



STATE OF VERMONT
SENATE CHAMBER
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS

April 9, 2025

Dear Senate Appropriations Committee -

After hearing compelling testimony from the Department of States Attorneys and Sheriffs, our Senate Government Operations Committee is writing to advocate for the increased funding they are requesting from the Legislature. Your SGO Committee appreciates the time and effort you've taken to listen to their needs. And while the House supported much of this essential work done by this Department, we feel the Senate needs to go further – providing the Department with the necessary resources needed to continue their important work protecting Vermont communities and victims and supporting best practices in the criminal justice system.

As you know by now the House Appropriations Committee included the Department's base budget increases to level funding to fill vacancy savings: \$650,000 for State's Attorneys and \$650,000 for the Sheriffs. We are glad of that. However, to handle the now overwhelming number of caseloads in the State's Attorney's offices and the increased demands for transports to court hearings that must be accommodated by the Sheriffs' state transport deputies, your Senate Government Operations is asking the SAC to consider the Department's original ask of the Legislature in full. Please support their request in full:

Support the base budget increases to level-funding to fill vacancy savings, as noted above (\$650K for SA; \$650K for Sheriffs)

1 Fiscal/ IT support staff: \$95,000;

6 admin-paralegal support staff: \$650,000

4 Victim Advocates: \$320,000

6 State Transport Deputies: \$850,000

\$0 Cost - The Department's fervent hope is to convert their 9 Limited-Service positions (awarded to us in FY25 / last session) to Permanent positions. The positions and funding are already in the Department's budget, so this is a No Cost request. Almost all of these positions are already filled in the SA field offices. Being able to maintain these positions will allow the Department to further assist the field offices with staffing to help address the roughly 23,500 criminal cases and nearly 100 pending homicides that the SA Offices are handling. Cost: \$0.

**please note that the BAA converted 8 Limited-Service positions to Permanent for the Defender General's Office and the Office of the Attorney General received \$1.1 million for new programming and an additional position in the FY26 budget as passed by the House.

The SGO Committee strongly supports these financial investments in our judiciary system. Access to justice, a value we hold dear and guaranteed by our Constitution necessitates

full funding of the pillars which hold up and enable its effective productivity. To that end, we ask that you support the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs' funding requests.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Senator Brian Collamore
Chair, Senate Government Operations Committee

cc: Honorable Senate Pro Tem Philip Baruth

cc: Senator Robert Norris – Senate budget liaison to Dept. of SAS