

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Appropriations to which was referred Senate Bill No. 39
3 entitled “An act relating to compensation and benefits for members of the
4 General Assembly” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the report of the Committee on Government Operations be
6 amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu
7 thereof the following:

8 * * * Health Benefits * * *

9 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 631 is amended to read:

10 § 631. GROUP INSURANCE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES; SALARY
11 DEDUCTIONS FOR INSURANCE, SAVINGS PLANS, AND
12 CREDIT UNIONS

13 (a)(1) The Secretary of Administration may contract on behalf of the State
14 with any insurance company or nonprofit association doing business in this
15 State to secure the benefits of franchise or group insurance. Beginning on
16 July 1, 1978, the terms of coverage under the policy shall be determined under
17 section 904 of this title, but it may include:

18 * * *

19 (2)(A)(i) As used in this section, the term “employees” includes any
20 class or classes of elected or appointed officials, State’s Attorneys, sheriffs,
21 employees of State’s Attorneys’ offices whose compensation is administered

1 through the State of Vermont payroll system, except contractual and temporary
2 employees, and deputy sheriffs paid by the State of Vermont pursuant to
3 24 V.S.A. § 290(b). The term “employees” ~~shall~~ does not include ~~members of~~
4 ~~the General Assembly as such~~, any person rendering service on a retainer or
5 fee basis, members of boards or commissions, or persons ~~other than employees~~
6 ~~of the Vermont Historical Society, the Vermont Film Corporation, the~~
7 ~~Vermont State Employees’ Credit Union, Vermont State Employees’~~
8 ~~Association, and the Vermont Council on the Arts~~, whose compensation for
9 service is not paid from the State Treasury, or any elected or appointed official
10 ~~unless the~~ except as specifically provided pursuant to this subdivision
11 (a)(2)(A)(i). The term “employees” includes employees of the Vermont
12 Historical Society, the Vermont State Employees’ Credit Union, the Vermont
13 State Employees’ Association, the Vermont Council on the Arts, and any
14 elected or appointed official who is actively engaged in and devoting
15 substantially full-time to the conduct of the business of his or her the official’s
16 public office. The term “employees” also includes members of the General
17 Assembly as set forth in subdivision (iv) of this subdivision (a)(2)(A).

18 * * *

19 (iv) For purposes of group hospital-surgical-medical expense
20 insurance, any employee assistance program offered to State employees, and
21 any flexible spending account program offered to State employees for health

1 care or dependent care expenses, or both, the term “employees” includes
2 members of the General Assembly.

3 (B)(i) The premiums for extending insurance coverage to employees
4 shall be paid in full by the Vermont Historical Society, ~~the Vermont Film~~
5 ~~Corporation~~, the Vermont State Employees’ Association, the Vermont State
6 Employees’ Credit Union, the Vermont Council on the Arts, or their respective
7 retirees. Nothing herein creates a legal obligation on the part of the State of
8 Vermont to pay any portion of the premiums required to extend insurance
9 coverage to this group of employees.

10 (ii) Members of the General Assembly shall be required to pay the
11 same portion of the premium for group hospital-surgical-medical expense
12 insurance as is required of employees of the Executive Branch.

13 * * *

14 * * * Compensation and Expenses * * *

15 Sec. 2. LEGISLATOR COMPENSATION FOR 2025–2026 BIENNIAL
16 SESSION

17 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 1052 to the contrary,
18 members of the General Assembly other than the Speaker of the House and
19 President Pro Tempore of the Senate are entitled to the following weekly
20 salary amounts during the 2025–2026 Biennial Session:

1 (1) for 2025, a weekly salary of \$1,000.00 plus an adjustment consistent
2 with the compensation increase provided to other constitutional officers for
3 fiscal year 2025; and

4 (2) for 2026, a weekly salary of \$1,100.00 plus an adjustment consistent
5 with the compensation increases provided to other constitutional officers for
6 fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

7 (b) Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 1051 to the contrary, the
8 Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate are entitled to
9 the following weekly salary amounts during the 2025–2026 Biennial Session:

10 (1) for 2025, a weekly salary of \$1,230.00 plus an adjustment consistent
11 with the compensation increase provided to other constitutional officers for
12 fiscal year 2025; and

13 (2) for 2026, a weekly salary of \$1,530.00 plus an adjustment consistent
14 with the compensation increases provided to other constitutional officers for
15 fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

16 (c) Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 1051 to the contrary, the
17 Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate are entitled to
18 annual compensation for the 2025–2026 Biennial Session as follows:

19 (1) for 2025, an annual salary of \$19,000.00 plus an adjustment
20 consistent with the compensation increase provided to other constitutional
21 officers for fiscal year 2025; and

1 (2) for 2026, an annual salary of \$23,500.00 plus an adjustment
2 consistent with the compensation increases provided to other constitutional
3 officers for fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

4 (d) The weekly salary amounts set forth in subsections (a) and (b) of this
5 section shall apply in all circumstances during the 2025–2026 Biennial Session
6 in which legislator compensation is determined pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1051
7 or 1052, including per diem compensation under 2 V.S.A. § 23, special session
8 compensation, and adjournment compensation.

