

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE

OF THE

STATE OF VERMONT

BIENNIAL SESSION, 2025

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January 8, 2025 through May 13, 2025

**(For Appendices A & B, and General Index,
see Volume 2)**



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BetsyAnn Wrask, Clerk of the House and Theresa Utton-Jerman, House Journal Clerk

Journal of the House

of the

STATE OF VERMONT
BIENNIAL SESSION, 2025

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution and Laws of the State of Vermont, the members-elect of the House of Representatives convened in the State House in Montpelier on the first Wednesday after the first Monday, being the eighth day of January, two thousand and twenty-five.

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Honorable Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State, called the House to order for the seventy-eighth biennial session.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Elissa Johnk, First Congregational Church UCC, Burlington.

Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from Rep.-elect Brown of Castleton

December 13, 2024

“Dear Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask, Clerk of the House of Representatives:

This letter is to give notice of my intention to resign from my position as Representative-elect for Rutland 3-Castleton. I wish not to take my oath on January 8, 2025.

It is with a heavy heart that I must inform you of my decision to step away from my recently elected position, representing the residents of Castleton and all Vermonters in the House.

My wife has been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and this family medical crisis has necessitated the need for me to dedicate my time to helping her and my children and family as we meet the challenges ahead.

I ask for your support of my decision.

It is my most fervent hope that a suitable replacement will be named to move forward in my place. Someone with a history and love for Castleton, Vermont and Vermonters.

With Sincerity and Thanks,
Former Rep-elect Chris Brown”

Message from the Governor

“January 8, 2025

BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the House
115 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-2301

Dear BetsyAnn:

I have the honor to inform you that I have appointed Zachary J. Harvey of Castleton, Vermont to serve in the General Assembly representing House District Rutland-3.

Sincerely,
/s/Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/te

cc: Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State”

ROLL CALL

Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas called the roll for the seventy-eighth biennial session:

Addison-1	Robin P. Scheu of Middlebury Amy D. Sheldon of Middlebury
Addison-2	Peter C. Conlon of Cornwall
Addison-3	Matthew J. Birong, Jr. of Vergennes Robert “Rob” North of Ferrisburgh
Addison-4	Mari K. Cordes of Bristol Herb Olson of Starksboro
Addison-5	Jubilee McGill of Bridport
Addison-Rutland	James “Jim” Casey of Hubbardton
Bennington-1	Jonathan Cooper of Pownal

Bennington-2	Timothy R. Corcoran, II of Bennington William “Will” Greer of Bennington
Bennington-3	David K. Durfee of Shaftsbury
Bennington-4	Robert Hunter of Manchester Kathleen C. James of Manchester
Bennington-5	Mary A. Morrissey of Bennington Michael Nigro of Bennington
Bennington-Rutland	Sandra “Sandy” Pinsonault of Dorset
Caledonia-1	Debra Lynn Powers of Waterford
Caledonia-2	Michael Southworth of Walden
Caledonia-3	Martha A. “Marty” Feltus of Lyndon Beth M. Quimby of Lyndon
Caledonia-Essex	R. Scott Campbell of St. Johnsbury Deborah Cordz Dolgin of St. Johnsbury
Caledonia-Washington	Gregory “Greg” Burt of Cabot
Chittenden-1	Jana Brown of Richmond
Chittenden-2	Angela Arsenault of Williston Erin Brady of Williston
Chittenden-3	Edye Graning of Jericho Trevor J. Squirrell of Underhill
Chittenden-4	Phil Pouech of Hinesburg
Chittenden-5	Chea Waters Evans of Charlotte
Chittenden-6	Kate Lalley of Shelburne
Chittenden-7	Shawn Sweeney of Shelburne
Chittenden-8	Bridget Marie Burkhardt of South Burlington
Chittenden-9	Emilie Krasnow of South Burlington
Chittenden-10	Kate Nugent of South Burlington
Chittenden-11	Brian Minier of South Burlington
Chittenden-12	Martin J. LaLonde of South Burlington
Chittenden-13	Tiffany “Tiff” Bluemle of Burlington Bram Kleppner of Burlington

Chittenden-14	Barbara Rachelson of Burlington Mary-Katherine Stone of Burlington
Chittenden-15	Brian J. Cina of Burlington Troy Headrick of Burlington
Chittenden-16	Jill L. Krowinski of Burlington Kate Logan of Burlington
Chittenden-17	Abbey Duke of Burlington
Chittenden-18	Robert J. Hooper of Burlington Carol Ode of Burlington
Chittenden-19	Sarah C. "Sarita" Austin of Colchester Wendy Critchlow of Colchester
Chittenden-20	Doug Bishop of Colchester Gayle Pezzo of Colchester
Chittenden-21	Daisy Berbeco of Winooski Chloe Tomlinson of Winooski
Chittenden-22	Karen N. Dolan of Essex Junction Lori Houghton of Essex Junction
Chittenden-23	Leonora Dodge of Essex Golrang "Rey" Garofano of Essex
Chittenden-24	Alyssa Black of Essex
Chittenden-25	Brenda Steady of Milton
Chittenden-Franklin	Anthony "Tony" Micklus of Milton Christopher Taylor of Milton
Essex-Caledonia	John Kascenska of Burke
Essex-Orleans	Larry Labor of Morgan
Franklin-1	Ashley R. Bartley of Fairfax Carolyn Whitney Branagan of Georgia
Franklin-2	Eileen G. "Lynn" Dickinson of St. Albans Town
Franklin-3	Joseph "Joe" Luneau of St. Albans City
Franklin-4	Thomas Oliver, Jr. of Sheldon Matthew E. "Matt" Walker of Swanton
Franklin-5	Lisa A. Hango of Berkshire Wayne A. Laroche of Franklin

Franklin-6	James A.R. Gregoire of Fairfield
Franklin-7	Allen “Penny” Demar of Enosburgh
Franklin-8	Casey J. Toof of St. Albans Town
Grand Isle-Chittenden	Leland J. Morgan of Milton Michael R. Morgan of Milton
Lamoille-1	Jed Lipsky of Stowe
Lamoille-2	Richard J. Bailey of Hyde Park Daniel A. Noyes of Wolcott
Lamoille-3	Lucy Boyden of Cambridge
Lamoille-Washington	Saudia LaMont of Morristown David W. Yacovone of Morristown
Orange-1	Michael Tagliavia of Corinth
Orange-2	Monique Priestley of Bradford
Orange-3	Joshua Dobrovich of Williamstown
Orange-Caledonia	Joseph Parsons of Newbury
Orange-Washington- Addison	Philip “Jay” Hooper of Randolph Lawrence “Larry” Satcowitz of Randolph
Orleans-1	Richard M. Nelson of Derby
Orleans-2	Woodman H. “Woody” Page of Newport City
Orleans-3	Kenneth “Ken” Wells of Brownington
Orleans-4	Leanne Harple of Glover
Orleans-Lamoille	Mark A. Higley of Lowell Michael J. Marcotte of Coventry
Rutland-1	Patricia A. McCoy of Poultney
Rutland-2	David “Dave” Bosch of Clarendon Thomas B. Burditt of West Rutland
Rutland-3	Zachary J. Harvey of Castleton
Rutland-4	Christopher Howland of Rutland Town
Rutland-5	Eric Maguire of Rutland City
Rutland-6	Mary E. Howard of Rutland City
Rutland-7	Chris Keyser of Rutland City

Rutland-8	Alicia Malay of Pittsford
Rutland-9	Todd Nielsen of Brandon
Rutland-10	William P. “Bill” Canfield of Fair Haven
Rutland-11	James “Jim” Harrison of Chittenden
Rutland-Bennington	Christopher A. “Chris” Pritchard of Pawlet
Rutland-Windsor	Kevin C. Winter of Ludlow
Washington-1	Anne B. Donahue of Northfield Kenneth W. Goslant of Northfield
Washington-2	Dara Torre of Moretown Candice White of Waitsfield
Washington-3	Michael Boutin of Barre City Edward “Teddy” Waszazak of Barre City
Washington-4	Conor Casey of Montpelier Kate McCann of Montpelier
Washington-5	Ela Chapin of East Montpelier
Washington-6	Marc B. Mihaly of Calais
Washington-Chittenden	Thomas S. “Tom” Stevens of Waterbury Theresa A. Wood of Waterbury
Washington-Orange	Gina M. Galfetti of Barre Town Francis M. “Topper” McFaun of Barre Town
Windham-1	Zon Eastes of Guilford
Windham-2	Laura H. Sibilia of Dover
Windham-3	Michelle Bos-Lun of Westminster Leslie Goldman of Rockingham
Windham-4	Michael “Mike” Mrowicki of Putney
Windham-5	Emily J. Long of Newfane
Windham-6	Emily Carris-Duncan of Whitingham
Windham-7	Emilie K. Kornheiser of Brattleboro
Windham-8	Mollie Sullivan Burke of Brattleboro
Windham-9	Ian Goodnow of Brattleboro

Windham-Windsor-Bennington	Christopher Morrow of Weston
Windsor-1	John L. Bartholomew of Hartland Elizabeth L.C. Burrows of West Windsor
Windsor-2	Voranus Lothrop "VL" Coffin, IV of Cavendish
Windsor-3	Alice M. Emmons of Springfield Kristi C. Morris of Springfield
Windsor-4	Heather Surprenant of Barnard
Windsor-5	Charles A. "Charlie" Kimbell of Woodstock
Windsor-6	Kevin B. "Coach" Christie of Hartford Esme Cole of Hartford
Windsor-Addison	Kirk White of Bethel
Windsor-Orange-1	John K. O'Brien of Tunbridge
Windsor-Orange-2	Rebecca Holcombe of Norwich James W. "Jim" Masland of Thetford
Windsor-Windham	Thomas F. Charlton of Chester

Absentee

The following named member-elect was not present for roll call:

Rep. Kevin B. "Coach" Christie - Windsor-6

Quorum Present

Thereupon, the Secretary of State declared that a quorum of the members-elect was present.

Member Present

Rep. Kevin B. "Coach" Christie of Hartford later was present.

Election of Speaker

The Secretary of State directed the House to the election of a Speaker for the two years next ensuing.

Rep. Wood of Waterbury presented the name of **Rep. Jill L. Krowinski** of Burlington.

Thereupon, **Rep. Krowinski of Burlington's** nomination for Speaker was seconded by **Rep. Burditt of West Rutland**.

Rep. Burrows of West Windsor presented the name of **Rep. Laura H. Sibilia of Dover**.

Thereupon, **Rep. Sibilia of Dover's** nomination for Speaker was seconded by **Rep. Higley of Lowell** and **Rep. Headrick of Burlington**.

There being no further nominations, the Secretary declared the nominations closed.

Tellers Appointed

The Secretary of State appointed the following tellers to count the ballots:

Rep. Emmons of Springfield, Lead Teller
Rep. Cina of Burlington
Rep. Hango of Berkshire
Rep. Nigro of Bennington
Rep. Quimby of Lyndon
Rep. Taylor of Milton
Rep. Torre of Moretown

The ballots having been taken and counted by the tellers, it appeared that **Rep. Krowinski of Burlington** had 111 votes and **Rep. Sibilia of Dover** had 35 votes.

Thereupon, the Secretary declared that

Jill L. Krowinski

the Representative from the City of Burlington, having a majority of votes cast, was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives for the two years next ensuing.

