

Ward 5 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA):

Draft Agenda

Thursday, November 20th

6:30PM-8:15PM



Join in person: 645 Pine Street (DPW Building)

Join virtually: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89574495720>

Facilitator: Primrose VanWolvelear **Note Taker:** Jak Tiano

6:30	Community Dinner	30 min
7:00	Welcome & Public Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Open floor for community input	15 min
7:15	Overdose Prevention Centers Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing info about the OPC community survey launching in November	15 min
7:30	Update and community conversation regarding school redistricting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To discuss the school redistricting process and gather input before the committee finalizes its recommendations	25 min
7:55	Apartheid-Free Community presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A presentation and discussion of the Open Letter to the Burlington City Council regarding free speech and the Apartheid Free Communities initiative (www.vermontcpl.org/btv)	20 min
8:15	Adjourn <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next meeting will be Thursday, December 18th, 2025	

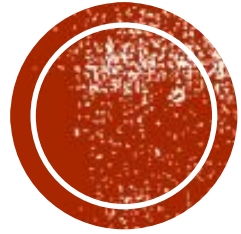


EDUCATION REFORM – ACT 73

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

WHERE WE ARE

WHAT'S AHEAD



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

THE PROBLEM

- ❑ Unsustainable annual increases in property taxes
- ❑ Highest per-pupil spending in the country
- ❑ Large variations in education spending and education quality across the state
- ❑ Ed spending going up even as the number of students declines.



ACT 73 GOALS

1

**LOWER AND
STABILIZE
COSTS**

2

**ACHIEVE
EFFICIENCIES
ACROSS THE
EDUCATIONAL
SYSTEM**

3

**IMPROVE
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES &
INCREASE
STUDENT
OPPORTUNITIES**



1. DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION

Task Force created to draw up to 3 maps – Report due to legislature this December

2. CLASS SIZE MINIMUMS

1st grade: 10; grades 2-5: 12; grades 6-8: 15; grades 9-12: 18. Exceptions for certain classes.

3. FUNDING

- ❑ Base funding to districts through statewide “Foundation Formula” (by 2028 if new districts formed by then)
- ❑ \$15,033 per student (adjusted annually for inflation)
- ❑ Additional money (or weights) for students who are English learners, economically disadvantaged, and those with disabilities
- ❑ Other allowances

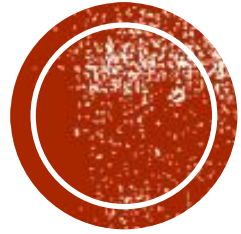
4. INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- ❑ **Prohibits tuitioning students to out of state schools**
- ❑ **Allows tuitions to VT independent schools if:**
 - A district does not have a public school for some or all grades
 - At least 25% of students enrolled are tuitioned through the state
- ❑ **Effective 2026-27 school year**

5. Tax Changes

Replaces statewide property tax credit with a homestead property tax exemption based on income.

- ❑ Households earning \$115,000 or less can exempt a portion of housesite value – up to \$425,000 – from property taxes.
- ❑ Taxes second homes at a higher rate than business or rental properties.
- ❑ Implementation report due by Dec 31st.



WHERE WE ARE

Redistricting Task Force - August - Nov

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ❑ Be pragmatic and focused
- ❑ Acknowledge political realities
- ❑ Use DATA, not assumptions
- ❑ Honor local knowledge
- ❑ Do no harm
- ❑ Design for resilience

Redistricting Report

- ❑ **No research supports** the mandated Act 73 sizes (of between 4-8,000 students)
- ❑ Evidence of potential harm if implementation is **too rapid or poorly planned**
- ❑ **New maps don't address real cost drivers** (health insurance, special education, transportation, building maintenance & construction investments)
- ❑ Research reflects that **locally driven, voluntary** mergers are more successful and can produce more immediate savings

Its Conclusion

“Vermont should concentrate on instructional improvement and regional shared-service capacity, *not* on large or rapid district mergers.”