9 Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 1051 is amended to read:

10 § 1051. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
11 OF THE SENATE; COMPENSATION AND EXPENSE
12 REIMBURSEMENT

13 (a) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate
14 shall be entitled to receive annual compensation of ~~\$10,080.00 for the 2005~~
15 \$28,300.00 for the first year of the 2027 Biennial Session and thereafter, to be
16 ~~paid in biweekly payments, provided that, beginning on January 1, 2007, the~~
17 ~~annual compensation shall be adjusted annually thereafter by the cost of living~~
18 ~~adjustment negotiated for State employees under the most recent collective~~
19 ~~bargaining agreement, except that, beginning on July 1, 2021, plus an~~
20 adjustment consistent with the compensation increases provided to other
21 constitutional officers for fiscal years 2025–2027. Beginning on January 1,

1 2028 and annually thereafter on January 1, the annual compensation shall be
2 adjusted consistent with the compensation increases provided to other
3 constitutional officers. The salary of the Speaker and President Pro Tempore
4 shall be paid in biweekly installments.

5 (b) In addition to the annual compensation set forth in subsection (a) of this
6 section, the Speaker and President Pro Tempore shall be entitled to receive:

7 (1) ~~\$652.00 a week for the 2005~~ \$1,830.00 a week for the first year of
8 the 2027 Biennial Session, plus an adjustment consistent with the
9 compensation increases provided to other constitutional officers for fiscal years
10 2025–2027 and thereafter, to be paid in biweekly payments during the regular
11 and adjourned sessions of the General Assembly, ~~provided that, beginning on~~
12 ~~January 1, 2007, the weekly compensation shall be adjusted annually thereafter~~
13 ~~by the cost of living adjustment negotiated for State employees under the most~~
14 ~~recent collective bargaining agreement, except that, beginning on July 1, 2021.~~
15 Beginning on January 1, 2028 and annually thereafter on January 1, the weekly
16 compensation shall be adjusted consistent with the compensation increases
17 provided to other constitutional officers;

18 * * *

19 (3) an allowance for or reimbursement of expenses for mileage, meals,
20 and lodging expenses as provided to members of the General Assembly under
21 subsection 1052(b) of this title during the biennial, adjourned, and special

1 sessions of the General Assembly and in addition such other actual and
2 necessary expenses incurred while engaged in duties imposed by law.

3 Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 1052 is amended to read:

4 § 1052. MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; COMPENSATION
5 AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

6 (a) Compensation.

7 (1) Session compensation. Each member of the General Assembly,
8 other than the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the
9 Senate, is entitled to a weekly salary of ~~\$589.00 for the 2005~~ \$1,210.00 for the
10 first year of the 2027 Biennial Session, plus an adjustment consistent with the
11 compensation increases provided to other constitutional officers for fiscal years
12 2025–2027 and thereafter, provided that, beginning on January 1, 2007, the
13 weekly compensation shall be adjusted annually thereafter by the cost of living
14 adjustment negotiated for State employees under the most recent collective
15 bargaining agreement, except that, beginning on July 1, 2021. Beginning on
16 January 1, 2028 and annually thereafter on January 1, the weekly
17 compensation shall be adjusted consistent with the compensation increases
18 provided to other constitutional officers. The salary of members shall be paid
19 in biweekly installments.

20 (2) Special session compensation. During a special session, a member is
21 entitled to an amount equal to one-fifth of the annually adjusted weekly

1 compensation set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection, rounded up to the
2 nearest dollar, for each day of a special session ~~on which the House of which~~
3 ~~he or she is a~~ that the House in which the member serves shall sit.

4 (3) Adjournment compensation. During adjournment of the General
5 Assembly, a member is entitled to an amount equal to one-fifth of the annually
6 adjusted weekly compensation set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection
7 (a), rounded up to the nearest dollar, for each week of the adjournment of the
8 General Assembly.

9 (b) Expenses. During any session of the General Assembly, each member
10 is entitled to receive an allowance for or reimbursement of expenses as
11 ~~follows:~~ set forth in this subsection.

