

LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 17, 2019

Systemic racism is, unfortunately, alive and well in our country and our state, according to civil and social rights advocates from across the state. The good news is we are in the process of changing the status quo by helping to educate Vermonters, both young and old, about self-awareness and inclusiveness. As we continue to see national headlines, we must also look inward at our “bucolic” state and examine our own track record. You can learn more about systemic racism in Vermont on the back.

Currently, there is a bill (H.3) in the Vermont legislature that will bring advocates and educators together in order to create an educational curriculum that includes all Vermonters regardless of their race, economic status, sexual orientation, disability, language and/or gender. Read an interview with the bill’s lead sponsor, Rep. Christie, on the back. As we more accurately learn our past, and include the many non-male and non-white leaders, as well as how systems of the past gave some a leg up while not others, we can work to better understand what systemic racism really is. With that framework, we can better understand our current events and how they are symptoms of legacy effects.

We must all continue to do our part in becoming more aware of how our biases, ingrained mindsets, and lack of education and experience on this topic can hurt others. These societal issues must be addressed both in law and in our day to day lives. Every time we speak up when we observe bullying or bigotry, we make Vermont a better place to live.

Thank you for staying connected.



PUBLIC HEARINGS ON GOVERNOR’S FY2020 BUDGET

The House and Senate Committees on Appropriations are holding public hearings on the Governor’s recommended FY2020 State Budget on **Monday, February 25** at the following locations.

Morrisville 6:00 – People’s Academy High School, top of Copley Avenue

Rutland City 6:00 – Rutland Public Schools, Longfellow School Building, Board Room

St. Johnsbury 6:00 – St. Johnsbury House, Main dining room, 1207 Main Street

St. Albans City 6:00 – St. Albans City School, Library, 29 Bellows Street

Winooski 6:00 – Community College of Vermont, Room 108, 1 Abenaki Way

Springfield 5:30 – Springfield Town Hall, 96 Main Street, 3rd Floor Conference Room

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 19 6:00PM

‘It’s Criminal’ movie and panel discussion. The Sharon Academy, 79 VT-132, Sharon

February 20 12:00PM

Dr. Lasse Siurala talk on youth engagement in Finland. VT Historical Society Museum, 109 State St., Montpelier

February 22 8:30AM

‘Coffee with Constituents’ Lt. Gov. Office, State House, Montpelier

February 25 5:30PM

Community Conversation with Lt. Gov. and Reps. John Bartholomew & Zach Ralph. Windsor Public Library

February 28 5:30PM

Lt. Gov. Movie Series showing *‘The Devil We Know.’* Cafeteria, State House, Montpelier

For a complete list of events please visit the calendar on our website:

www.LTGov.vermont.gov

SYSTEMIC RACISM IN OUR COUNTRY AND STATE

By Chloé White, Policy Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont

Systemic racism is, unfortunately, alive and well in our country and our state. It pervades every facet of our society. Despite important gains, white supremacy and racial injustice remain deeply embedded in our democracy and are evident throughout Vermont: in daily interactions in our communities and in our schools, in access to employment, housing, health care, and in our criminal justice system—from interactions with law enforcement to our prisons. For example:

- Vermont is the second whitest state in the nation, yet we have one of the highest rates of racial disparities in incarceration in the country;
- We have massive racial disparities in traffic stops and searches; and
- Students of color are more likely to be suspended and expelled than their white peers

It is more important than ever that we continue to combat racial injustice everywhere it is found.

ETHNIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY STUDIES

An interview with Representative Kevin "Coach" Christie of Hartford, VT by Cindy Weed

History could be more inclusive and accurate if H.3 passes the legislature this year. The bill, sponsored by Representatives Christie, Cina, Giambatista, and Gonzalez, is "An act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools". The bill has passed the full House plus the Senate Education Committee and is now being reviewed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The bill would create an Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group to advise the State Board of Education on the adoption of ethnic and social equity studies standards into statewide educational standards. The bill also proposes to require the State Board of Education to publish data on student performance and hazing, harassment, or bullying incidents including ethnic and racial groups, poverty status, disability status, English language learner status, and gender.

"We are working to help marginalized people whose voices in history have not been heard," said Rep. Christie, "and whose influence was not shared." For example, "If it hadn't been for women, we might not have succeeded in space," Rep. Christie said. "How many people know that?"

When Rep. Christie presented the bill in the Education Committee, he asked if they had heard about the 1921 incident in Tulsa, Oklahoma where 300 persons of color were shot by people flying above in a private airplane. No one present in the room knew anything about it. "It was one of the most egregious acts of racism that occurred in this country," Rep. Christie noted.

"It's more about knowing what we know now, and what we do with it; then we can do the work to get where we want to be," said Rep. Christie.

For more information on H.3 and to follow its progress:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.3>