

**Vermont Commission on Women
Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 28, 2018 | 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
VCW Conference Room, 126 State St., 2nd Floor, Montpelier**

Commissioners present:

Marcia Merrill (Chair), Gretchen Bailey, Carol Buchdahl, Deborah Bucknam, Mary Daly, Charlotte Dennett, Nancy LaVarnway, Danielle Martel, Melinda Moulton, Marybeth Christie Redmond, Lisa Senecal

Commissioners absent:

Eileen Boland, Ruth Finn, Emilie Kornheiser, Kerry Secrest

Advisors present:

Kevin Veller of U.S. Congressman Welch's Office
Jennifer Oldham of Vermont Works for Women

Staff: Cary Brown, Hannah Lane, Victoria Foster (intern)

Presiding: Marcia Merrill

Recording: Hannah Lane

1. Call to order

Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Discussion and possible vote on proposal to issue a public statement in response to the federal government's separation of children from parents who are crossing the US border

Determining the appropriateness of VCW issuing a statement

MOTION made by Melinda, seconded by Charlotte:

To determine that this issue is within the purview of the Vermont Commission on Women.

The question was discussed, and then Mary moved to call the question, seconded by Carol.

Vote taken by roll call:

Nancy – Yes

Carol – Yes

Danielle – Yes

Melinda - Yes

Lisa - Yes

Deb - Yes

Marybeth - Yes

Charlotte - Yes

Mary - Yes

Motion to call the question approved.

On the question, roll call vote taken:

Nancy –No
Carol – abstain
Danielle – Yes
Melinda - Yes
Lisa - abstain
Deb - No
Marybeth - Yes
Charlotte - Yes
Mary - No

MOTION APPROVED.

Approving a public statement

MOTION made by Carol, seconded by Nancy:

To approve the following statement:

The Vermont Commission on Women supports the joint resolution, passed by the Vermont Senate and House, condemning the recently reversed federal policy of separating children from their families at the southern international border, expressing a profound hope that the family separation policy will not be reinstated, and imploring the Department of Homeland Security to reunite the separated families immediately.

The question was discussed, and then Charlotte moved to call the question.

Vote taken by roll call:

Nancy –Yes
Carol – Yes
Danielle – Yes
Melinda - Yes
Lisa - Yes
Deb - No
Marybeth - Yes
Charlotte - Yes
Mary – Yes
Marcia – Yes
Gretchen – Yes

Motion to call the question approved.

On the question, vote taken by roll call:

Nancy –Yes
Carol – Yes

Danielle – Yes
Melinda - Yes
Lisa - Yes
Deb - No
Marybeth - Yes
Charlotte - Yes
Mary - No
Gretchen - Yes

MOTION APPROVED.

Deb moved to adopt the statement she proposed by e-mail, reading:

“The recent overwhelming reaction against separating 2000 children from their parents at the southern border underscores the common understanding of compassionate Americans that separation of children from their parents causes trauma and heartbreak to these children. It is our responsibility as American citizens to minimize the mental, emotional and physical trauma levied on children because of the loss of one or more of their parents. Sadly, as a result of government policies and cultural pressure, there are millions of American children separated from the parents they love and who love them, because they are being raised by single parents. In addition, reduced economic security, higher crime rates, lower life expectancy, lower educational achievement and increased mental health problems in children are the result of single parenthood, even when all other factors are equal. The Vermont Commission on Women, in keeping with our mission as advocates for the rights of women and children, use this opportunity, when Americans are focused on the plight of separated families, to make a public statement on to advocate for government policies and cultural norms that encourage families to begin together, and stay together.”

No second. Motion died.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:21 a.m.