Date: 2/04/2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Good morning everyone,

My name is Mohamed Diop. I serve as the Vice President and a Board Member of Vermont Language Justice, as well as the Director of Multilingual Learner Programs for the Winooski School District. Additionally, I am a member of the Vermont State Board of Education and contribute to several other educational committees and boards.

I am here today to testify about the vital work Vermont Language Justice has carried out for years to ensure that all Vermont residents, especially those with limited or no English proficiency, receive essential information and updates that affect their daily lives.

I want to thank Senator Gulick and everyone involved in introducing S.243, a bill that would require the Department of Health to distribute funds to the Vermont Language Justice Project to create informational materials related to disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

As an immigrant and a polyglot who speaks seven languages, I deeply understand the importance of delivering information in ways that reach everyone. Vermont's demographics have changed significantly over the years; our state continues to welcome migrants, immigrants and refugees, many of whom do not speak, read, or write in English.

Vermont Language Justice plays a key role in addressing this need. Our mission is to provide vital health and social service information to refugees, migrants, and immigrants by producing and translating educational videos in multiple languages. This ensures that all Vermont residents, regardless of their English proficiency, can access accurate and timely information, especially when it concerns health and safety.

As lawmakers and Vermont residents, I urge you to support S.243. Requiring the Department of Health to fund Vermont Language Justice's work will strengthen our state's ability to respond to public health emergencies through inclusive communication.

If the Department of Health truly values all Vermonters, its work must align with a universal design framework, one that plans for accessibility and inclusion from the start. There can be no true equity or inclusion without it.

Vermont today is not the same as it was 10 or 15 years ago. Back then, I could go days without meeting or seeing someone who looked like me. Today, our communities are far more diverse, and our systems must evolve to reflect that reality.

Thank you for your time and for recognizing the importance of language access and inclusion in building a stronger Vermont for all.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Diop,

meddegeorges@gmail.com