

Uncommon Alliance Abolishing Slavery in Vermont

Vermont Constitutional Amendment Will Prohibit Slavery and Indentured Servitude in all forms

BURLINGTON, VERMONT, USA, June 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This November, Vermont

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Debbie Ingram/ VIA Executive Director/ Former Vermont Senator

voters have a rare chance to weigh in on not one, but two proposed amendments to the state constitution. [Prop 2](#), which will clarify the prohibition against slavery and indentured servitude, is being promoted to the electorate through the partnership between [Vermont Interfaith Action](#) (VIA), which is primarily composed of white Vermonters, and [Vermont Racial Justice Alliance](#), which is led by people of color.

Constitutional amendments in Vermont can only be introduced in the Senate, and only during four-year Presidential election cycles. VIA Executive Director Debbie Ingram, who was serving as a Vermont State Senator at the time when the Proposition was introduced – and who was

in fact the lead sponsor of the amendment – said, “It is a real honor – and kind of a strange twist of fate – that the organization I direct has become one of the key proponents of the proposition that I asked to be drafted and that I championed in the legislature.”

Although Vermonters have been told for decades that the state was the first to abolish slavery, that assertion is not true. The way the constitution currently reads, there are exceptions to the abolition of slavery on three grounds: 1) for those under age 21, 2) for those bound by their own consent, and 3) for those bound for payment of debts, damages, fines, costs or “the like.” These exceptions in the Vermont constitution have led to similar exceptions in the constitutions of 25 other states and in the U.S. Constitution, which contains an exception for punishment of a crime in the Thirteenth Amendment.

Of course, Ingram readily admits that she would not have been aware of the need to abolish slavery without exception in the state constitution had it not been for the early advocacy of the Black man she now considers a partner in justice – Mark Hughes, Executive Director of the

Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. Hughes shared, "A product of slavery, systemic racism maintains economic inequality along racial lines. Nearly a quarter of black Vermonters live in poverty and the median wealth of a black family is at 1/13th (and widening) that of a white family."

An emphasis of the Prop 2 campaign is not only to ensure that voters – a huge majority of whom are white – understand the need to unambiguously abolish slavery in the state's foundational document, but also to help Vermonters make the connection between the historic legacy of slavery and the current inequity, violence, and systemic racism in society. The Vermont campaign draws support from two national movements:

the Faith in Action national network and Abolish Slavery National Network. Four states passed similar measures in 2018, and seven other states besides Vermont, including Florida and Tennessee, will have abolition on their ballots this year.

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Pass Proposal 2
...slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited.

Abolish Slavery Vermont

#AbolishSlaveryVT

vermont racial justice alliance VIA Vermont Interfaith Action

Vermont Racial Justice Alliance

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