INSTEAD... THREE COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES

- ❑ Creation of regional **Cooperative Education Services Areas** designed to reduce duplication, leverage proximate resources, promote equitable access to education, and reduce costs.
- ❑ **Incentivizing strategic, voluntary mergers** focused on educational benefit, community priorities, and fiscal sustainability
- ❑ **Regionally-governed high schools** to expand student opportunity (particularly in rural areas)

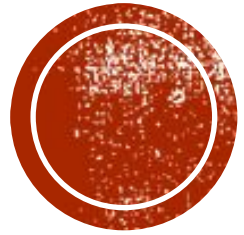
REDISTRICTING: Timeline

Multi-year, multi-stage process:

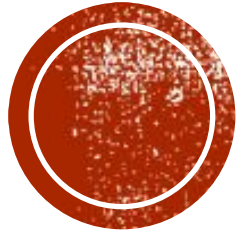
- Year 1:** Assessment and Planning
ID shared svcs opportunities
- Years 1-2** Launch service pilots
Begin regional staffing where feasible
Evaluation and feedback
- Years 2-4** Conduct feasibility studies for regional
high schools
Incentivize voluntary mergers
- Years 4+** Expand successful models statewide
Implement mergers and governance shifts
Evaluate

Parallel Work

- ❑ Commission on the Future of Public Education charged with resolving issues related to school governance: which decisions are local, which belong to the state?
- ❑ Agency of Education charged with establishing statewide high school graduation requirements
- ❑ Reports on other issues - school construction, transportation, career and technical education, special education and pre-K - in process



WHAT ABOUT BTV?



Helpful Links

- ❑ Draft Report: <https://bit.ly/3XM4MEt>
- ❑ AOE Task Force Link: <https://bit.ly/3Xalr4x>



**APARTHEID
-FREE**

Burlington, VT

NPA Meeting Tour

AGENDA



**Israeli
Apartheid and
the Genocide**



**Local
Campaign**



Next Steps



**Open
Discussion
and Q&A**

THE CRIME OF **APARTHEID**

The 1998 Rome Statute to the International Criminal Court and 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid define apartheid as a **crime against humanity** consisting of three main elements:

- 1 AN INTENT TO MAINTAIN DOMINATION**
BY ONE RACIAL GROUP OVER ANOTHER
- 2 A CONTEXT OF SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION**
BY ONE RACIAL GROUP OVER ANOTHER
- 3 INHUMANE ACTS**

Israeli apartheid: 4 strategies

Dispossession

Decades of discriminatory land and property seizures, home demolitions, and forced evictions

Segregation

A system of laws and policies that keep Palestinians restricted to enclaves, subject to several measures that control their lives, and segregated from Jewish Israelis

Deprivation

The deliberate impoverishment of Palestinians. For example, keeping them at a great disadvantage in comparison to Jewish Israelis

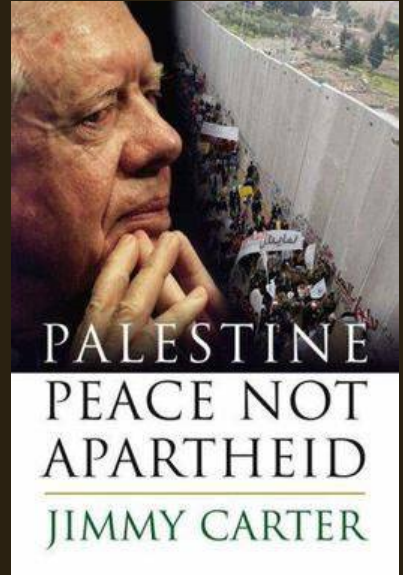
Fragmentation

Keeping Palestinians separated from each other into distinct territorial, legal and administrative domains

Source: Amnesty International



Israeli apartheid: According to whom?



Advisory opinion on July 19, 2024 found Israel **responsible** for committing apartheid.

PALESTINE SHRINKING EXPANDING ISRAEL

1918



UNDER OTTOMAN RULE, ZIONIST ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND BEGIN TO MAKE LAND PURCHASES THROUGHOUT PALESTINE FOR JEWISH SETTLEMENT.

1947



PRIVATISATION OF LAND UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE ACCELERATES ITS TRANSFER AND SALE TO ZIONIST ORGANISATIONS, AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF PALESTINIAN INHABITANTS.

1960



FOLLOWING THE FORCED DISPLACEMENT (NAKBA) OF OVER 750,000 PALESTINIANS IN 1948, THE NEW STATE OF ISRAEL ENACTS LAWS TO CONFISCATE THE VAST MAJORITY OF PALESTINIAN LANDS.

