

Journal of the Senate

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Jeff Fuller of Waterbury Center.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 5.

Senate bill of the following title, appearing on the Calendar for notice and carrying an appropriation or requiring the expenditure of funds, under the rule was referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

An act relating to affordably meeting the mandated greenhouse gas reductions for the thermal sector through electrification, decarbonization, efficiency, and weatherization measures.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted on the Part of the Senate

J.R.S. 15.

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. 15. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 24, 2023, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

Bill Introduced

Senate bill of the following title was introduced, read the first time and referred:

S. 93.

By Senators Perchlik and Chittenden,

An act relating to the sales tax exemption for advanced wood boilers.

To the Committee on Finance.

Consideration Resumed; Appointment Confirmed

Consideration was resumed on the following Gubernatorial appointment,

Barrett, Jennifer L. of Newport - Superior Judge - September 23, 2022 to March 31, 2027.

Which was confirmed by the Senate on a roll call, Yeas 26, Nays 4.

Senator Ram Hinsdale having demanded the yeas and nays, they were taken and are as follows:

Roll Call

Those Senators who voted in the affirmative were: Baruth, Bray, Brock, Champion, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Gulick, Harrison, Hashim, Ingalls, Kitchel, Lyons, MacDonald, Mazza, Norris, Perchlik, Sears, Starr, Vyhovsky, Watson, Weeks, Westman, White, Williams.

Those Senators who voted in the negative were: Hardy, McCormack, Ram Hinsdale, Wrenner.

Proposal of Amendment; Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposals of Amendment**H. 145.**

House bill entitled:

An act relating to fiscal year 2023 budget adjustments.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending third reading of the bill, Senators Kitchel, Baruth, Lyons, Perchlik, Sears, Starr and Westman moved to amend the Senate proposal of amendment as follows:

First: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 1a to read as follows:

Sec. 1a. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.133 is amended to read:

Sec. B.133 Vermont state retirement system

Personal services	180,911
Operating expenses	1,399,555 <u>2,276,023</u>
Total	1,580,466 <u>2,456,934</u>
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	1,580,466 <u>2,456,934</u>
Total	1,580,466 <u>2,456,934</u>

Second: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 1b to read as follows:

Sec. 1b. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.134 is amended to read:

Sec. B.134 Municipal employees' retirement system

Personal services	198,399
Operating expenses	890,207 <u>1,221,607</u>
Total	1,088,606 <u>1,420,006</u>
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	1,088,606 <u>1,420,006</u>
Total	1,088,606 <u>1,420,006</u>

Third: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 39a to read as follows:

Sec. 39a. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.514.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.514.1 State teachers' retirement system administration

Personal services	236,503
Operating expenses	1,609,560 <u>2,538,377</u>
Total	1,846,063 <u>2,774,880</u>
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	1,846,063 <u>2,774,880</u>
Total	1,846,063 <u>2,774,880</u>

Fourth: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 106a to read as follows:

Sec. 106a. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. E.134.2 is amended to read:

Sec. E.134.2 3 V.S.A. § 524 is added to read:

§ 524. VERMONT PENSION INVESTMENT COMMISSION SPECIAL FUND

(a) Creation. There is hereby created the Vermont Pension Investment Commission Special Fund, administered by the Vermont Pension Investment Commission, for the purpose of receiving funds transferred to the Commission pursuant to subsection ~~523~~ 522(i) of this title. Monies in the Fund shall be used to pay expenses associated with carrying out the Commission's duties.

* * *

Fifth: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 106b to read as follows:

Sec. 106b. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. E.134.2 is amended to read:

Sec. E.134.3 VERMONT RETIREMENT SYSTEMS AND VERMONT PENSION INVESTMENT COMMISSION; SOURCE OF FUNDS

~~(a) The funds appropriated in Sec. B.134.1 of this act are costs to the State's pension funds and have been considered in each pension systems' actuarial valuations, but have not been included in the funds appropriated in Secs. B.133, B.134, and B.514.1 of this act.~~

(b)(a) The funds appropriated from the pension systems for administrative costs in Secs. B.133, B.134, and B.514.1 of this act are intended to provide spending authority needed to transfer cover the operating costs of the State's pensions systems, including transferring funds from the State's pension systems to the Treasurers Retirement Admin Costs fund (21520) and to the Vermont Pension Investment Commission Special Fund (21521) to cover the portion of the Treasurer's budget attributable to the State's pension systems and the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's budget.