The Secretary of State designated:

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction
Rep. McCoy of Poultney
Rep. Logan of Burlington
Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock
Rep. Marcotte of Coventry
Rep. Scheu of Middlebury

as a committee to wait upon the Speaker-elect to inform her of her election and conduct her to the rostrum to receive the oath of office.

Oath Administered to Speaker-Elect

The Speaker-elect was conducted to the rostrum, the oath of office was administered by the Secretary of State, and thereupon, the Speaker was conducted to the Chair and assumed her duties.

Message from the Senate No. 1

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

A quorum of the Senate has assembled and organized by the election of

JOHN H. BLOOMER, Jr.

of the Town of Wallingford, Secretary, who in turn has appointed

MELISSA ROSE GRADEL

of the City of Montpelier, Assistant Secretary, and by the election of

PHILIP E. BARUTH

of the City of Burlington, Chittenden-Central District, President *pro tempore*.

Message from the Senate No. 2

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolutions of the following titles:

J.R.S. 1. Joint resolution relating to joint rules.

J.R.S. 2. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the report of the committee appointed to canvass votes for state officers.

J.R.S. 3. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the inaugural message of the Governor.

J.R.S. 4. Joint resolution relating to Town Meeting adjournment.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Message from the Senate No. 3

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has appointed as members of the Joint Canvassing committee on the part of the Senate to canvass votes for state officers:

Addison District	Senator Hardy
Bennington District	Senator Plunkett
Caledonia District	Senator Beck
Chittenden-Central District	Senator Gulick
Chittenden-North District	Senator Mattos
Chittenden-Southeast District	Senator Ram Hinsdale
Essex District	Senator Ingalls
Franklin District	Senator Norris
Grand Isle District	Senator Brennan
Lamoille District	Senator Westman
Orange District	Senator Hart
Orleans District	Senator Douglass
Rutland District	Senator Williams
Washington District	Senator Watson
Windham District	Senator Harrison
Windsor District	Senator Major

The President has designated Senator Hardy as Chair on the part of the Senate.

Election of Clerk

The Speaker directed the House to the election of a Clerk for the two years next ensuing.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presented the name of BetsyAnn Wrask of Barre Town.

Ms. Wrask's nomination for Clerk of the House was seconded by **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**.

There being no further nominations, the Speaker then directed that the vote be taken *viva voce*.

The vote having been taken, the Speaker declared that

BetsyAnn Wrask

of Barre Town was elected Clerk of the House of Representatives for the two years next ensuing.

The Speaker designated:

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction

Rep. Surprenant of Barnard

Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town

Rep. Headrick of Burlington

as a committee to wait upon the Clerk-elect, inform her of her election, and conduct her to the bar of the House to receive the oath of office.

Oath Administered to Clerk-Elect

The Clerk-elect was conducted to the bar of the House, the oath of office was administered by the Speaker of the House, and thereupon, the Clerk entered upon the discharge of her duties.

Oath Administered to Members-Elect

Thereupon, the Representatives-elect each took and subscribed the oath, administered by the Clerk, as required by the Constitution and laws of the State.

Communication from Clerk

The Speaker placed before the House a communication from the Clerk as follows:

“January 8, 2025

Honorable Speaker Krowinski

Speaker of the House

Madam Speaker:

I have the honor of informing you and the members of the House that I have appointed Nigel Hicks-Tibbles of Northfield as First Assistant Clerk, Courtney Reckord of Williamstown as Second Assistant Clerk, Theresa Utton-Jerman of Barre Town as Journal Clerk, Christine Ditmeyer of Plainfield as Clerk Associate (on leave of absence), and Jeannie Lowell of Montpelier as Interim Clerk Associate.

Sincerely,

BetsyAnn Wrask

Clerk of the House”

Oath Administered to Assistant Clerks

The Clerk then administered the oath of office to Nigel Hicks-Tibbles of Northfield, the First Assistant Clerk, and Courtney Reckord of Williamstown, the Second Assistant Clerk

Thereupon, the assistant clerks entered upon the discharge of their duties.

House Resolutions Adopted**H.R. 1**

By Representatives Houghton of Essex Junction, McCoy of Poultney, and Logan of Burlington

House resolution, entitled

House resolution relating to House Rules

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the House rules in effect at the end of the 2023–2024 session be the rules of this biennial session until others are adopted.

Was read and adopted.

H.R. 2

By Representatives Houghton of Essex Junction, McCoy of Poultney, and Logan of Burlington

House resolution, entitled

House resolution relating to the organization of the House and informing the Senate thereof

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the Clerk of the House inform the Senate that the House has organized and is ready to proceed on its part with the business of the session.

Was read and adopted.

H.R. 3

By Representatives Houghton of Essex Junction, McCoy of Poultney, and Logan of Burlington

House resolution, entitled

House resolution relating to the organization of the House and informing the Governor thereof

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That His Excellency, the Governor, be informed by Committee that the House has completed its organization and is ready to receive any communication from him.

Was read and adopted.

Committee Appointed

Pursuant to the provisions of H.R. 3, the Speaker appointed the following as members of the Committee to inform the Governor of the organization of the House:

Rep. Corcoran of Bennington

Rep. Stone of Burlington

Rep. Kascenska of Burke

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town

Rep. Cina of Burlington

Rep. Lipsky of Stowe

Joint Resolutions Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 1**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 1. Joint resolution relating to joint rules.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the joint rules of the Senate and the House as adopted in 2023 be adopted as the joint rules of this biennial session until others are adopted.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

J.R.S. 2

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 2. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the report of the committee appointed to canvass votes for state officers.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon to receive the report of the Joint Canvassing Committee appointed to canvass votes for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts and Attorney General, and if it shall be declared by said Committee that there had been no election by

the voters of any of said state officers, then to proceed forthwith to elect such officers as have not been elected by the voters.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

J.R.S. 3

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 3. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the inaugural message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at two o'clock in the afternoon to receive the inaugural message of the Governor.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

J.R.S. 4

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 4. Joint resolution relating to Town Meeting adjournment.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 28, 2025, or Saturday, March 1, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Rules Committee Announced

Pursuant to the provisions of House Rule 25, the Speaker is Chair *ex officio*, and the following members elected by caucus are members of the Committee on Rules:

Democrats:

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction, *ex officio* (Majority Leader)

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction, *ex officio* (Assistant Majority Leader)

Rep. Bartholomew of Hartland

Republicans:

Rep. McCoy of Poultney, *ex officio* (Minority Leader)

Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town, *ex officio* (Assistant Minority Leader)

Rep. Feltus of Lyndon

Recess

At twelve o'clock and twenty-one minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

Called to Order

At one o'clock and thirty-five minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Seating of Members

Pursuant to the provisions of House Rule 5, the members were seated.

Canvassing Committee Elected

The Speaker nominated as the Committee on the part of the House to canvass votes for State officers the following named members:

Addison District	Birong of Vergennes Cordes of Bristol North of Ferrisburgh
Bennington District	Durfee of Shaftsbury Pinsonault of Dorset Hunter of Manchester
Caledonia District	Parsons of Newbury Campbell of St. Johnsbury Southworth of Walden
Chittenden-Central District	Rachelson of Burlington Tomlinson of Winooski Garofano of Essex
Chittenden-North District	Black of Essex Bartley of Fairfax Steady of Milton
Chittenden-Southeast District	Kleppner of Burlington Brown of Richmond Waters Evans of Charlotte
Essex District	Feltus of Lyndon Labor of Morgan Page of Newport City
Franklin District	Hango of Berkshire Dickinson of St. Albans Town Oliver of Sheldon

Grand Isle District	Critchlow of Colchester Austin of Colchester Bishop of Colchester
Lamoille District	LaMont of Morristown Boyden of Cambridge Bailey of Hyde Park
Orange District	Dobrovich of Williamstown Tagliavia of Corinth Satcowitz of Randolph
Orleans District	Kascenska of Burke Marcotte of Coventry Harple of Glover
Rutland District	Malay of Pittsford Maguire of Rutland City Howard of Rutland City
Washington District	Chapin of East Montpelier Lipsky of Stowe Galfetti of Barre Town
Windham District	Bos-Lun of Westminster Carris-Duncan of Whitingham Goodnow of Brattleboro
Windsor District	Bartholomew of Hartland Morris of Springfield Winter of Ludlow

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction moved the election of the candidates, as nominated by the Speaker, which was agreed to.

Thereupon, the Speaker appointed **Rep. Birong of Vergennes** as Chair on the part of the House.

Oath Administered to Canvassing Committee

The Clerk administered the oath to the above-named Canvassing Committee as required by the rules of the House.

House Resolution Adopted**H.R. 4**

By Representatives Houghton of Essex Junction, McCoy of Poultney, and Logan of Burlington

House resolution, entitled

House resolution relating to standing committees

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body amends Rule 25 of the Rules and Orders of the House of Representatives as follows:

25. At the beginning of each regular session, standing committees shall be appointed having the following names, number of members, and duties:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>To Consider Matters Relating to</u>
Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry	~~11~~ <u>8</u>	Agriculture, food resiliency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, forestry and forest products, State parks and lands, and other similar policies.
Appropriations	~~12~~ <u>11</u>	Appropriating money from the State Treasury.
Commerce and Economic Development	11	Workforce development and training programs, business development and formations, financial institutions, property and casualty, life, and captive insurance, securities, unemployment and workers' compensation insurance, consumer protection, and other similar policies.
Corrections and Institutions	11	Vermont's State bonding as it relates to the financing of State-owned properties, State preservation initiatives, climate change mitigation, and water quality; and the Department of Corrections' role in the criminal justice system; and other similar policies.
Education	~~12~~ <u>11</u>	Education, libraries, literary and scientific subjects, and other similar policies.
<u>Environment and Energy and Digital Infrastructure</u>	~~11~~ <u>9</u>	~~Conservation and development, climate change mitigation, land resources, air, water, and wildlife, and solid waste management; energy~~ <u>Energy, utilities, telecommunications, and broadband; information technology, cybersecurity,</u> and other similar policies.

<u>Environment</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>Conservation and development; climate change mitigation; land resources, air, water, fish, and wildlife; solid waste management; and other similar policies.</u>
General and Housing	~~42~~ <u>11</u>	Housing, labor, equity and inclusion, and all matters relating to subjects for which there is no other appropriate committee.
Government Operations and Military Affairs	~~42~~ <u>11</u>	The structure, organization, and oversight of State, local, county, and regional government, and municipal corporations; the administration of public safety; compensation and retirement benefits for public officials and employees; elections and reapportionment; liquor and lottery; military affairs; public records and open meetings; ~~information technology and cybersecurity~~ ; and other similar policies.
Health Care	11	Health care, defined as an integrated, holistic system of care that includes policy development with and oversight of the Vermont Departments of Health Access, of Mental Health, and of Health, and health equity, health insurance, health care delivery improvement, and other similar policies.
Human Services	11	Improving the well-being of individuals and families, including children, individuals with disabilities, and older Vermonters; <u>oversight of programs and services provided by the Vermont Departments for Children and Families, of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, and of Health</u> ; and other similar policies.
Judiciary	11	Civil rights and civil liberties, the criminal and civil justice systems, violence prevention and public safety, and other similar policies.