2017



SINCE OCCUPYING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IN 1967, ISRAEL HAS UNILATERALLY DECLARED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HECTARES OF SO-CALLED STATE LAND FOR ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS.

SOURCES

Text based on:

Black, 2000. *Land Ownership in Palestine/Israel 1918-2000*.
 Pictorial: UN. *United Nations Population Transfer and the Negev Evacuees in The Negev*,
 8 taken 2010. By Haak And By Crook. *Israeli Settlement Policy in The West Bank*.

Maps adapted from:
 Bask, 2009. *Atlas of the Conflict in Israel-Palestine*.
 (Title: 2004). *Map of the West Bank, Settlements and the Separation Barrier*.

■ *Occupied Land
 ■ Donor Settlements

VISUALIZING PALESTINE


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Israeli apartheid: Who's paying for it?

In Burlington, Vermont, \$2,959,782 to Israel's weapons could instead fund one of the following:


 **1,855** Households with one month's free rent

 **6,227** Families with one month's free groceries


 **1,029** Children's free or low-cost healthcare for one year

 **32** Elementary school teachers' salaries for one year

 **8,426** Households with solar electricity produced for a year


 **78** Students with their loan debt cancelled

In Vermont, \$27,647,196 to Israel's weapons could instead fund one of the following:


 **17,333** Households with one month's free rent

 **58,174** Families with one month's free groceries

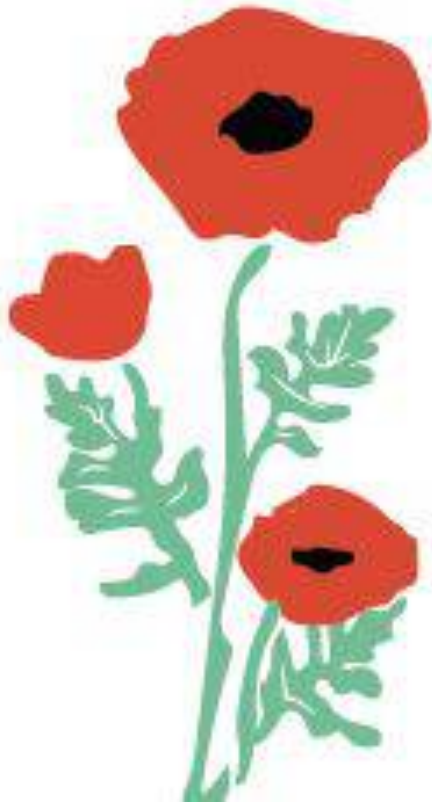
 **9,619** Children's free or low-cost healthcare for one year

 **301** Elementary school teachers' salaries for one year

 **78,710** Households with solar electricity produced for a year

 **731** Students with their loan debt cancelled





LOCAL CAMPAIGN

The **VERMONT COALITION FOR PALESTINIAN LIBERATION** is a collaboration of several Vermont organizations and hundreds of Vermont residents volunteering their time and energy to work for a **FREE PALESTINE.**



\$27.6 million Vermont taxpayer dollars sent to Israel in 2024

3 Palestinian students were shot in Burlington in 2023, showing the violence is not contained overseas

The Boomerang Comes Back, spreading apartheid, hate, and violence spread

**Palestine
is a local
issue.**

THE APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITY PLEDGE:

WE AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;

WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and

WE DECLARE ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end,

WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

Initiated by the American Friends Service Committee in 2022, this pledge has been **adopted worldwide by 880+** businesses, community organizations, artists, unions, faith organizations, & municipalities.



