

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs to  
3 which was referred Senate Bill No. 30 entitled “An act relating to creating a  
4 Sister State Program” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that

6 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 2488 is added to read:

7 § 2488. VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM

8 (a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Sister State Program is created  
9 within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

10 (b) Oversight.

11 (1) A Vermont Sister State Committee composed of the following  
12 members shall oversee the Program:

13 (A) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or  
14 designee;

15 (B) the Chair of the Board of Directors of Vermont Humanities or  
16 designee;

17 (C) two members appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees  
18 with experience in international relations;

19 (D) two members appointed by the Speaker of the House with  
20 experience in international education and cultural exchange; and

1           (E) two members appointed by the Governor with experience in  
2 international arts, recreation, or governance.

3           (2) The members appointed pursuant to subdivision (1)(C)–(E) of this  
4 subsection shall serve for terms of five years or until the member’s earlier  
5 resignation or removal for cause by the Governor.

6           (3) If a member resigns or is removed, the appointing authority shall  
7 appoint a new member for the remainder of the member’s term.

8           (4) The members of the Committee shall select a chair by a majority  
9 vote.

10          (c) Administration. Subject to the approval of the Vermont Sister State  
11 Committee:

12           (1) the Agency may contract for administration of part or all of the  
13 Program with a nonprofit organization that has expertise in international  
14 affairs;

15           (2) the Agency, or its contracted administrator, shall create an  
16 application form and process for evaluating Sister State relationships; and

17           (3) the Agency may adopt rules and policies for the Program.

18          (d) Program requirements.

19           (1) The Vermont Sister State Committee may approve not more than  
20 five Sister State relationships at one time with countries or provinces in

1 varying regions of the world upon finding that a relationship meets the  
2 following goals:

3 (A) The relationship fosters understanding and collaboration between  
4 residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in Vermont  
5 and residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in the  
6 Sister State.

7 (B) The relationship creates opportunities for cultural exchanges and  
8 joint programs for educational, recreational, artistic, humanitarian, and  
9 economic purposes that benefit both Vermont and the Sister State.

10 (C) The relationship promotes peace, human rights, and  
11 environmental sustainability.

12 (D) The relationship involves a diverse range of individuals, sectors,  
13 organizations, and communities in Vermont and the Sister State.

14 (2) A Sister State agreement shall not initially exceed eight years and  
15 may be renewed for five-year increments upon approval of the Committee if it  
16 determines the relationship has met the goals of the Sister State Program.

17 (3) The Committee shall report to the relevant legislative committees  
18 and the Governor biannually on or before February 1 concerning the status of  
19 the Sister State Program, its programs, agreements, and progress meeting the  
20 Program goals.

1           (4) In the event of an emergency, such as a public health emergency;  
2           war or armed conflict; or serious human rights, environmental, or economic  
3           violations, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker may agree to  
4           immediately terminate a Sister State agreement or individual program.

5           Sec. 2. IMPLEMENTATION

6           The authorities authorized to make appointments to the Vermont Sister  
7           State Committee pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2488(b)(1)(C)–(E) shall appoint  
8           members to initial terms of three, four, and five years, respectively.

9           Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

10           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

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(Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR THE COMMITTEE