

# State of Vermont

## House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

### House Resolution

H.R. 25

House resolution encouraging the Senate of the State of Vermont in 2019 to initiate a proposal for a State constitutional amendment to remove from the Vermont Constitution all language authorizing slavery or indentured servitude

Offered by: Representatives Cina of Burlington, Ancel of Calais, Bartholomew of Hartland, Baser of Bristol, Belaski of Windsor, Briglin of Thetford, Brumsted of Shelburne, Burke of Brattleboro, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Christensen of Weathersfield, Christie of Hartford, Colburn of Burlington, Conlon of Cornwall, Connor of Fairfield, Conquest of Newbury, Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Donahue of Northfield, Donovan of Burlington, Dunn of Essex, Fagan of Rutland City, Forguites of Springfield, Gage of Rutland City, Gardner of Richmond, Gonzalez of Winooski, Haas of Rochester, Head of South Burlington, Hooper of Montpelier, Hooper of Randolph, Houghton of Essex, Howard of Rutland City, Jessup of Middlesex, Jickling of Randolph, Joseph of North Hero, Kitzmiller of Montpelier, Krowinski of Burlington, Lippert of Hinesburg, Long of Newfane, Lucke of Hartford, Macaig of Williston, Masland of Thetford, McCullough of Williston, McFaun of Barre Town, Miller of Shaftsbury, Morris of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Ode of Burlington, Potter of Clarendon, Pugh of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, Sharpe of Bristol, Sheldon of Middlebury, Stevens of Waterbury, Stuart of Brattleboro, Sullivan of Dorset, Sullivan of Burlington, Till of Jericho, Toleno of Brattleboro, Toll of Danville, Townsend of South Burlington, Troiano of Stannard, Weed of Enosburgh, Willhoit of St. Johnsbury, Wood of Waterbury, and Yantachka of Charlotte

Whereas, Chapter I, Article 1 of the original 1777 Vermont Constitution provided in part that “no male person, born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after he arrives to the age of twenty-one years, nor female in like manner, after she arrives to the age of eighteen years, unless they are bound by their own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like,” and

Whereas, the revised Vermont Constitutions of 1786 and 1793 continued to include the language related to slavery and indentured servitude, and

Whereas, Vermont constitutional conventions approved amendments in 1828, 1836, 1850, and 1870, and none of these conventions altered the original 1777 language, and

Whereas, beginning in 1883, there have been multiple popular votes to amend the Vermont Constitution, most recently in 2010, and other than the

1924 elimination of the distinction between the genders regarding the age at which a slave is released, the language has otherwise remained the same, and

Whereas, the Vermont Constitution serves as the foundation of our State's governmental structure and political process, the fundamental limitation on the use of the State's police power, and the underpinning of all of the laws of the State of Vermont, and

Whereas, the Vermont Constitution should not authorize slavery or indentured servitude in any form, and

Whereas, 2019 is a year the Vermont constitutional amendment process may be started in the Senate, and the placement of a proposal for a constitutional amendment before the State's electorate that removes the authorization of slavery and indentured servitude is of the greatest importance, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body encourages the Senate of the State of Vermont in 2019 to initiate a proposal for a State constitutional amendment to remove from the Vermont Constitution all language authorizing slavery or indentured servitude.