Rules (Consisting of the Speaker, who shall be chair ex officio; three members of the majority party, the leader, the assistant leader, and one member at large elected by the majority party; and three members from the minority party, the leader, assistant leader, and one member at large elected by the minority party. The Speaker shall designate a Vice Chair, who shall be ranking member.)	7	The rules of the House and to expediting the business of the House, including the final adjournment thereof.
Transportation	11	All air and surface transportation, the registration, regulation, and licensing of transportation operations and users, the construction and maintenance of thoroughfares, the impact of the transportation sector on air pollution and climate change, and other similar policies.

Ways and ~~12~~ 11 Means The revenue of the State, and which shall report the amount of taxes necessary to be raised for the support of the government and inquire what measures, if any, ought to be adopted, the better to equalize the public burdens, and otherwise improve the financial concerns of the State, including all matters relating to taxation, local or otherwise, and all matters relating to the grand list, and other similar policies.

Was read and adopted.

Joint Rules Committee Appointments

Pursuant to Joint Rule 5, the Speaker is *ex officio*, and appointed the following members to the Committee on Joint Rules:

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction

Rep. McCoy of Poultney

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction

STANDING COMMITTEES ANNOUNCED

The Speaker announced the 2025-2026 House Standing Committees as follows:

Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

Durfee, Chair	of Shaftsbury
Surprenant, Vice Chair	of Barnard
Morgan, L., Ranking Member	of Milton
Bos-Lun	of Westminster
Burt	of Cabot
Lipsky	of Stowe
Nelson	of Derby
O'Brien	of Tunbridge

Appropriations

Scheu, Chair	of Middlebury
Harrison, Vice Chair	of Chittenden
Bluemle, Ranking Member	of Burlington
Dickinson	of St. Albans Town
Kascenska	of Burke
Laroche	of Franklin
Mrowicki	of Putney
Nigro	of Bennington
Squirrell	of Underhill

Stevens	of Waterbury
Yacovone	of Morristown

Commerce and Economic Development

Marcotte, Chair	of Coventry
Graning, Vice Chair	of Jericho
White, Ranking Member	of Bethel
Bosch	of Clarendon
Boutin	of Barre City
Carris-Duncan	of Whitingham
Cooper	of Pownal
Duke	of Burlington
Micklus	of Milton
Olson	of Starksboro
Priestley	of Bradford

Corrections and Institutions

Emmons, Chair	of Springfield
Gregoire, Vice Chair	of Fairfield
Headrick, Ranking Member	of Burlington
Casey	of Montpelier
Galfetti	of Barre Town
Greer	of Bennington
Luneau	of St. Albans City
Minier	of South Burlington
Morrissey	of Bennington
Sweeney	of Shelburne
Winter	of Ludlow

Education

Conlon, Chair	of Cornwall
Taylor, Vice Chair	of Milton
Brady, Ranking Member	of Williston
Brown	of Richmond
Dobrovich	of Williamstown
Harple	of Glover
Hunter	of Manchester
Long	of Newfane
McCann	of Montpelier
Quimby	of Lyndon
Toof	of St. Albans Town

Energy and Digital Infrastructure

James, Chair	of Manchester
Campbell, Vice Chair	of St. Johnsbury
Sibilia, Ranking Member	of Dover
Bailey	of Hyde Park
Howland	of Rutland Town
Kleppner	of Burlington
Morrow	of Weston
Southworth	of Walden
Torre	of Moretown

Environment

Sheldon, Chair	of Middlebury
Labor, Vice Chair	of Morgan
Satcowitz, Ranking Member	of Randolph
Austin	of Colchester
Bartholomew	of Hartland
Chapin	of East Montpelier
Logan	of Burlington
Morris	of Springfield
North	of Ferrisburgh
Pritchard	of Pawlet
Tagliavia	of Corinth

General and Housing

Mihaly, Chair	of Calais
Bartley, Vice Chair	of Fairfax
Krasnow, Ranking Member	of South Burlington
Burrows	of West Windsor
Charlton	of Chester
Dodge	of Essex
Dolgin	of St. Johnsbury
Howard	of Rutland City
LaMont	of Morristown
Parsons	of Newbury
Pezzo	of Colchester

Government Operations and Military Affairs

Birong, Chair	of Vergennes
Hango, Vice Chair	of Berkshire
Waters Evans, Ranking Member	of Charlotte
Boyden	of Cambridge
Coffin	of Cavendish
Hooper	of Randolph

Hooper	of Burlington
Morgan, M.	of Milton
Nugent	of South Burlington
Pinsonault	of Dorset
Stone	of Burlington

Health Care

Black, Chair	of Essex
McFaun, Vice Chair	of Barre Town
Berbeco, Ranking Member	of Winooski
Cina	of Burlington
Cordes	of Bristol
Critchlow	of Colchester
Demar	of Enosburgh
Goldman	of Rockingham
Houghton	of Essex Junction
Page	of Newport City
Powers	of Waterford

Human Services

Wood, Chair	of Waterbury
Garofano, Vice Chair	of Essex
Donahue, Ranking Member	of Northfield
Bishop	of Colchester
Cole	of Hartford
Eastes	of Guilford
Maguire	of Rutland City
McGill	or Bridport
Nielsen	of Brandon
Noyes	of Wolcott
Steady	of Milton

Judiciary

LaLonde, Chair	of South Burlington
Burditt, Vice Chair	of West Rutland
Christie, Ranking Member	of Hartford
Arsenault	of Williston
Dolan	of Essex Junction
Goodnow	of Brattleboro
Goslant	of Northfield
Harvey	of Castleton
Malay	of Pittsford
Oliver	of Sheldon
Rachelson	of Burlington

Transportation

Walker, Chair	of Swanton
Corcoran, Vice Chair	of Bennington
Pouech, Ranking Member	of Hinesburg
Burke	of Brattleboro
Casey	of Hubbardton
Keyser	of Rutland City
Lalley	of Shelburne
McCoy	of Poultney
Tomlinson	of Winooski
Wells	of Brownington
White	of Waitsfield

Ways and Means

Kornheiser, Chair	of Brattleboro
Canfield, Vice Chair	of Fair Haven
Kimbell, Ranking Member	of Woodstock
Branagan	of Georgia
Burkhardt	of South Burlington
Feltus	of Lyndon
Higley	of Lowell
Holcombe	of Norwich
Masland	of Thetford
Ode	of Burlington
Waszazak	of Barre City

Adjournment

At two o'clock and forty-one minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Thursday, January 9, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone of Burlington.

Report from the Attorney General; Referral to Committee

December 24, 2024

Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: Requests to Judge Bennington-1 House District Election Filed by Bruce Busa, Select Residents to the Town of Pownal, the Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Stamford, and the Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Readsboro

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2605, this letter provides an opinion on the law and facts regarding four requests related to the election of a member of the Vermont House of Representatives. On November 23, 2024, the Secretary of State provided the Attorney General's Office with notice of a written request filed by candidate Bruce Busa seeking to invoke the constitutional authority

¹ Chapter II, § 14 of the Vermont Constitution reads in part that "[t]he Representatives so chosen... shall have power to... judge of the elections and qualifications of their own members...."

² The request includes 29 signatures next to 29 of the 57 names listed as the people who live on the south side of Barber Pond Road, South Stream Road, and some residents of Moonrise Drive in Pownal. One of the 57 names is of an individual who has moved out of Pownal and the Bennington-1 House District.

of the House of Representatives to judge the elections and qualifications of its own members. *Vt. Const. ch. II, §14;*¹ *see also* 17 V.S.A. § 2605(a). Mr. Busa's request is included as Attachment A. The Secretary of State also

provided this Office with three subsequent written requests filed pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2605(a). First is a written request in the form of a petition by Pownal residents self-identified as the “Pownal 45” that was submitted to the Secretary of State by Mr. Busa on November 28, 2024 (the “Pownal 45”), included as Attachment C.² The Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Stamford also submitted a written request to the Secretary of State, dated November 21, 2024, and included as Attachment B. And the Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Readsboro submitted a written request to the Secretary of State on December 5, 2023, included as Attachment D.³

All four requests were properly filed in compliance with the three requirements in 17 V.S.A. § 2605. First, the requesters all qualify to file such a request. Section 2605 provides that “[a] candidate for the office of Representative to the General Assembly in the general election, or any elected town officer in the representative district, or any 25 voters in the representative district may request the House of Representatives to exercise its constitutional authority to judge the elections and qualifications of its own members....” Mr. Busa is a candidate for the Bennington-1 House District seat. The boards of civil authority are comprised of select board members, justices of the peace, and the town clerks in towns wholly within the representative district (i.e., the Bennington-1 House District). And the Pownal 45 request includes a petition by more than 25 voters in the representative district.

Second, they all filed requests within the statutory deadline. Section 2605 provides that the request be filed “not later than the latest of the following: (1) 20 days after the date of the election; or (2) 10 days after a final court judgment, if there is a recount under section 2602 of this title.” 17 V.S.A. § 2605(a). As will be discussed more below, the Bennington County Superior Court ordered a recount and entered final court judgment on November 26, 2024. Mr. Busa and the Stamford Board of Civil Authority filed requests within 20 days of the date of the election.

³ Although Mr. Busa is a member of the Readsboro Board of Civil Authority, the minutes from the December 2, 2024 meeting approving the submission of the request reflect that he recused himself after giving an update on his election contest. Minutes of the Readsboro Bd. of Civil Auth. (Dec. 2, 2024), available at https://towncloud.io/go/readsboro-vt/agendas/738/minutes/get_agenda_document_link.

The Pownal 45 and the Readsboro Board of Civil Authority filed requests within ten days after the Court entered final judgment. Therefore, all requests were filed within the statutory deadline.

Finally, they all filed their requests in the proper manner. Section 2605 provides that the manner of the request be submitted “by filing a written request with the Secretary of State specifying the candidate or candidates whose election is being challenged.” 17 V.S.A. § 2605(a). All requests were filed in writing with the Secretary of State. Mr. Busa and both boards of civil authority specify both the election being challenged and one of the candidates for that election (i.e., Mr. Busa). Although the Pownal 45 request does not specify a candidate or candidates, it does specify the house district and requests the ability to vote in that district. Given that the other requests provide the specific names of the candidates and context for the residents’ request, we recommend construing the Pownal 45 request liberally and accepting it as properly filed.

Pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2605(b)(1), after being notified by the Secretary of State of a request, it is the responsibility of the Attorney General to investigate the facts and deliver a report on the law and facts to the Clerk of the House at least ten days before the General Assembly convenes. Under the Vermont Constitution, the House is the final arbiter of the election and qualifications of its own members. Vt. Const. ch. II, §14. Reviewing the available facts, 56 voters received ballots for the incorrect house district in a race in which the successful candidate won by 23 votes.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In 2022, the General Assembly divided the Town of Pownal into two House of Representatives districts through reapportionment. One portion of Pownal is part of the Bennington-1 House District and another is part of the Bennington-5 House District. *See* 17 V.S.A. § 1893b. The voter checklists were updated in 2022 in an attempt to match the reapportionment that placed Pownal in two House districts.

The 2024 general election was held on November 5, 2024. Two candidates ran for the single seat for the Bennington-1 House District: Bruce Busa of Readsboro and Jonathan Cooper of Pownal. On the night of the election, Jonathan Cooper received the highest vote total with 1,265 votes. Bruce Busa received the second highest total with 1,240 votes.

⁴ Neither the Pownal Town Clerk nor the Bennington-1 House District Clerk are aware of voters notifying either office or election workers of the error on or prior to Election Day.