TOWNS & CITIES

Winooski, Brattleboro, Newfane, Thetford, Plainfield

LABOR UNIONS

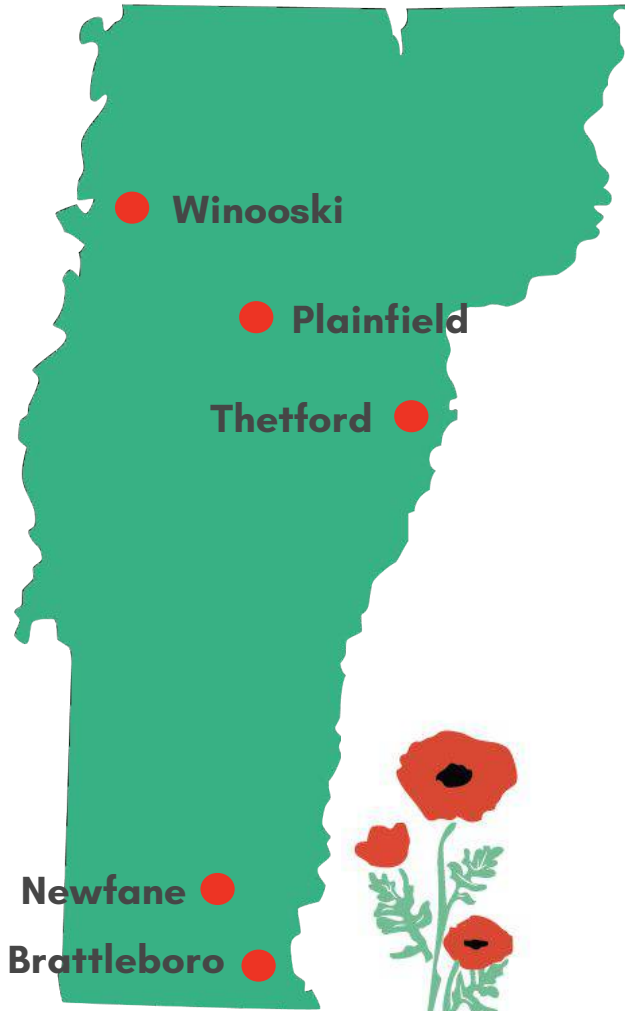
AFSCME 1674 Howard Center Union, UE 255 Local Hunger Mountain Co-op Union, Vermont Workers' Center + more

COMMUNITIES

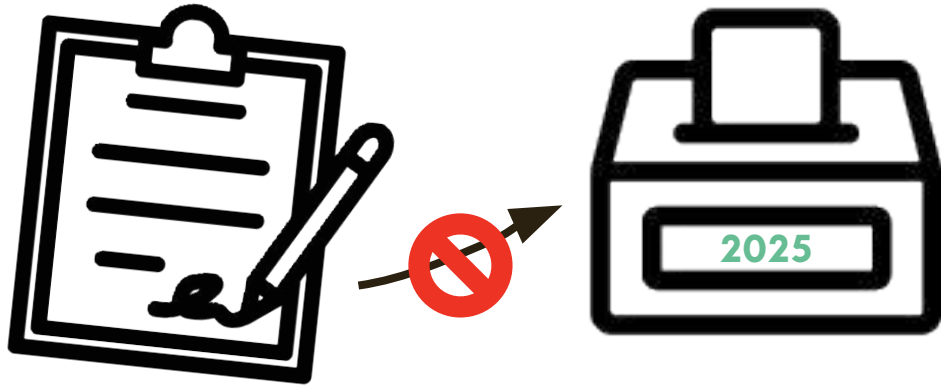
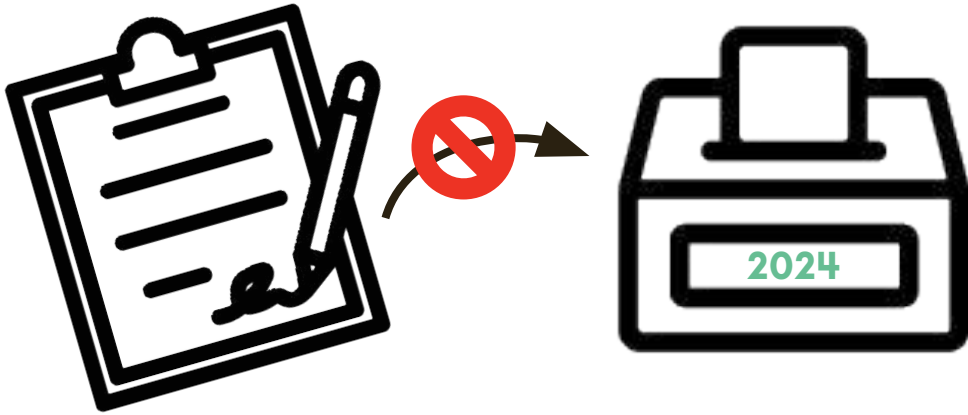
Free Her, The Peace and Justice Center, Migrant Justice, Education Justice Coalition of Vermont, Ascension Lutheran Church, Episcopal Diocese of Vermont + more

BUSINESSES


Haymaker Buns, Marshfield Village Store, Otter Creek Yoga+ more



Support for the pledge is growing around Vermont...