12 (1) Mileage reimbursement. ~~Reimbursement~~ Each member shall receive
13 reimbursement in an amount equal to the actual mileage traveled for each day
14 of session in which the member travels between Montpelier and the member's
15 home or from Montpelier or from the member's home to another site on
16 officially sanctioned legislative business. Reimbursement of actual mileage
17 traveled under this subdivision shall be at the rate per mile determined by the
18 federal Office of Government-wide Policy and published in the Federal
19 Register for the year of the session.

20 (2) Meals and lodging allowance. Each member shall receive either a
21 meals allowance or reimbursement of actual meals expenses. Each member

1 shall inform the Office of Legislative Operations of the member’s choice of a
2 meals allowance or meals expense reimbursement annually prior to the
3 convening of each regular and adjourned session, and the member’s choice
4 shall remain in effect through the remainder of that session unless the member
5 notifies the Office, in writing, that the member needs to change that choice due
6 to a change in circumstances or for another compelling reason.

7 (A) Meals allowance. ~~A~~ A member who elects to receive a meals
8 allowance ~~is~~ shall receive an amount equal to the daily amount for meals ~~and~~
9 lodging determined for Montpelier, Vermont, by the federal Office of
10 Government-wide Policy and published in the Federal Register for the year of
11 the session; for each day the House in which the member serves shall sit.

12 (B) Meals reimbursement. A member who elects to receive
13 reimbursement of expenses shall receive reimbursement equal to the actual
14 amounts expended by the member for meals for each day that the House in
15 which the member serves shall sit, as well as meals for the night preceding the
16 first legislative day of each week during the legislative session. The amount of
17 the daily reimbursement available pursuant to this subdivision shall not exceed
18 the daily amount for meals determined for Montpelier, Vermont, by the federal
19 Office of Government-wide Policy and published in the Federal Register for
20 the year of the session. The member shall provide meal receipts or otherwise

1 substantiate the amounts expended to the Office of Legislative Operations in
2 the form and manner prescribed by the Director of Legislative Operations.

3 (3) Lodging. Each member shall receive either a lodging allowance or
4 reimbursement of actual lodging expenses. Each member shall inform the
5 Office of Legislative Operations of the member’s choice of a lodging
6 allowance or lodging expense reimbursement annually prior to the convening
7 of each regular and adjourned session, and the member’s choice shall remain in
8 effect through the remainder of that session unless the member notifies the
9 Office, in writing, that the member needs to change that choice due to a change
10 in circumstances or for another compelling reason.

11 (A) Lodging allowance. A member who elects to receive a lodging
12 allowance shall receive an amount equal to the daily amount for lodging
13 determined for Montpelier, Vermont, by the federal Office of Government-
14 wide Policy and published in the Federal Register for the year of the session
15 for each day the House in which the member serves shall sit.

16 (B) Lodging reimbursement. A member who elects to receive
17 reimbursement of expenses shall receive reimbursement equal to the actual
18 amounts expended by the member for lodging for each day that the House in
19 which the member serves shall sit, as well as lodging for the night preceding
20 the first legislative day of each week during the legislative session. The
21 amount of the daily reimbursement available pursuant to this subdivision shall

1 not exceed the daily amount for lodging determined for Montpelier, Vermont,
2 by the federal Office of Government-wide Policy and published in the Federal
3 Register for the year of the session. The member shall provide lodging
4 receipts or otherwise substantiate the amounts expended to the Office of
5 Legislative Operations in the form and manner prescribed by the Director of
6 Legislative Operations.

7 (4) Absences. If a member is absent for reasons other than sickness or
8 legislative business for one or more entire days while the house in which the
9 member sits is in session, the member shall notify the Office of Legislative
10 Operations of that absence, and ~~expenses received shall not include the amount~~
11 ~~that the legislator specifies was not incurred~~ the member shall not be
12 reimbursed for mileage, meals, or lodging expenses incurred during the period
13 of that absence.

14 (c) ~~For attending a meeting of the Joint Fiscal Committee when a member~~
15 ~~is not receiving compensation as a member of the General Assembly, a~~
16 ~~member of the Joint Fiscal Committee shall be entitled to the same per diem~~
17 ~~compensation and reimbursement for necessary expenses as provided members~~
18 ~~of the General Assembly for attendance at sessions of the General Assembly.~~

19 ~~[Repealed.]~~ Members-elect; stipend. Each member-elect of the General
20 Assembly who is not an incumbent shall receive a stipend in an amount equal
21 to one-fifth of the annually adjusted weekly compensation set forth in

1 subdivision (a)(1) of this section, rounded up to the nearest dollar, for each day
2 of attendance at an orientation program for new legislators organized by the
3 General Assembly and its staff.