The vote total in the Town of Pownal for the Bennington-1 House District race was: Jonathan Cooper, 745 and Bruce Busa, 525. There were also three write-in votes for others, one overvote, and 53 blank votes.

On November 7, 2024, the Pownal Town Clerk discovered the Town of Pownal voter checklist used for the 2024 general election had errors after Mr. Busa visited her office and informed her that he heard from a voter who had not received a ballot listing him as a candidate for the House of Representatives.⁴ The Pownal Town Clerk immediately began reviewing the boundary street addresses and scheduled a meeting for the Board of Civil Authority for the Town of Pownal.

On November 8, 2024, Mr. Busa filed a petition for a recount of the Bennington-1 House District election with the Bennington County Superior Court.⁵ On November 12, the canvass meeting was held, and the Bennington-1 House District Clerk certified Jonathan Cooper as the winner. After the court-ordered recount was conducted on November 18, the vote difference between the candidates narrowed from 25 votes to 23 votes.

Following the recount and prior to the Court entering final judgment, Mr. Busa filed the instant request for the House to judge the election and qualifications of its own members. Additional requests to the House filed by the Pownal 45, the Stamford Board of Civil Authority, and the Readsboro Board of Civil Authority followed.

The Pownal Board of Civil Authority met on November 18, 2024 to review the reapportionment statute boundary description, the district maps, and voter registrations. Upon careful review, the Board concluded: (1) that 56 voters on the Bennington-5 House District checklist should have been on the Bennington-1 House District checklist; and (2) that 14 voters on the Bennington-1 House District checklist should have been on the Bennington-5 House District checklist.⁶ These checklist errors existed at the time of the election but were subsequently corrected by the Pownal Town Clerk. As of December 12, 2024, the district checklists are correct.

⁵ Mr. Busa also filed a motion for a revote in the Town of Pownal with the Court on November 14, 2024, which the Court denied on November 15, 2024. In the denial, Judge Barra explained that the Vermont Constitution “places the final determination of the election and qualifications of its members exclusively in the House of Representatives of the General Assembly as a part of its legislative powers.” Entry Regarding Motion at 2, *Busa v. Cooper*, Case No. 24-CV-04565 (Vt. Super. Ct., Nov. 15, 2024) (Barra, J.) (*citing* Vt. Const. ch. II, §14; *Kennedy v. Chittenden*, 142 Vt. 397, 399 (1983)).

REMEDIES SOUGHT BY REQUESTERS

The requesters all seek a revote, but the scope varies. Although some request that only the voters who reside in the Bennington-1 House District who received a Bennington-5 House District ballot in error be given the correct Bennington-1 House District ballot and given the chance to vote on the proper ballot, Mr. Busa generally requests a revote of “District 1.”⁷ *See* Attachment A.

The Pownal 45 asks the Legislature “to send us our ballot(s) for the Bennington 1 House District, so we can vote in our district” and cites 17 V.S.A. § 2605. *See* Attachment C.

The Boards of Civil Authority for the Town of Stamford and the Town of Readsboro both request that the legislative boundary, including Barbers Pond Road and South Stream Road, as well as Route 7 and the remaining boundary line, be investigated to determine how many voters were erroneously included in the wrong district and were sent a Bennington-5 House District ballot instead of the correct Bennington-1 House District ballot. They also both state that they believe the votes cast fairly and properly in Stamford, Readsboro, Woodford, Searsburg, and Pownal should be recognized and accepted. They further submit to the House the following verbatim request for relief:

A determination should be made to correct this unfortunate error by recognizing all the voters who reside in the Bennington-1 District who received a Bennington-5 District ballot in error. Only these voters should be given the correct Bennington-1 District ballot and given the chance to vote on the proper ballot.

⁶ The winning candidates for the two seats in the Bennington-5 House District won with a margin of 177 votes separating the second place candidate from the third place candidate, a margin greater than the number of incorrectly listed voters in the Bennington-5 House District and the Bennington-1 House District.

⁷ Of note, Mr. Busa’s motion for a revote filed with the Bennington County Superior Court on November 14, 2024 contended that “the most accurate and efficient way to correct the error in Pownal is to simply conduct a new vote for the Bennington-1 House district in the precinct where the error occurred... Pownal.” Plaintiff’s Motion to Have a Revote in the Town of Pownal at 2, *Busa*, Case No. 24-CV-04565.

It does not seem prudent to burden all of the towns in the Benn-1 District with the expense of another election and this would invalidate the votes that have been properly cast. Voters who have already voted on the correct Benn-1 ballot, whether in Pownal or the other four towns, should not be given the opportunity to vote twice.

Attachment B at 2 and Attachment D at 2.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

ACT 89 2022 REAPPORTIONMENT

Vermont apportionment laws require periodic reapportionment of the House of Representatives and the Senate to ensure that all state legislative bodies are apportioned in a way that achieves substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the choice of legislators. *See* 17 V.S.A. § 1901. The periodic reapportionment is done following each decennial census of the United States. *See* 17 V.S.A. § 1903.

Following the 2020 U.S. census, the General Assembly passed H.722 in 2022 reapportioning the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Governor signed H.722 into law on April 6, 2022, as Act 89. *See* 2021, No. 89 (adj. sess.), available at 17 V.S.A. § 1893b. The Statewide map showing the House districts is included as Attachment E and the map showing the Bennington-1 House District is included as Attachment F.8

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT089/ACT089%20As%20Enacted.pdf>.

Act 89 established the Bennington-1 House District as follows:

BENNINGTON-1 Readsboro, Searsburg, Stamford, Woodford, and that portion of the town of Pownal encompassed within a boundary beginning at the point where the northern boundary line of the town of Pownal intersects with VT Route 7; then southerly along the western side of the centerline of VT Route 7 to the intersection of Barber Pond Road; then easterly along the southern side of the centerline of Barber Pond Road to the intersection of South Stream Road; then easterly along the south side of the centerline of South Stream Road to where it intersects with the power lines after 620 South Stream Road and before 802 South Stream Road; then easterly along the southern side of the power lines to where the power lines intersect with the boundary of the town of Stamford approximately one mile north of County Road; then southerly along the town line of Stamford to the state border of Massachusetts; then easterly along the state border of Massachusetts to the state border of New York; then

northerly along the state border of New York to the boundary of the town of Bennington; then easterly along the town line of Bennington to the point of beginning[.]

After reapportionment, the Secretary of State's Office updates the Vermont Election Management System, the statewide computer system that clerks use to maintain voter checklists (commonly called VEMS). The Secretary of State's Office does this by adding the names of the new districts to the system and linking them to the towns included within the boundaries of those districts. The town clerks then review their town's street listings in VEMS and verify they are accurate.

For towns split into two or more districts, like Pownal, the process is more complicated. Those clerks update a spreadsheet downloaded from VEMS that includes street listings. Clerks then either upload those changes back into VEMS or send them to the Secretary of State's Office to be uploaded. The system then updates voter records with the newly assigned districts according to changes made to the street listings. When a street is divided into two districts, such as Barber Pond Road and South Stream Road in Pownal, the clerk must determine which districts apply to which street segments. Town clerks work closely with the Secretary of State's Office, the board of civil authority for their town, and their E911 coordinator to ensure the reapportionment changes are captured accurately in the system.⁹

⁸ Note that the 2022 reapportionment maps are also available on the General Assembly's website at the following URLs:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/SmallMaps/2022/Final%20House%20Statewide.pdf> (Statewide map) and
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/SmallMaps/2022/House/Bennington-1.pdf> (Bennington-1 House District map).

⁹ For example, the Secretary of State's Office provides support for clerks by answering questions about the process and the statewide computer system. It also helps connect town clerks to their E911 coordinator to answer questions about the boundaries of particular properties.

¹⁰ The State has 283 distinct ballot styles. This is due to overlapping House and Senate districts across Vermont's 247 towns. Pownal accounts for two of the 283 ballot styles statewide.

¹¹ Vermont law requires that the mailing of the ballots commence no later than 43 days before the election and be completed no later than October 1. 17 V.S.A. § 2537a(a)(1).

The Secretary of State's Office manages the contracts with the vendors that fulfill the design, printing, and mailing of the universal vote-by-mail ballots based on the information in VEMS. *See* 17 V.S.A. § 2537a. The Secretary of State's Office works with one vendor to design the ballots that will be used in each of the districts¹⁰ and another vendor to print and mail the ballots. The production process for printing and mailing runs throughout mid-September, so the Secretary of State's Office requests that town clerks review and update their checklists prior to Labor Day.¹¹

As noted above, the Pownal Town Clerk discovered errors on her voter checklist after the election. She immediately brought those errors to the attention of the Pownal Board of Civil Authority, which convened a meeting on November 18, 2024.¹²

The Pownal Board of Civil Authority determined that there were 56 voters on the Bennington-5 House District checklist who should have been on the Bennington-1 House District checklist.¹³ More specifically, the voters on both the north and south sides of Barber Pond Road and South Stream Road, as well as six voters on Moonrise Drive, were incorrectly included in the Bennington-5 House District instead of the Bennington-1 House District.¹⁴ This meant that those voters received the Bennington-5 House District ballot by mail and, if voting in person, at Pownal's polling location.

¹² Further evidence of the error appeared on some of the Bennington-5 House District ballots, some of which included write-in votes that appear to have been for the Bennington-1 House District candidates: three write-in votes for "Bruce Buso," and eight write-in votes for Jonathan Cooper.

¹³ Although the Pownal Board of Civil Authority is the authority on the determination as to the number of voters impacted, we note the estimates of the requesters. Mr. Busa estimates in his request that approximately 47 voters in the Bennington-1 House District were affected by the voter checklist errors. The Pownal 45 filed a request with 29 signatures and 57 names listed. The Boards of Civil Authority for the towns of Stamford and Readsboro do not make any estimates as to the number of affected voters.

¹⁴ Although Moonrise Drive itself is in the Bennington-1 House District, some of the residents on that street have a legal address with the Cozy Meadow Mobile Home Park, which is located on the east side of Route 7 and part of the Bennington-5 House District.

The Pownal Town Clerk has since updated the voter checklists for both House districts. Our Office has verified that the names in the Pownal 45 request are all included in the corrected checklist for the Bennington-1 House District, except for two voters who moved out of Pownal and did not vote in Pownal in the November 5, 2024 general election.

THE RECOUNT

A recount is commenced by filing a petition with the Superior Court under 17 V.S.A. § 2602. The county clerk then obtains the ballots from the town clerks and secures them. 17 V.S.A. § 2602(c)(2).

Pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2602a, the county clerk notifies the candidates for the office that is the subject of the recount and asks for a list of a minimum of ten nominees to serve on the recount committee. The Court then sets a date for the recount and names the committee. *See* 17 V.S.A. §§ 2602(c)(1), 2602a(b).

At the outset, the county clerk explains the responsibilities of the committee and assigns committee members to a counting team, a vote tabulator team, and a clerk observer team. 17 V.S.A. §§ 2602b, 2602c. Ballots are counted according to the procedures spelled out by the statutes. *See* 17 V.S.A. §§ 2602c, 2602d, 2602e, 2602f, 2602h. The Superior Court then holds a hearing during which candidates are given the opportunity to present evidence to the Court relating to the conduct of the recount, how to count questionable votes, and the marking of any ballot as defective. 17 V.S.A. § 2602j(c). The Court must order a new recount if it finds a violation of recount procedures that may have affected the outcome of the recount. 17 V.S.A. § 2602j(e).

