



VLCT LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Date: June 11, 2021

To: Vermont State Senators and Representatives

From: Karen B. Horn, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy

Re: Support the Winooski and Montpelier Municipal Charters – Override the Governor’s Veto

On behalf of the 246 member cities and towns of VLCT, we urge you to support H.177 and H.227, and override Governor Scott’s vetoes of both charters. These two municipal charters and their relevant provisions relating to voter access for non-citizen residents of Montpelier and Winooski received strong support from the voters in both cities. Voters in both municipalities used the charter process as a means to grant greater voting access to their neighbors by the only constitutional means available: voting rights at *only* the municipal level.

No other city or town in Vermont is affected by these charter amendments and neither is the state. Both provisions were deemed constitutional by your legislative council. Until the legislature enables all municipalities to vote to allow non-citizen residents voting rights in local elections, the charter process is the only means municipalities have to achieve this goal. Voters in both communities took the only legal path available to grant voting rights in municipal elections to their non-citizen neighbors and the legislature should continue to support these decisions made by Montpelier and Winooski voters.

VLCT supports all charters before the legislature that are constitutional and which only affect the municipalities that propose the charter provisions. H.177 and H.227 are just two examples of voter-approved charter amendments and the only instances we can recall of a governor vetoing a charter or charter amendment. In 2021, the House Government Operations Committee left six charter amendment proposals hanging on the wall. We urge the legislature to support the will of the local voters in Montpelier and Winooski. Please vote override the governor’s vetoes of H.177 and H.227.