(1) Of the \$2,456,934 appropriated in Section B.133 of this act, \$1,580,466 constitutes the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System operating budget, and \$876,468 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's budget attributable to Vermont State Employees' Retirement System.

(2) Of the 1,420,006 appropriated in Section B.134 of this act, \$1,088,606 constitutes the Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System operating budget, and \$331,400 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's budget attributable to Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System.

(3) Of the 2,774,880 appropriated in Section B.514.1 of this act, \$1,846,063 constitutes the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System operating budget, and \$928,817 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's budget attributable to Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System.

Sixth: By striking out Sec. 88, amending 33 V.S.A. § 3543, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 88 to read as follows:

Sec. 88. 33 V.S.A. § 3543 is amended to read:

§ 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

(a)(1) There is established a need-based student loan repayment assistance program for the purpose of providing student loan repayment assistance to any individual employed by a regulated, privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home.

(2) An eligible individual shall:

(A)(i) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or in a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year; or

(ii) if the individual is an employee of a Vermont Head Start program that operates fewer than 48 weeks per year, work a minimum of nine months of the year, inclusive of any employer-approved time off; or

(B) receive an annual salary of not more than ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$60,000.00 through the individual's work in regulated childcare; and

(C)(i) have earned an associate's, ~~or~~ bachelor's, or master's degree with a major or concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family services ~~within the preceding five years; or~~

(ii) have earned an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree that contributes to an Early Childhood Career Ladder Certificate Level IIIB or higher through Northern Lights at the Community College of Vermont.

(3) To participate in the program set forth in this section, an eligible individual shall submit to the Department for Children and Families documentation expressing the individual's intent to work in a regulated, privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home for at least the 12 months following the annual loan repayment award notification. A participant may receive up to \$4,000.00 annually in student loan repayment assistance, which shall be distributed by the Department in four allotments. The Department shall distribute at least one-quarter of the individual's total annual benefit after the individual has completed three months of employment in accordance with the program. The remainder of an individual's total annual benefit shall be distributed by the Department every three months after the initial payment.

Seventh: By inserting a new section to be Sec. 88a to read as follows:

Sec. 88a. RETROACTIVE STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

(a) In recognition that many long-serving child care providers had student loan debt that is now retired, the Department for Children and Families shall provide to an eligible applicant a one-time retroactive payment of up to \$4,000.00. An eligible applicant shall:

(1) have not previously received student loan repayment assistance pursuant to 33 V.S.A. section 3543;

(2) have met all eligibility requirements listed in 33 V.S.A. section 3543 within the 12 months preceding the date of application; and

(3) not currently have any student loan debt.

Which was agreed to.

Thereupon, pending the question, Shall the bill be read third time?, Senators Vyhovsky and Wrenner moved to further amend the Senate proposal of amendment in Sec. 45, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100, in subdivision (a)(33), by striking out subdivision (B) in its entirety and inserting a new subdivision (B) in lieu thereof to read as follows:

(B) \$7,500,000 to the Department for Children and Families to extend the General Assistance Temporary Housing program from March 15, 2023 to July 1, 2023 for all other households that are otherwise eligible for General Assistance housing pursuant to section 2652.3 of the Department's General Assistance rule (CVR 13-170-260) for temporary housing independent of maximum nights received or weather forecasts or conditions.

Which was disagreed to.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Message from the House No. 22

A message was received from the House of Representatives by Ms. Alona Tate, its Second Assistant Clerk, as follows:

Mr. President:

I am directed to inform the Senate that:

The House has passed a House bill of the following title:

H. 190. An act relating to removing the residency requirement from Vermont's patient choice at end of life laws.

In the passage of which the concurrence of the Senate is requested.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until one o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, February 22, 2023.