Within five working days after the hearing and the Court's final decision on any questionable votes or defective ballots, the Court: (1) issues a judgment that supersedes any certificate of election previously issued; (2) sends a certified copy of the judgment to the Secretary of State; and (3) returns to the county clerk any ballots containing questionable votes and defective ballots that had been forwarded to the Court. 17 V.S.A. § 2602j(f). Once the Court order has been issued, a candidate for the Legislature may file a request with the appropriate body of the General Assembly if they wish to contest the results of the election or recount. 17 V.S.A. §§ 2605, 2606 (Senate); *Kennedy*, 142 Vt. 397.

Following the thorough process laid out above, the recount for the Bennington-1 House District was conducted on November 18, 2024, under the supervision of the Bennington County Clerk. The Court held a hearing on November 25, 2024, after which it entered a final judgment finding Jonathan Cooper the winner of the Bennington-1 House District race.

See Amended Judgment, *Busa*, Case No. 24-CV-04565 (final order issued Nov. 25, 2024 and amended order issued Nov. 26, 2024), included as Attachment G. Both candidates were represented by legal counsel at the hearing.

The final judgment vote totals are as follows:

Jonathan Cooper	1265
Bruce Busa	1242
Write-In's	5
Overvotes	0
Blank Votes	108

The Amended Master Recount Summary Sheet signed by the Bennington County Clerk on November 21, 2024, and included as Attachment H, provides the following vote totals for ballots cast in the Town of Pownal:

Jonathan Cooper	745
Bruce Busa	526
Write-In's	3
Overvotes	0
Blank Votes	54

On information and belief, no appeal challenging the manner in which the recount process was conducted has been filed as of the date of this letter.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the factual and legal background set forth above, it is the Opinion of this Office that 56 voters registered in the Bennington-1 House District received the Bennington-5 House District ballot and were unable to properly cast a vote in the race for the Bennington-1 House District seat. It is also the Opinion of this Office that the winner of the certified recount of the Bennington-1 House District won by a margin of 23 votes, meaning that the number of registered voters who were not able to properly vote in the Bennington-1 House District election (56 voters) is greater than the margin of victory (23 votes).

Outside of the Bennington-1 House District election, no other elections or election outcomes were considered as a part of this review and report. Federal, statewide, and county elections were not impacted by the voter

checklist errors. The Town of Pownal's Bennington-1 House District and Bennington-5 House District ballots were identical, other than (1) the candidates listed for the House, and (2) the label at the top of the ballot. Similarly, as noted above, the voter checklist errors would not have impacted the outcome in the Bennington-5 House District, i.e. any voters who voted in that district in error or did not receive a Bennington- 5 House District ballot would not have been enough to change the outcome of that election.

This Report and Opinion is intended to provide the House of Representatives with our Office's opinion on the law and facts to enable the House to determine appropriate actions, if any. 17 V.S.A. § 2605(b)(1).

Respectfully submitted and dated at Montpelier, Vermont this 24th day of December, 2024.

Leslie A. Welts
Assistant Attorney General and Chief of
General Counsel and Administrative Law Division

cc: Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State
Rob McDougall, Deputy Attorney General

Which was read and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 1

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, and Sibilia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to accepting and referring complaints by the State Ethics Commission

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 2

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Dolan of Essex Junction, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the minimum age for delinquency proceedings

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 3

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the minimum qualifications required for State employment

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 4

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington and Cole of Hartford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to standards for the care of egg-laying hens

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 5

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a hearsay exception for a child under 16 years of age

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 6

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to marriage license fees

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 7

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to termination of parental rights in an adoption proceeding

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 8

By Rep. Stone of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a tax credit for home modifications for safety and livability

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 9

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont State and Judiciary Employees' Cost-Savings Incentive Program

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 10

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 11

By Rep. Sibilia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to consumer protections applicable to broadband and VoIP services

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 12

By Reps. Bluemle of Burlington and Goldman of Rockingham,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to addressing barriers to blenderized tube feeding

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 13

By Reps. Wood of Waterbury and Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 14

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the use of animals in product testing

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 15

By Rep. Donahue of Northfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to assistance for room and board at a Vermont postsecondary school for students served by foster or kinship care

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 16

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartley of Fairfax, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Casey of Hubbardton, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Southworth of Walden, Steady of Milton, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Walker of Swanton, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the Affordable Heat Act

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 17

By Reps. Yacovone of Morristown and LaMont of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 18

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Dolan of Essex Junction, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to decriminalizing nonmoving DLS violations for third-time offenders

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 19

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield, Burditt of West Rutland, and Goslant of Northfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to grand larceny of a firearm

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 20

By Rep. Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a voluntary firearms storage program for persons in crisis

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 21

By Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to service of writs of possession

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 22

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Berbeco of Winooski, Burke of Brattleboro, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Harrison of Chittenden, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, Priestley of Bradford, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to access to information concerning benefit extension agreements for employees of public agencies

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 23

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 24

By Rep. Donahue of Northfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring retail businesses to accept cash

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 25

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Dolan of Essex Junction, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to imposing Impaired Driver Rehabilitation Program fees based on a person's ability to pay

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Message from the Senate No. 4

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 5. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 10, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and forty-four minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, January 10, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following names of members of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Richard T. "Dick" Mazza of Colchester	Member of the House, Sessions 1973-1976
Rep. William "Bill" Mares of Burlington	Member of the House, Sessions 1985-1990
Rep. William "Bill" Keogh of Burlington	Member of the House, Sessions 2001-2008
Rep. Curt McCormack of Rutland City and Burlington	Member of the House, Sessions 1983-1996 Sessions 2013-2022
Rep. James Colvin of Bennington	Member of the House, Sessions 1999-2002

Rep. Gloria Ann Wing of Morristown	Member of the House, Sessions 1987-1990
Rep. John V. LaBarge of Grand Isle	Member of the House, Sessions 1993-2002
Rep. Donald H. “Don” Turner, Jr. of Milton	Member of the House, Sessions 2006-2018

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased members.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Patricia McCoy of Poultney.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 26

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield and Howard of Rutland City,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to guardianship proceedings
To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 27

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington and Nugent of South Burlington,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission
To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 28

By Reps. Chapin of East Montpelier and LaLonde of South Burlington,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to including an affirmation option in oath requirements in
Titles 1–10 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated
To the Committee on Judiciary.

Joint Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 5**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 5. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 10, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 10, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and fifty-seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 5.

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Brian Cina of Burlington.

Message from the Senate No. 5

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 6. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 17, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 29

By Rep. Berbeco of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to replacing statutory references to Vermont Psychiatric Survivors with MadFreedom, Inc.

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 30

By Reps. Bluemle of Burlington, Stone of Burlington, Garofano of Essex, Graning of Jericho, and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of seclusion and restraint on children and youth in the custody of the Department for Children and Families

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 31

By Rep. Black of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to claim edit standards and prior authorization requirements

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 32

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Maguire of Rutland City, Arsenault of Williston, Bartley of Fairfax, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Graning of Jericho, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Howard of Rutland City, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Luneau of St. Albans City, Malay of Pittsford, McCann of Montpelier, McCoy of Poultney, McGill of Bridport, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Noyes of Wolcott, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Rachelson of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Tomlinson of Winooski, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to treatment for opioid use disorder in correctional facilities

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

Pledge of Allegiance

Speaker led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

House Discrimination Prevention Panel Announced

Pursuant to House Rule 90(a), the House Rules Committee appointed the following members to the House Discrimination Prevention Panel:

Rep. Berbeco of Winooski
Rep. Burrows of West Windsor
Rep. Donahue of Northfield
Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town
Rep. McFaun of Barre Town

House Ethics Panel Announced

Pursuant to House Rule 90(b), the House Rules Committee appointed the following members to the House Ethics Panel:

Rep. Cina of Burlington
Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington
Rep. Morgan, M. of Milton
Rep. Ode of Burlington
Rep. Taylor of Milton

House Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel Announced

Pursuant to House Rule 90(c), the House Rules Committee appointed the following members to the House Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel:

Rep. Branagan of Georgia
Rep. Burke of Brattleboro
Rep. Headrick of Burlington
Rep. Mrowicki of Putney
Rep. Quimby of Lyndon

Joint Fiscal Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 501, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Joint Fiscal Committee:

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury, *ex officio*
Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro, *ex officio*
Rep. Wood of Waterbury
Rep. Harrison of Chittenden
Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock

Joint Legislative Management Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 41, the Speaker is an *ex officio* member, and appointed the following members to the Joint Legislative Management Committee:

Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town

Rep. Wood of Waterbury

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction

Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9390, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee:

Rep. Donahue of Northfield

Rep. Goldman of Rockingham

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and fourteen minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Peter Plagge, Waterbury Congregational Church.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Brittney L. Wilson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 15th day of January 2025, pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2002(b), I am herewith enclosing the following Executive Order:

01-25 Creation of the Agency of Public Safety**Text of the Executive Order 05-21****“STATE OF VERMONT****EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT****EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 01-25**

[Creation of the Agency of Public Safety]

WHEREAS, the Governor, pursuant to Vermont Constitution Chapter II, Section 3 and Section 20, and 3 V.S.A. Section 2001 and Section 2002, subject to the Vermont Constitution Chapter II, Section 6, may make such changes in the organization of the Executive Branch or in the assignment of functions among its units as he considers necessary for efficient administration; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Vermont, Chapter II, Section 6 provides that no bill, resolution or other thing which shall have been passed by one house of the General Assembly shall have the effect of or be declared to be a law without the concurrence of the other, ensuring no action by a single house, committee or agent of the General Assembly may be binding on the Executive Branch; and

WHEREAS, any organizational changes made by the Governor, pursuant to 3 V.S.A. Section 2001 and Section 2002, shall be subject to disapproval by both houses of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to reorganize the agencies, departments and divisions of government to better coordinate certain activities and improve the coordination and effectiveness of services to the public; and

WHEREAS, the workload and responsibilities of the Department of Public Safety have been ever increasing over time including:

- Statewide law enforcement provided by the Vermont State Police.
- The response capabilities for the entirety of Vermont offered by special teams from both the Vermont State Police and the Division of Fire Safety.
- The Division of Emergency Management (VEM) is responsible for disaster response, recovery, and mitigation as well as management of the State Emergency Operations Center; VEM’s responsibilities will only increase as Vermont faces the dynamic impacts of climate change.
- Broad responsibilities of the Division of Fire Safety.

- Numerous support services including Radio Technology and Crime Information, as well as management of Vermont's only accredited forensic lab.
- Animal welfare.

