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April 25, 2019

To the Senate Committee on the Judiciary,

I would encourage the committee to hear the below concerns of the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police regarding an amendment for Bill H. 518 currently before you from the Human Rights Commission.

This amendment seeks to give unnecessary and redundant oversight and monitoring authority to the Human Rights Commission over law enforcement agencies statewide for their compliance with the Fair and Impartial Policing Policy. There is a Vermont state organization that already has this authority: the Criminal Justice Training Council.

Adding additional layers of bureaucracy to oversee this vitally important issue will blur what is already a clear path of accountability among police officers, their constituents, and the state government of Vermont. It is the concern of the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police that adding this additional regulatory group would only serve to water down and encumber the management and oversight of fair and impartial policing.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the state are already required to submit reports of their training hours to the Criminal Justice Training Council to ensure police are being appropriately and regularly trained. The Criminal Justice Training Council also oversees and manages any and all complaints and reports of noncompliance in Vermont.

We support and encourage the making public of all of these policies and documents, but the chief oversight authority should remain within an agency that specializes in the training, administration and standards of the profession of law enforcement.

This amendment also seeks to give the Human Rights Commission or a designee the authority to examine an agency's records, policies, procedures and/or training materials with 48 hours' notice. These records are already public, and accessible through the Criminal Justice Training Council. The proposed amendment does little more than offer provocative language in this regard.

The Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police believes the Criminal Justice Training Council does a comprehensive, thorough job of overseeing the work of law enforcement agencies, training, and investigating any and all complaints. We urge you to nullify this amendment, and keep the current regulatory system that our state relies on intact.

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*Founded in 1966*

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Sincerely,

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