**...but in
Burlington,
our vote is
being
blocked.**



● **Burnaby, BC, Canada**
Aug 26, 2025 | Passed resolution to endorse AFC and write to federal government demanding an arms embargo.

● **Iowa City, IA**

Aug 5, 2025 | Passed resolution to boycott and divest from businesses supporting Israeli genocide and occupation.

● **St. Louis, MO**
Nov 7, 2025 | Passed resolution to divest city pensions from war and human rights violations by Israel.

● **Somerville, MA**

Nov 4, 2025 | Ballot question to boycott and divest from businesses supporting Israeli apartheid passed with 55.7% of votes.



**Beyond
Burlington,
cities and
towns are
taking
action.**



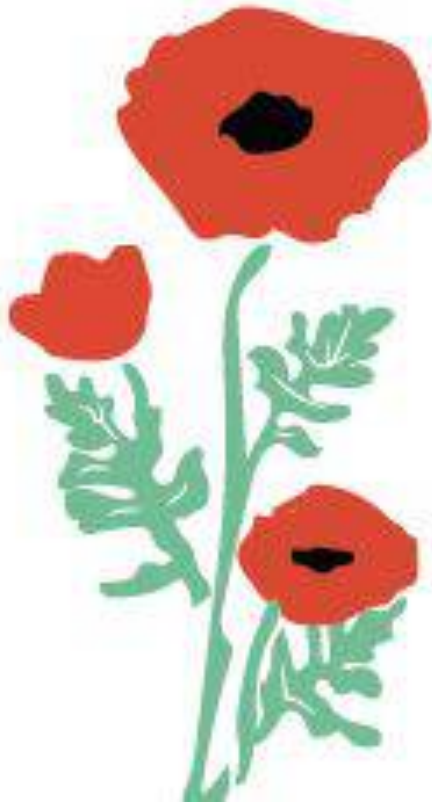
Let Voters Decide on Apartheid-Free Community

OPEN LETTER TO BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Dear Burlington City Council & Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak,

Democrats on the City Council blocked the AFC pledge advisory question from going to voters two years in a row, despite thousands of Burlington residents signing petitions to put the pledge on the ballot. In April 2025, the Council unanimously approved a resolution for protecting free speech on Palestine, and it is time to rectify the fact that our free speech rights have been repeatedly denied. There should be a democratic vote on adopting the pledge.

We, the undersigned, **SUPPORT** the Apartheid-Free Community (AFC) pledge, and **DEMAND** that the Burlington City Council place the AFC advisory referendum question on the town meeting day 2026 ballot.



NEXT STEPS

What can you do?

- ❑ **Sign the open letter** (vermontcpl.org/btv)
- ❑ **Contact your city councilors** to demand the right to vote on AFC
- ❑ Inform your community about AFC and post on **Front Porch Forum**
- ❑ **Volunteer** with VCPL to support this campaign
- ❑ Support “**No Appetite for Apartheid**” campaign

What can this NPA do?

Vote on a **resolution** to call on City Council to uphold democratic norms and endorse the open letter to the Burlington City Council

Ben Traverse

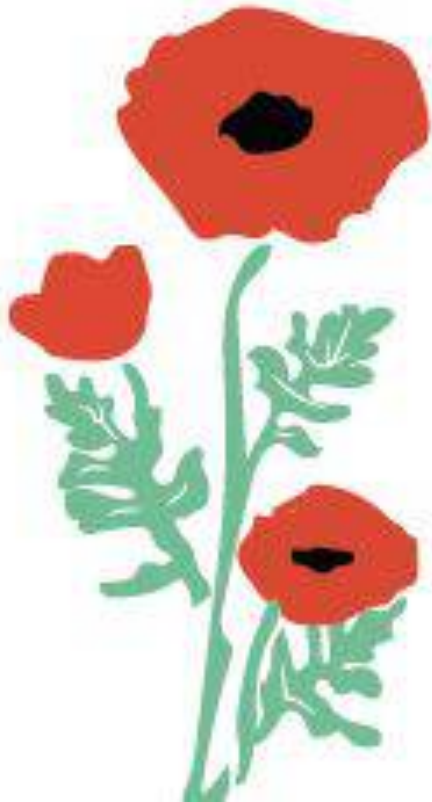
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THANK YOU

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