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety has demonstrated strong leadership in expanding alternative crisis response methodologies such as field mental health workers; providing enhanced statewide model policies in key areas, including use of force; leading efforts to reduce violent crime in Vermont communities; and communication and public safety information and technology systems that support every community in the state; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety's leadership serves as the State's designated Homeland Security Advisors to the Governor and is tasked with monitoring intelligence, coordinating planning and response to all hazard threats to the State, its populace and its Critical Infrastructure sectors; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety has established, together with the Agency of Education, the Vermont School Safety Center; and

WHEREAS a new division of Animal Welfare was statutorily added to the Department of Public Safety in 2024; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of responsibilities accruing to the Department of Public Safety in service to the Governor's Constitutional duty to faithfully execute the laws and the public health and safety needs of Vermonters statewide, necessitate the elevation of the Department of Public Safety to a cabinet-level agency.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of Vermont by the Constitution of the State of Vermont, Chapter II, Section 3 and Section 20, 3 V.S.A. § 209, 3 V.S.A. Chapter 41 and 32 V.S.A. § 704a, do hereby create an Agency of Public Safety which shall be successor to the Department of Public Safety as follows:

1. All duties, obligations, responsibilities and authority, including all contracts, grant agreements, service level agreements and MOUs of the Department of Public Safety are hereby transferred to the Agency of Public Safety.
2. All financial assets and liabilities, including all appropriations associated with the positions transferred pursuant to paragraph 3 below, of the Department of Public Safety are hereby transferred to the Agency of Public Safety.

3. All authorized positions, functions, equipment, supplies and inventory of the Department of Public Safety are transferred to the Agency of Public Safety.
4. The positions of Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety are abolished and all the duties, responsibilities, and authority, including board, committee and council memberships, of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner are hereby transferred to the Secretary of the Agency of Public Safety and the Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Public Safety, respectively.
5. The Secretary shall be directly responsible to the Governor and shall plan, coordinate and direct the functions vested in the Agency. The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Governor an annual budget for the Agency.
6. Effective April 16, 2025, the Agency of Public Safety shall be headed by the Secretary appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.
7. Effective April 16, 2025, the Secretary of the Agency of Public Safety may appoint a Deputy Secretary, with the approval of the Governor, who shall be exempt from the classified service.
8. Effective April 16, 2025, the Agency of Public Safety shall consist of a Division Fire Safety, a Division of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security, a Division of Emergency Management, a Division of Administration and Finance, a Division of Animal Welfare, a Division of the Forensic Laboratory, a Division of Radio Technology Services and a Division of the Vermont Crime Information Center, as follows:
 - A. The Division of Fire Safety shall be headed by an Executive Director and organized into four offices, each reporting to the Executive Director of Fire Safety through a program manager:
 - 1) Administration – (Plan Review, Permitting, Code Inspection and Public Fire Education)
 - 2) Licensing, Certification and Rule Making Office
 - 3) Special Teams
 - a) HazMat Team
 - b) USAR/Swiftwater Team

c) Fire and Explosive Investigation Unit

- B. 4) Training Office – Vermont Fire Academy
- The Division of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security shall be headed by the Colonel who shall be the senior commander of the Vermont State Police.
- C. The Division of Emergency Management shall be headed by a Director and organized into the following five sections:
 - 1) Planning
 - 2) Engagement
 - 3) Operations and Logistics
 - 4) Recovery
 - 5) Mitigation
- D. The Division of Administration and Finance shall be headed by a Director and organized into the following offices:
 - 1) Accounting
 - 2) Budgeting
 - 3) Grant Management
 - 4) Procurement
 - 5) Audit and Payroll
- E. The Division of Animal Welfare shall be headed by a Director.
- F. The Division of the Vermont Forensic Laboratory shall be headed by a Director and shall be organized into the following sections:
 - 1) Chemistry
 - 2) Biology
 - 3) Toxicology
 - 4) Physical Comparison
 - 5) Quality Control and Accreditation
 - 6) Evidence Management and Control
- G. The Division of Radio Technology Services shall be headed by a Director.

H. The Division of the VT Crime Information Center, including the Sex Offender Registry, shall be headed by a Director.

The Colonel and all Executive Directors and Directors shall be appointed by the Secretary with the approval of the Governor. The Director of the Division of Fire Safety and the Director of Emergency Management shall be exempt from the classified service. The Colonel shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Secretary of the Agency of Public Safety shall be a member of the Governor's Cabinet which consists of the Secretaries of the agencies as are created by law, as well as such Commissioners of the departments created by law as the Governor determines shall appoint to be members of the Cabinet.

This Executive Order shall be submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2002, subject to the Vermont Constitution Chapter II, Section 6, and shall take effect on April 16, 2025, unless disapproved by both houses of the General Assembly.

WITNESS my name hereunto
subscribed and the Great Seal of
the State of Vermont hereunto
affixed at Montpelier this 15th day
of January 2025.

Philip B. Scott
Governor

By the Governor:

Brittney L. Wilson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs
Executive Order 01-25"

Message from the Senate No. 6

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 7. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the budget message of the Governor.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 33

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Chapin of East Montpelier, Greer of Bennington, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, Stevens of Waterbury, Tomlinson of Winooski, Waszazak of Barre City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding employee access to unpaid leave

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 34

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to workforce leadership in Vermont

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 35

By Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 36

By Reps. Goodnow of Brattleboro and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to family forensic evaluators

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 37

By Rep. Harrison of Chittenden,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the consolidation of Vermont's school districts to align with career and technical education service regions

To the Committee on Education.

Joint Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 6**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 6. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 17, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 17, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and seventeen minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, January 16, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre City.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 38

By Reps. Christie of Hartford, Stevens of Waterbury, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burrows of West Windsor, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Mrowicki of Putney, Priestley of Bradford, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to adding new positions to the Human Rights Commission
To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 39

By Reps. Maguire of Rutland City, Burditt of West Rutland, Canfield of Fair Haven, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Malay of Pittsford, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repeal of authorization of overdose prevention centers
To the Committee on Human Services.

Executive Order Referred to Committee

The Speaker placed before the House Executive Order No. 01-25, which was read and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Joint Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 7**

By Senator Perchlik,

J.R.S. 7. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the budget message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at one o'clock in the afternoon to receive the budget message of the Governor.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Birong of Vergennes**, the following remarks by **Rep. Black of Essex** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I’m sorry. Bear with me, please. I always say that I’m just a soccer mom from Essex. I didn’t come from the world of advocacy and the things and people that I’ve been exposed to in my life frankly, I’ve been a little sheltered. Now I’m in this weird little world that we all belong to, and you meet people along the way. You are also exposed to new people and new experiences, and then, every once in a while, you meet someone, and they end up like your soul sister. For a little soccer mom from Essex, one of the people that I have met in this weird little world, ended up being one of my best friends. She would find this very funny because we joked about it all the time. I want to recognize the passing of someone who we all may have seen around the State House a lot, working in advocacy throughout the State of Vermont. I asked someone to give me a synopsis of her c.v. because, frankly, my best times with her were spent over beer. She was a retired zoning administrator, a selectboard member for the Town of Bakersfield, and Commissioner for the Vermont Commission on Women.

She was a cabinet member of Emerge Vermont, and a fierce advocate for the LGBTQIA Alliance. Two days ago, we lost Brenda Churchill, and I wanted to recognize her. We lost someone truly great in this State. She was a friend to me, and a friend to so many in this Chamber. So, have a beer this weekend in memory of Brenda. She’d like that. Thank you.”

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirteen minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, January 17, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Geof Hewitt, poet, Calais.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following names of members of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Kenneth "Ken" Atkins of Winooski	Member of the House, Sessions 1999-2012
Rep. Thomas P. Salmon of Rockingham	Member of the House, Sessions 1965-1970

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased members.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 40

By Reps. Chapin of East Montpelier, Arsenault of Williston, Burke of Brattleboro, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Mrowicki of Putney, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 41

By Reps. Burditt of West Rutland and Demar of Enosburgh,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a felony penalty for abuse of a corpse

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 42

By Reps. Stevens of Waterbury, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Cole of Hartford, LaMont of Morristown, McCann of Montpelier, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Housing Board of Appeals

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 43

By Reps. Canfield of Fair Haven, Hango of Berkshire, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Austin of Colchester, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartley of Fairfax, Birong of Vergennes, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Corcoran of Bennington, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Hunter of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, McFaun of Barre Town, Micklus of Milton, Minier of South Burlington, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Ode of Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Sibia of Dover, Southworth of Walden, Stone of Burlington, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Walker of Swanton, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exempting military retirement and survivor benefit income from Vermont income tax

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

Judicial Nominating Board House Members Elected

Pursuant to 4 V.S.A. § 601, the Speaker made the following nominations to the Judicial Nominating Board:

Rep. Garofano of Essex

Rep. Goslant of Northfield

Rep. Rachelson of Burlington

Rep. McCoy of Poultney moved the election of the candidates, as nominated by the Speaker, which was agreed to.

Message from the Senate No. 7

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted Senate concurrent resolution of the following title:

S.C.R. 1. Senate concurrent resolution congratulating Brattleboro Memorial Hospital on its 120th anniversary.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 1. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Falcons Division IV championship boys' track and field team.

H.C.R. 2. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Missisquoi Valley Union High School Thunderbirds Division I championship softball team.

H.C.R. 3. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Enosburg Falls High School Hornets Division II championship softball team.

H.C.R. 4. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Division IV championship girls' soccer team.

H.C.R. 5. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Rockets Division IV championship softball team.

H.C.R. 6. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Milton High School Yellowjackets girls' soccer team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and forty-seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 6.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 1

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Falcons Division IV championship boys' track and field team

H.C.R. 2

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Missisquoi Valley Union High School Thunderbirds Division I championship softball team

H.C.R. 3

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Enosburg Falls High School Hornets Division II championship softball team

H.C.R. 4

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Division IV championship girls' soccer team

H.C.R. 5

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Rockets Division IV championship softball team

H.C.R. 6

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Milton High School Yellowjackets girls' soccer team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship

S.C.R. 1

Senate concurrent resolution congratulating Brattleboro Memorial Hospital on its 120th anniversary

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Rachel Field, St. Mary's Episcopal Church of Northfield.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pages Lucy Hakim of Shelburne and Henry Smith of Shelburne led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 8

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 8. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 24, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 44

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington and Burditt of West Rutland,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the laws governing impaired driving

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 45

By Reps. Bluemle of Burlington, Stone of Burlington, Duke of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 46

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield, Noyes of Wolcott, and Stone of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Rare Disease Advisory Council

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 47

By Reps. Stone of Burlington and Donahue of Northfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Vermont's adoption of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 48

By Reps. Graning of Jericho and Arsenault of Williston,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the emission of excessive soot or smoke from certain motor vehicles

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 49

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the implementation of an electronic roll-call system in the Vermont House of Representatives

To the Committee on Rules.