4 (d) Death of a member. If a member of the General Assembly dies while
5 the General Assembly is in session, the estate of the deceased member shall be
6 entitled to receive compensation for the entire pay period in which the death
7 occurred.

8 * * * Legislative Leave from Employment * * *

9 Sec. 5. 21 V.S.A. § 496 is amended to read:

10 § 496. LEGISLATIVE LEAVE

11 (a) Any person who, in order to serve as a member of the General
12 Assembly, must leave a ~~full-time~~ position in the employ of any employer, shall
13 be entitled to a temporary or partial leave of absence for the purpose of
14 allowing such employee to perform any official duty in connection with ~~his or~~
15 ~~her~~ the person's elected office.

16 (b) An employee who intends to seek election to the General Assembly and
17 to invoke, if elected, ~~his or her~~ the right to a leave of absence pursuant to
18 subsection (a) of this section, shall notify ~~his or her~~ the employee's employer
19 of those intentions in writing within ~~10~~ 14 days after ~~filing the primary election~~
20 ~~nominating petition required by 17 V.S.A. § 2353 or of taking any other action~~
21 ~~required by 17 V.S.A. chapter 49, to place his or her name on a primary or~~

1 ~~general election ballot~~ being elected. An employee who fails to give notice to
2 ~~his or her~~ the employee's employer as required by this section shall be deemed
3 to have waived ~~his or her~~ the right to a leave of absence under subsection (a) of
4 this section.

5 * * *

6 * * * Legislative Service Working Group * * *

7 Sec. 6. LEGISLATIVE SERVICE WORKING GROUP

8 (a) Creation. There is created the Legislative Service Working Group to
9 consider issues related to serving as a member of the Vermont General
10 Assembly.

11 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
12 members:

13 (1) three current members of the House of Representatives, not all from
14 the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;
15 and

16 (2) three current members of the Senate, not all from the same political
17 party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

18 (c) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall consider and make
19 recommendations on issues involving legislative compensation and benefits,
20 staffing, administrative support, and the length of the legislative session,
21 including:

- 1 (1) the current compensation and benefits offered to members of the
2 General Assembly, including:
- 3 (A) whether current salaries and benefits, including those added or
4 increased by this act, are sufficient and, if not, how they should be increased;
- 5 (B) the impact of current salaries and benefits, including those added
6 or increased by this act, on recruiting and retaining members from diverse
7 backgrounds and life experiences;
- 8 (C) whether members should be offered additional benefits, including
9 reimbursement of child, dependent, and elder care expenses;
- 10 (D) whether members should have the option to receive a prorated
11 salary throughout the calendar year instead of receiving their full salary
12 amount during the months that the General Assembly is in session;
- 13 (E) whether supplemental compensation should be provided to
14 members who hold leadership positions in addition to the Speaker of the House
15 and Senate President Pro Tempore, including caucus leaders and committee
16 chairs; and
- 17 (F) how the salaries, benefits, and compensation structure in the
18 Vermont General Assembly compare to those of other state legislatures;
- 19 (2) whether changes to staffing are necessary, such as increasing the
20 number of legislative staff in existing staff offices, expanding the types of
21 legislative staff services available to members, adding caucus staff, and adding

1 personal staff or providing members with an allowance to hire their own
2 personal staff;

3 (3) how to increase the administrative support available to members to
4 increase their effectiveness and ability to respond efficiently to the needs of
5 their constituents; and

6 (4) whether changes should be made to the length or structure of the
7 legislative session.

8 (d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
9 technical, and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Operations, the
10 Office of Legislative Counsel, the Office of Human Resources, and the Joint
11 Fiscal Office.

12 (e) Report. On or before January 15, 2024, the Working Group shall report
13 its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for
14 legislative action, to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President Pro
15 Tempore, and the House Committee on Government Operations and Military
16 Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations. Drafts of the
17 Working Group’s report shall be confidential unless publicly released.

18 (f) Meetings.

19 (1) The Office of Legislative Operations shall call the first meeting of
20 the Working Group to occur on or before July 1, 2023.

1 (c) Secs. 1 (health benefits), 3(b)(3) (expenses for Speaker and President
2 Pro Tempore), and 4(b)–(d) (legislator expenses) shall take effect on January 1,
3 2024.

4 (d) Sec. 2 (legislator compensation for 2025–2026 Biennial Session) shall
5 take effect on July 1, 2024.

6 (e) The remaining sections shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

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15 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE