

Journal of the Senate

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Mark Wilson of Waitsfield.

Pledge of Allegiance

The President then led the members of the Senate in the pledge of allegiance.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted on the Part of the Senate

J.R.S. 40.

Joint Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read and adopted on the part of the Senate, and is as follows:

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 40. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 26, 2024.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 26, 2024, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, January 30, 2024.

Joint Resolution Referred

J.R.S. 41.

Joint Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read the first time and is as follows:

By Senators Cummings, Perchlik, and Watson,

J.R.S. 41. Joint resolution requesting that the U.S. Postal Service reestablish, as rapidly as possible, a full-service U.S. Post Office in downtown Montpelier.

Whereas, as the Vermont State capital, the seat of Washington County, and an important commercial hub in central Vermont, the City of Montpelier's daily U.S. Mail service is extremely important, and

Whereas, the municipality of Montpelier has hosted a U.S. Post Office since 1798, and the historic State Street location dates from 1891, and

Whereas, on July 10 and 11, 2023, Montpelier experienced a devastating flood, and one of the most unfortunate consequences was the immediate closure of the U.S. Post Office, leaving the municipality bereft of this essential public service, and

Whereas, initial plans for a limited U.S. postal facility proved unworkable, and eventually, trucks, primarily offering a pickup point for postal box renters, were stationed in a parking lot on River Street, a site far from downtown Montpelier that is not easily accessible to public transit customers or pedestrians, and

Whereas, because these trucks had neither heat nor electricity, this temporary, and wholly inadequate, arrangement ended on Friday, November 17, 2023, and

Whereas, on Monday, January 8, 2024, a rally was conducted in front of the shuttered Montpelier U.S. Post Office that featured remarks from U.S. Senator Peter Welch, U.S. Representative Becca Balint, and a senior member of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders's staff, each of whom implored U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to remediate, immediately, this untenable situation, and

Whereas, the lack of a full-service U.S. Post Office in downtown Montpelier is extremely inconvenient for the citizens, businesses, and governmental offices located in the State's capital city, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly requests that the U.S. Postal Service reestablish, as rapidly as possible, a full-service U.S. Post Office in downtown Montpelier, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Joseph R. Biden, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, and the members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Thereupon, the President, in his discretion, treated the joint resolution as a bill and referred it to the Committee on Government Operations.

Bill Referred

House bill of the following title was read the first time and referred:

H. 599.

An act relating to retroactively reinstating 10 V.S.A. § 6081(b).

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

Governor's Veto Sustained

Senate Bill entitled:

H. 158. An act relating to the beverage container redemption system.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, the question, Shall the bill pass, notwithstanding the refusal of the Governor to approve the bill?, was decided in the negative on a roll call required by the Vermont Constitution, Yeas 17, Nays 13. (the necessary *override* two-thirds vote *not* having been attained).

Roll Call

Those Senators who voted in the affirmative were: Baruth, Bray, Champion, Clarkson, Cummings, Gulick, Hardy, Harrison, Hashim, Lyons, MacDonald, McCormack, Perchlik, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Watson, White.

Those Senators who voted in the negative were: Brock, Chittenden, Collamore, Ingalls, Kitchel, Mazza, Norris, Sears, Starr, Weeks, Westman, Williams, Wrenner.

Joint Resolutions Adopted on the Part of the Senate

Joint Senate resolutions entitled:

J.R.S. 38. Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly for the election of an Adjutant and Inspector General, and two legislative Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

J.R.S. 39. Joint resolution establishing a procedure for the conduct of the election of two legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation by plurality vote by the General Assembly in 2024.

Having been placed on the Calendar for action, were taken up and severally adopted on the part of the Senate.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until one o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, January 24, 2024.