H. 50

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and McCann of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to identifying State real property suitable for conversion into affordable housing

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 51

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes and Boyden of Cambridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing alcoholic beverages

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 52

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden, Lipsky of Stowe, and Morris of Springfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to changing the greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements to goals

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) Appointments

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 817, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules:

Rep. Squirrell of Underhill

Rep. Higley of Lowell

Rep. Ode of Burlington

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph

Joint Committee on Judicial Retention Appointments

Pursuant to 4 V.S.A. § 607, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention:

Rep. Arsenault of Williston

Rep. Oliver of Sheldon

Rep. Casey of Montpelier

Rep. Malay of Pittsford

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 1**

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Laroche of Franklin, Demar of Enosburgh, Gregoire of Fairfield, and Walker of Swanton

Offered by Senators Brock and Norris

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Falcons Division IV championship boys' track and field team

Whereas, Richford Junior-Senior High School had not won a boys' track and field divisional title since 2015, and the 2024 team coalesced around the goal of winning the Division IV crown in honor of its former assistant coach, Andre LaBier, who in 2024 retired as the school's resource officer, and

Whereas, at the championship meet, held at Thompson Park in Manchester, the Falcons secured first place in the 200m and 400m, the 4x100 relay, and the triple jump, and the team's consistently solid performances resulted in its outscoring second-place Green Mountain Union High School (137–112) for a great victory, and

Whereas, the Falcons, who received a rousing fire department welcome on their triumphant return home, were Carson Steinhour, Carter Blaney, Daniel Blazevic, Davian Coy, David Scott, Eli Martin, Silas Martin, Jerrick Jacobs, Lars Riesterer, Lucas Kalo, Matthew Stryker, Oliver Pike, Tristan Whitestone, and Wyatt Chagnon, and

Whereas, the innovative leadership of Head Coach Richard Flint and Assistant Coach Kaydeen Juaire inspired the team, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Falcons Division IV championship boys' track and field team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Richford Junior-Senior High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 4

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Laroche of Franklin, Demar of Enosburgh, Gregoire of Fairfield, and Walker of Swanton

Offered by Senators Brock and Norris

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Division IV championship girls' soccer team

Whereas, the 11th-seeded varsity athletic team in an annual interscholastic playoff series seldom anticipates a championship game berth, but in the 2024 Division IV girls' soccer competition, that was the surprising result for the Richford Rockets, who demonstrated their true talent when they faced the top-ranked and undefeated West Rutland Golden Horde in an exciting season finale at Rutland High School's field, and

Whereas, thrilled to have astounded their supporters, the Rockets aimed to prove their journey to this special game would be happily memorable, and

Whereas, despite trailing 2–0 at the mid-game break, the Rockets played superbly during the second half; first, scoring less than two minutes after play resumed; then, at the midpoint of the concluding half; and finally, with 13:57 remaining of regulation time, all the while as the Richford defense prevented West Rutland from increasing its side of the score, and

Whereas, the Rockets, who triumphantly returned home with Richford's first-ever girls' soccer title, were Vanessa Tessier, Teddy Roberts, Keeley Long, Mikayla Chagnon, Adi Chagnon, Kyrielle Deuso, Audrey Swanson, Jazmine Cunningham, Sayge Bohannon, Katelyn Doe, Brooklynn Letourneau, Alex Percy, Lucia Aguila-Collantes Prieto, Alba Castel Delgado, and Kayliese McCray, and

Whereas, Head Coach Liza Bordo, assistant coaches Randi Chagnon and Jennie Hull, and Team Manager Megan Dussault were impressed with the Rockets' amazing 3–2 championship victory, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Division IV championship girls' soccer team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Richford Junior-Senior High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 5

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Laroche of Franklin, Demar of Enosburgh, Gregoire of Fairfield, and Walker of Swanton

Offered by Senators Brock and Norris

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Rockets Division IV championship softball team

Whereas, the strength of the fourth-ranked Richford Rockets initial seventh-inning lead proved crucial in their 2024 Division IV championship victory in Castleton against the second-seeded West Rutland Golden Horde, and

Whereas, Richford exhibited impressive offensive prowess early in the contest, scoring six runs in the second inning, expanding its lead in the third to 8–0, and to 9–0 in the fourth, prior to West Rutland’s crossing the plate for a single run in the fifth and two in the sixth, and

Whereas, in the decisive seventh inning, the Rockets increased their scoring advantage to 11–3 in the opening frame, and Richford stoically withstood a four-run Golden Horde final burst of energy to clinch the 2024 crown 11–7, and

Whereas, the delighted Rockets roster consisted of Jazzy Cunningham, Kyrielle Deuso, Agnus Heinrich, Vanessa Tessier, Adi Chagnon, Katelyn Doe, Erin Raymond, Sierra Derby, Maddie Combs, Kayliese McCray, Sophia Derby, Maddie Smith, and Mikayla Chagnon, and

Whereas, Head Coach Dennis Blaney and assistant coaches Randi Chagnon and Kiley Deuso motivated the Rockets to excel on the softball diamond, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Richford Junior-Senior High School Rockets Division IV championship softball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Richford Junior-Senior High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and twenty-six minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Dr. Jolivette Anderson-Douoning of St. Michael's College in Colchester.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 53

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Arsenaault of Williston, Burrows of West Windsor, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Sibilia of Dover, and Tomlinson of Winooski

House bill, entitled

An act relating to counteracting federal discriminatory mandates

To the Committee on Education.

H. 54

By Reps. Arsenaault of Williston, Birong of Vergennes, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Boutin of Barre City, Brady of Williston, Burditt of West Rutland, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Chapin of East Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Duke of Burlington, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goldman of Rockingham, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Randolph, Hunter of Manchester, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Masland of Thetford, McCoy of Poultney, Minier of South Burlington, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Nugent of South Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Stone of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Torre of Moretown, Waters Evans of Charlotte, White of Waitsfield, and Winter of Ludlow

House bill, entitled

An act relating to cell phone-free schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 55

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, Surprenant of Barnard, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Waszazak of Barre City

House bill, entitled

An act relating to coverage for fertility treatment and gender-affirming health care services

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 56

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, Sibia of Dover, and Tomlinson of Winooski

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing an essential medication stockpile for reproductive and gender-affirming care

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 57

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Arsenault of Williston, Bailey of Hyde Park, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Masland of Thetford, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nielsen of Brandon, Noyes of Wolcott, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, and Tagliavia of Corinth

House bill, entitled

An act relating to survivor benefits for law enforcement officers

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 58

By Reps. Dobrovich of Williamstown, Arsenault of Williston, Boutin of Barre City, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burt of Cabot, Cooper of Pownal, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Galfetti of Barre Town, Higley of Lowell, Hunter of Manchester, Malay of Pittsford, McCann of Montpelier, McFaun of Barre Town, Micklus of Milton, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Taylor of Milton, Torre of Moretown, and Waszazak of Barre City

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid coverage for play therapy

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 59

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Burlington

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 60

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nielsen of Brandon, Oliver of Sheldon, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, and Tagliavia of Corinth

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting discrimination based on immunization status

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 61

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Nielsen of Brandon, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, and Tagliavia of Corinth

House bill, entitled

An act relating to bodily autonomy and health care decision making

To the Committee on Health Care.

Joint Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 8**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 8. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 24, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 24, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, January 28, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and twenty-three minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, January 23, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Jay Voorhees of Trinity Methodist Church in Montpelier.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 62

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Bailey of Hyde Park, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Feltus of Lyndon, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City,

Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Quimby of Lyndon, Southworth of Walden, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the Global Warming Solutions Act

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 63

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Boyden of Cambridge, Casey of Montpelier, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fair employment practices and legislative leave

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 64

By Reps. Oliver of Sheldon, Arsenault of Williston, Bartley of Fairfax, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Branagan of Georgia, Demar of Enosburgh, Dolan of Essex Junction, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Goslant of Northfield, Harvey of Castleton, Labor of Morgan, LaLonde of South Burlington, Malay of Pittsford, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Quimby of Lyndon,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 65

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Donahue of Northfield, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Quimby of Lyndon, Southworth of Walden, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to revoking Vermont's use of California's Clean Air Act waiver

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 66

By Rep. Scheu of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the number of votes required for a write-in candidate to win a primary election

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 67

By Reps. Boyden of Cambridge, Waters Evans of Charlotte, and Garofano of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to legislative operations and government accountability

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 68

By Reps. Hango of Berkshire, Birong of Vergennes, Bartley of Fairfax, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Christie of Hartford, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Southworth of Walden, Stone of Burlington, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the National Guard Tuition Benefit Program

To the Committee on Education.

H. 69

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Burditt of West Rutland, Burtt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Maguire of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nielsen of Brandon, Powers of Waterford, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reporting on adverse reactions related to immunizations

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 70

By Reps. Higley of Lowell, Bailey of Hyde Park, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Quimby of Lyndon, Southworth of Walden, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Taylor of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the inclusion of use value appraisal land in the conserved land inventory

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 71

By Reps. Bluemle of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Cina of Burlington, Goldman of Rockingham, and Page of Newport City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health care entity transaction oversight and clinical decision making

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 72

By Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to municipal ordinances governing nuisance properties containing salvage and scrap

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 73

By Rep. Parsons of Newbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the zoning requirements for group homes

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 74

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden, Noyes of Wolcott, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartley of Fairfax, Birong of Vergennes, Bosch of Clarendon, Boyden of Cambridge, Burditt of West Rutland, Burrows of West Windsor, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Christie of Hartford, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Harvey of Castleton, Headrick of Burlington, Higley of Lowell, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Morrow of Weston, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Southworth of Walden, Surprenant of Barnard, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Waszazak of Barre City, Wells of Brownington, White of Bethel, Winter of Ludlow, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exempting Social Security benefits from Vermont income tax

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 75

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to clinician participation in patient choice at end of life and DNR/COLST orders

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 76

By Reps. Hango of Berkshire, Bartley of Fairfax, Birong of Vergennes, Branagan of Georgia, Christie of Hartford, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Burlington, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Laroche of Franklin, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Southworth of Walden, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to an income tax exemption for National Guard active duty subsistence and quarters allowance

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 77

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a new income tax bracket

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 78

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 50

Rep. Mihaly of Calais moved that the Committee on General and Housing be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to identifying State real property suitable for conversion into affordable housing

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, which was agreed to.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and sixteen minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, January 24, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Toussaint St. Negritude, poet, Newark.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following names of members of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Edward R. Zuccaro of St. Johnsbury	Member of the House, Sessions 1981-1988
Rep. Richard Howrigan of Fairfield	Member of the House, Sessions 1995-2012

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased members.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 79

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 80

By Reps. Cordes of Bristol, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Cina of Burlington, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Goldman of Rockingham, McFaun of Barre Town, and Page of Newport City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 81

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Dodge of Essex, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Bluemle of Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Hooper of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Priestley of Bradford, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring legislative approval prior to entering into certain immigration agreements

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 82

By Reps. Holcombe of Norwich and Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Division of Planning and Evaluation and strengthening the regulatory capacity of the Green Mountain Care Board

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 83

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Bishop of Colchester, Black of Essex, Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Mrowicki of Putney, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to firearms storage

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 84

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Branagan of Georgia, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Casey of Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Duke of Burlington, Greer of Bennington, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Maguire of Rutland City, McCann of Montpelier, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nielsen of Brandon, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to allowing telehealth appointments to be recorded with patient and provider consent

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 85

By Reps. Lipsky of Stowe, Bosch of Clarendon, Branagan of Georgia, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Demar of Enosburgh, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Keyser of Rutland City, Maguire of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Southworth of Walden, Sweeney of Shelburne, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the taxation of vehicles used for forestry operations

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 86

By Reps. Sheldon of Middlebury, Austin of Colchester, Bartholomew of Hartland, Chapin of East Montpelier, Logan of Burlington, Morris of Springfield, and Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Chloride Contamination Reduction Program at the Agency of Natural Resources

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 87

By Reps. Hango of Berkshire, Austin of Colchester, Birong of Vergennes, Sibia of Dover, Stone of Burlington, Bartley of Fairfax, Boyden of Cambridge, Coffin of Cavendish, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Noyes of Wolcott, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Southworth of Walden, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to raising awareness of military-related postsecondary opportunities

To the Committee on Education.

