

**Statement in Support of Carolyn Partridge
for BCA Meeting, November 30, 2021
Submitted by Michael Simonds**

I want to speak here tonight in support of Carolyn Partridge. She has more than a 30-year record of personal service to the citizens of Windham. She has served on the Select Board and the School Board. She is a justice of the peace, a long-time member of the Windham Community Organization, and a member of the former Windham Congregational Church. Carolyn has served as our state representative for almost 20 years, and is the chair of the Agriculture Committee in Montpelier.

Carolyn has been a mentor and provided support to countless individuals over the years, including my wife Mac and myself. When I first bought property and moved to Windham, I was living in a tent and trying to figure out how to build a house with no knowledge of contractor service people or local and state regulations, and I had no phone. I had driven past the farm on Old Cheney Road a few times and decided to stop in and ask about contractors and if I could use their phone. Well, Carolyn and Alan knew people and suggested who to hire, and they had a phone extension in their garage, which they said was *my* phone which I could use anytime for local or long distance calls. I was one of the nicest and most helpful acts of support I have ever experienced.

Carolyn also recruited me for town committees. In my 25 years in Windham, I have served in eight different offices. When Mac later came into my life, Carolyn got her involved as well. You can find many people in town who have similar stories. Carolyn has always been there with advice and support, and if you needed it, a shoulder to cry on. Mac and I are constantly amazed that she can do all of these things while mending fences, farming sheep, spinning wool, and growing a lot of their own food. She also keeps chickens who produce the best eggs we've ever eaten. In addition, Carolyn has raised three sons who graduated from Windham Elementary School and have gone on to have successful careers.

Perhaps most importantly, Carolyn maintains the highest level of integrity. In my 25 years as her neighbor, I have never known her to do anything dishonest. To the contrary, she is someone who speaks the truth even when she knows it is not what others want to hear, and even when she's aware that it might cost her votes. She is a person who acts on her principles, and first and foremost of these is to act honorably and honestly.

That is why we and all the other people in town who love and care about Carolyn are shocked and dismayed that she has been accused of a criminal offense and that her name and reputation

are being dragged through the mud.

This is a new low for the movement to close the Windham School. It mirrors the methods and strategies used by national groups to question election results, spread lies, and demonize election officials. I hope this will not go any further in our town.

Finally, I want to express my concern about the impact this complaint will have on the town. At a time when we need to come together and try to heal the divides about future of Windham Elementary School, we are instead embroiled in a deeper level of hostility. This legal complaint, directed against an honorable, long-time public servant serves no worthy purpose. I can only hope it will be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted for the record,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Simonds". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Simonds" clearly legible.