

October 10, 2025

Governor Scott Highlights Civility at Vermont League of Cities and Towns' Town Fair Event



Governor Scott spoke at VLCT's Town Fair on October 8. Below is a transcript of his comments.

I had the opportunity to speak with the clerks and treasurers a few weeks ago and reminded them of the important role town and municipal government plays as the "gatekeepers" of our democracy, because it's your job to deal with the pieces of government that touch us close to home. From plowing and repairing roads and sidewalks, responding to emergencies, managing water and sewer infrastructure, issuing local zoning permits, and more. There's a lot your communities count on you for.

And it's at the local level where citizens show up every day to ask you for help and guidance or, in some cases, offering their help and their guidance. And as governor, I can certainly relate to that.

But in my experience, those conversations can be the most valuable, to help others understand how, where, and why their tax dollars are being spent while also listening to their ideas. By taking the time to understand, and committing to hearing what they have to say, not just waiting for them to stop talking to get our own points across, is essential. Because nine out of ten times, being heard is half the battle.

It's really important to understand how we talk to each other and how we treat each other truly matters. Too often, issues have turned into "us" versus "them," where you're either 100% right or 100% wrong, and there's no middle ground.

But it's not about forcing others to adopt our opinion or perspective or compromising our own values and thoughts, it's about putting yourself in their shoes to have a better understanding of why they feel the way they do.

And at the end of the day, if you still don't agree, that's okay. Because it's okay to not agree on every issue or "win" on every issue. But even when we don't agree, we should still treat others with decency and respect because we all have a role to play in tamping down the division and anger we're seeing far too often these days.

There are a number of public servants across Vermont, many in this room, who step up to serve for the right reasons, so I'd like to talk about a person whose example I try to follow every day.

Senator Dick Mazza was a dear friend to many, who we lost to cancer last year. For over four decades, Senator Mazza was a political giant, a friend and advisor to numerous governors on both sides of the aisle, longtime chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, a political powerhouse in the minds of many. The only person in the State House who didn't think that was Dick Mazza himself, because in his mind he was just a grocer from Mallets Bay who happened to be a legislator.

So, imagine my surprise as a freshman senator in 2001 when he took me under his wing, showed me the ropes, mentored me, and made me a part of his State House family. He was one of the most powerful Democrats in the state, and I was a first-term Republican. We became fast friends, worked together across the aisle every day, and we didn't always agree, but we didn't have to. We knew that regardless of our political party, we both had the best interest of our constituents and all Vermonters at heart - because that was the job.

Some may remember when Seven Days, a local newspaper, did a flashy front-page story on him a few years back. They were hoping to find out the story behind his political power and how was he able to wield so much influence. They even put a picture of him looking like "The Godfather" on the front page.

In their search for "the man behind the curtain," they found a kind, honest, thoughtful, and fair person who took his job as a Vermont state senator seriously. A politician that most everyone seemed to admire because he worked hard, listened to both sides, and treated people with respect. And even well over a decade ago, that was front-page news.

As leaders, whether you're an elected official or head of a department, you have a real opportunity to be the example, to restore those values and live by them every day. And remember, like it or not, we're all role models for someone whose lives we've touched - and they want to be just like

us.

So, thanks again for having me here today and for all that you do for Vermont.

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