These immigrant families, who live and work in our communities to provide our food and keep our dairies operating, were excluded from the stimulus checks, authorized by the federal government in the CARES Act passed in March.

Those left out include Vermont residents without social security numbers as well as many mixed-status families. This includes approximately 1,200 immigrant dairy workers who have been classified as

## Thoughts on Systemic Racism submitted by constituent Christina Erickson, PhD

For the last two weeks, as I've gone to bed, the wind has carried the chants from the protesters a few blocks away from my house. I've not joined them, and have various excuses (having a child to care for, a job to do, social distancing...) but I absolutely applaud their peaceful persistence and support their cause of examining the many aspects of systemic racism in our society and city. My non-participation in these daily protests makes me feel complicit. My silence could be seen as accepting the status quo and so why I might not be out in front shouting slogans or posting signs in my yard, I want to be anything but complicit or silent - about this or any number of contemporary issues. I urge my Burlington officials to reexamine the police excessive force investigation policy as a starting point.

Here is what I truly want to see: (next page)

“essential” during the pandemic by the Department of Homeland Security and whom we rely heavily upon to keep our dairy farms operating.

Now, more than ever, during the public health crisis, we need to make sure that all Vermonters have access to basic needs and safety.

Thank you to Xusana Davis, Director of Racial Equity and the House Committee on Appropriations for advocating for and identifying these resources for Vermonters.

### **All Are Welcome Here**

In response to recent anti-Black-Lives-Matter graffiti and vandalism to roads in southern Vermont, I want to say that in Vermont, All are Welcome Here. I recognize, encourage, support, join and appreciate the southern Vermont citizens, businesses and town officials who have been standing up against racism, hate and bigotry.

We must embrace everyone as the individuals they are and the strength they bring to our community. Racism is not acceptable in Vermont. #hatehasnobizhere.

Racist ideas are woven into the fabric of this country, and the first step to building an antiracist America is acknowledging America’s racist past and present. Here are two books I’ve found informative, interesting and helpful:

The book [Stamped: Antiracism, Racism, and You](#), by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi is a fast-paced read that shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas-and on ways YOU can identify and stamp out racist thoughts, leading to a better future. This book is also available in a young adult version.

The book [March](#), by Congressman John Lewis, is a graphic novel with a reflection on his important experiences from the civil rights era. If we do not understand our past, we cannot understand the issues we are facing in the present, nor can we improve people's lives in the future.

Additionally, the movie [13th](#), the first movie shown in the Lt. Gov. Movie Series, gives the viewers a lens into the history of systemic racism and how it is woven into our very own U.S. constitution.

This is not an easy topic for many of us to understand, comprehend, or explore within ourselves. But we are at a critical time when we must reflect on societal advantages white people have had throughout history in our country and state. While there are many other injustices as well (wealth inequality for instance) that also need to be addressed, in this moment...it is important to make sure we reflect on the impacts of intimidation (and worse) that occurs in our communities. From biased policing, wealth inequality brought on by governmental policies, to issues of daily subtle abuse that many do not see, we all need to do better. Please read or watch these resources to help get a better understanding of systemic racism.

As we recover from the public health and economic emergency let’s work to address systemic inequities.

Be well and stay safe,



A healing of the historical and contemporary injuries and fatalities to the Black / African American communities; the Indigenous communities, the Asian/American communities, and all other groups of people who have been systematically wronged. We cannot be a whole body of a nation if we have major limbs that have been broken and need immediate and sustained healing (be this through decent employment opportunities, land access, fair banking systems, community policing, and so on.)

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