

RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH PACKET FOR ABOLISH SLAVERY CAMPAIGN

Online resources:

- E-Pledge card and volunteer sign-up form: bit.ly/AbolishSlaveryVT
 - FINAL Talking points:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vlxJ1ej2SXJMIXwc8Fd8zk2d5F7sDJCaAPD_SvHqmw/edit?usp=sharing
 - [Guidelines for Having Conversations about Prop 2](#)
 - Abolish Slavery VT organizational sign-on form (for non-profits, other advocacy groups, businesses): bit.ly/ASVTorg-signon
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Press release:

This November, Vermont voters have a rare chance to weigh in on not one, but two proposed amendments to the state constitution. [Prop 2](#), which will clarify the prohibition against slavery and indentured servitude, is being promoted to the electorate through the partnership between [Vermont Interfaith Action](#) (VIA) and [Vermont Racial Justice Alliance](#) (VRJA).

This amendment states that “slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited.” Although Vermonters have been told for decades that the state was the first to abolish slavery, the truth is that no state constitutionally permitted slavery before Vermont. The way the constitution currently reads, there are exceptions to the abolition of slavery on three grounds: 1) for those under age 21, 2) for those bound by their own consent, and 3) for those bound for payment of debts, damages, fines, costs or “the like.” These exceptions in the Vermont constitution have led to similar exceptions in the constitutions of 25 other states and in the U.S. Constitution, which contains an exception for punishment of a crime in the Thirteenth Amendment.

The Abolish Slavery Vermont campaign focuses on human rights and connects the institution of slavery to its legacy -- systemic racism. **Mark Hughes, Executive Director of Vermont Racial Justice Alliance** and the catalyst for the amendment, stated, *“Political and economic inequality along racial lines and across all society exist today because of the legacy of slavery. This amendment goes to the heart of a 245-year-old*

crime against humanity.” It also addresses the existence of and the ongoing impact of the Thirteenth Amendment exception clause in the U.S. Constitution, which has led to the proliferation of the prison industry, as well as skyrocketing incarceration and hugely disproportionate numbers of Black Americans being locked up.

Constitutional amendments in Vermont can only be introduced in the Senate at four-year intervals. **VIA Executive Director Debbie Ingram**, who was serving as a Vermont State Senator at the time when the Proposition was introduced – and who was in fact the lead sponsor of the amendment – said, *“Freedom from oppression and release from captivity are values common to all faith traditions, and to all people of good will. It is well past time for our society to unambiguously abolish the morally reprehensible practice of slavery.”*

The Vermont [campaign](#) draws support from two national movements: the [Faith in Action](#) national network and [Abolish Slavery National Network](#). Four states have already passed similar measures, and several other states besides Vermont, including Louisiana and Tennessee, will have abolition on their ballots this year.

Blurb suitable for Front Porch Forums, newsletters and other venues:

This November, Vermont voters have a rare chance to weigh in on not one, but two proposed amendments to the state constitution. [Prop 2](#) states that “slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited.” Although Vermonters have been told that the state was the first to abolish slavery, this is not accurate. In the current constitution, there are exceptions to the abolition of slavery on three grounds, including for “those bound for payment of debts, damages, fines, costs or the like.” These exceptions in the Vermont constitution have led to similar exceptions in the constitutions of 25 other states and in the U.S. Constitution, with its exception for punishment of a crime in the Thirteenth Amendment. Vermonters, let’s take action during this election cycle to end the morally reprehensible practice of slavery and the legacy of hatred and systemic racism it has given our country. To find out more information or to join the campaign as a volunteer, go to www.abolishslaveryvt.org.