H. 88

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a prohibition on utility disconnections during periods of extreme heat

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 89

By Reps. Tagliavia of Corinth, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Morgan, M. of Milton, Page of Newport City, and Powers of Waterford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to school choice for all Vermont students

To the Committee on Education.

H. 90

By Reps. Canfield of Fair Haven and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont earned income tax credit and the Vermont child tax credit

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 91

By Reps. McGill of Bridport, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Garofano of Essex, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 92

By Reps. McFaun of Barre Town, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Boutin of Barre City, Charlton of Chester, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Gregoire of Fairfield, Higley of Lowell, Labor of Morgan, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Morrissey of Bennington, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Tagliavia of Corinth, Winter of Ludlow, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Human Services Board fair hearing proceedings

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 93

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington, Austin of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Casey of Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Critchlow of Colchester, Duke of Burlington, Greer of Bennington, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Howard of Rutland City, Maguire of Rutland City, McCann of Montpelier, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nielsen of Brandon, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation and maintenance of a database of veterans in Vermont

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 94

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden, Boyden of Cambridge, Casey of Montpelier, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Sibilia of Dover, and Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to events at accessory on-farm businesses

To the Committee on Environment.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 2

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Laroche of Franklin, Oliver of Sheldon, Walker of Swanton, and Gregoire of Fairfield

Offered by Senators Brock and Norris

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Missisquoi Valley Union High School Thunderbirds Division I championship softball team

Whereas, at 2024 Division I softball's decisive contest, played at Castleton, the fifth-seeded Thunderbirds challenged the second-seeded Mt. Anthony Patriots for the sport's top honor, and the game proved an exciting day on the diamond, and

Whereas, although the Patriots were the first on the scoreboard, these opening runs signaled the start of a seesaw battle during which each team enjoyed a lead, but at the end of the seven standard innings, the teams were tied at seven-all, necessitating extra innings to determine the game's outcome, and

Whereas, in the eighth inning, sensing the suspense should be ended quickly, a Thunderbird stole both second and third base, accelerating her scoring of the final run, and securing an 8–7 Missisquoi victory, and

Whereas, the thrilled Thunderbirds, who played with skill and enthusiasm, were Kerri Campbell, Molly Gagne, Molly Medor, Brooke Rainville, Sierra Reynolds, Lizi Bourdeau, Kirby King, Josie Maguire, Cayley Renaudette, Abigail Wilcox, Lillianna Fournier, Addison Gates, Avery Guyette, Addy Longway, Brooke Pilbin, Jady Lapin, and Ava Howe, and

Whereas, Head Coach Bill Sheets; assistant coaches Megan Rowell, Connie Sheets, and Emily Bourdeau; and team managers Alexis Beyor and Kyle Perkins were all critical to the Thunderbirds' success, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Missisquoi Valley Union High School Thunderbirds Division I championship softball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Missisquoi Valley Union High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Message from the Senate No. 9

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 7. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters Division II championship boys' football team.

H.C.R. 8. House concurrent resolution designating January 29, 2025 as Mental Health Advocacy Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 9. House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermonters who created the Tony-Award winning musical Hadestown and the Vermont theatrical youth ensembles now staging exhilarating teen performances.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and forty-seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 8.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 7

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters Division II championship boys' football team

H.C.R. 8

House concurrent resolution designating January 29, 2025 as Mental Health Advocacy Day at the State House

H.C.R. 9

House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermonters who created the Tony-Award winning musical Hadestown and the Vermont theatrical youth ensembles now staging exhilarating teen performances

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Jim Masland of Thetford.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pages Peter Burkholder of Barnard and Salvador Doyle of Montpelier led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 10

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 9. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 31, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 95

By Rep. Black of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 96

By Reps. Cordes of Bristol, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Goldman of Rockingham, Harrison of Chittenden, Logan of Burlington, Marcotte of Coventry, McFaun of Barre Town, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 97

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Graning of Jericho, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Scheu of Middlebury, Sibilia of Dover, Tomlinson of Winooski, Waszazak of Barre City, White of Waitsfield, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting firearms and deadly weapons in schools, on school property, and at childcare centers

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 98

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Christie of Hartford, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Headrick of Burlington, and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 99

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to regulating earned wage access services

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 100

By Rep. Graning of Jericho,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a Department and Commissioner of Education

To the Committee on Education.

H. 101

By Rep. Graning of Jericho,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the role and structure of the Agency of Education

To the Committee on Education.

H. 102

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Burke of Brattleboro, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to annual reporting on health care sharing plans and arrangements

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 103

By Reps. Labor of Morgan, Page of Newport City, Coffin of Cavendish, Morgan, M. of Milton, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibited practices for services involving veterans' benefits

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 104

By Reps. Page of Newport City, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Hooper of Burlington, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Lipsky of Stowe, Morrissey of Bennington, Oliver of Sheldon, Quimby of Lyndon, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to excluding veterans' disability benefits from income-based eligibility determinations for public assistance programs or benefits

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 105

By Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 106

By Rep. Stevens of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to selling real property within a FEMA mapped flood hazard area

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 107

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Burke of Brattleboro, Coffin of Cavendish, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reports or complaints of sex offenses or sexual harassment

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 108

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to filial support

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 109

By Reps. Page of Newport City, Boutin of Barre City, Coffin of Cavendish, Harrison of Chittenden, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Morrissey of Bennington, Oliver of Sheldon, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to municipal ordinances governing the maintenance of properties within downtown districts

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 110

By Rep. Boyden of Cambridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a reciprocity requirement for out-of-state consumer shipping licenses

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 111

By Reps. Toof of St. Albans Town and Hango of Berkshire,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to waived registration fees for volunteer firefighter motor vehicles

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 112

By Reps. Black of Essex, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Birong of Vergennes, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Brown of Richmond, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Eastes of Guilford,

Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Hunter of Manchester, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, Long of Newfane, McFaun of Barre Town, McGill of Bridport, Mrowicki of Putney, Noyes of Wolcott, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Pouech of Hinesburg, Powers of Waterford, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 113

By Reps. Page of Newport City, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Ode of Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to lakes in crisis and requirements for designation

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 114

By Reps. Black of Essex, Bishop of Colchester, Brown of Richmond, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Hooper of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Maguire of Rutland City, McFaun of Barre Town, Noyes of Wolcott, Stone of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Waszazak of Barre City, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding Dr. Dynasaur income eligibility for pregnant individuals and exploring eligibility expansions for other populations

To the Committee on Health Care.

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 78**

Rep. Birong of Vergennes spoke for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and eighteen minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Laurie Emmerson, Executive Director of National Alliance on Mental Illness–Vermont, Williston.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 115

By Reps. Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bishop of Colchester, Cordes of Bristol, Goldman of Rockingham, Howard of Rutland City, Noyes of Wolcott, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Torre of Moretown, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to tax debt forgiveness for victims of fraud

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 116

By Reps. Page of Newport City, Labor of Morgan, Coffin of Cavendish, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Morrissey of Bennington, Parsons of Newbury, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to limiting campaign contributions for State Representatives and State Senators

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 117

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Branagan of Georgia, Brown of Richmond, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Critchlow of Colchester, Duke of Burlington, Greer of Bennington, Harrison of Chittenden, Howard of Rutland City, Morgan, M. of Milton, and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to general election candidates

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 118

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 119

By Rep. Branagan of Georgia,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the beverage container redemption system

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 120

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the study and design of a long-term care trust fund

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 121

By Rep. Morrow of Weston,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to affordable broadband service

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 122

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes and Graning of Jericho,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the sustainable realignment of Vermont's school districts

To the Committee on Education.

H. 123

By Rep. Arsenault of Williston,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to driving while ability impaired

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Joint House Resolution Referred to Committee

J.R.H. 1

Offered by Representative Higley of Lowell

Joint resolution constituting an application for a convention of the States under Article V of the United States Constitution

Whereas, the founders of our Constitution empowered State Legislators to be guardians of liberty against future abuses of power by the federal government, and

Whereas, the federal government has created a crushing national debt through improper and imprudent spending, and

Whereas, the federal government has invaded the legitimate roles of the states through the manipulative process of federal mandates, most of which are unfunded to a great extent, and

Whereas, the federal government has ceased to live under a proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States, and

Whereas, it is the solemn duty of the States to protect the liberty of our people—particularly for the generations to come—by proposing Amendments to the Constitution of the United States through a Convention of the States under Article V for the purpose of restraining these and related abuses of power, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly of the State of Vermont hereby applies to Congress under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the General Assembly requests that the convention of the States be limited to proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress, *and be it further*

Resolved: That this application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, to the members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation, and to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the several States, requesting their cooperation.

Was read, treated as bill, and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs pursuant to House Rule 52.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence

J.R.S. 9

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 9. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 31, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 31, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 8**

Offered by Representatives Cina of Burlington, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Headrick of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Morris of Springfield, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, and Stevens of Waterbury

House concurrent resolution designating January 29, 2025 as Mental Health Advocacy Day at the State House

Whereas, without any discrimination, all Vermonters are entitled to receive the highest attainable quality of health care, including mental health care, and

Whereas, 1997 Acts and Resolves No. 25, Sec. 2, codified as 8 V.S.A. § 4089b, established that the treatment of an individual's mental health must be on par with that person's physical health care, and

Whereas, mental health care must be provided in a manner that does not result in any form of stigma, prejudice, violence, social exclusion, segregation, or unnecessary institutionalization, and

Whereas, all mental health treatment practices should respect an individual's autonomy, dignity, personal preferences, and will, and they must not constitute or lead to violations and abuses of human rights or fundamental freedoms, and

Whereas, mental health support and related community services should integrate a human rights perspective in order to avoid harm to any individuals availing themselves of these services, and

Whereas, today, January 29, 2025, individuals are visiting the State House seeking to remind the General Assembly of the fundamental importance of providing Vermonters with mental health care that equals in every respect the quality of care provided to individuals with any other health conditions,
now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates January 29, 2025 as Mental Health Advocacy Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the mental health advocacy organizations present today in the State House.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 24, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Third Reading; Bill Passed; Rules Suspended,
Messaged to Senate Forthwith**

H. 78

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the House's actions on the bill were ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 27

Rep. Rachelson of Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission

Reported in favor of its passage when amended in Sec. 1, 15 V.S.A. § 1140, in subsection (b), in the second sentence, by striking out “22” and inserting in lieu thereof “23”, and by striking out subdivisions (21) and (22) in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

(21) the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services or designee;

(22) a State’s Attorney victim advocate, appointed by the Executive Director of the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs; and

(23) the Director of Victim Services for the Department of Corrections or designee.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 35

Rep. Demar of Enosburgh, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-nine minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, January 30, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Tom Charlton of Chester.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 124

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Marcotte of Coventry, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Commissioner of Financial Regulation and an annual supervision and regulation report

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 125

By Rep. Sibilis of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reporting on the energy transition

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 126

By Rep. Goldman of Rockingham,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to universal basic income payments for youth exiting foster care

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 127

By Rep. Dodge of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to deed restrictions and renewable energy devices

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 128

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Luneau of St. Albans City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, and Nielsen of Brandon,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unlawful drug activity in a dwelling by a person who is not a legal tenant

To the Committee on Judiciary.

House Resolution Placed on Calendar**H.R. 5**

Offered by Committee on Rules

House resolution authorizing limited remote committee voting through the remainder of calendar year 2025

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That through the remainder of calendar year 2025, each member of a House committee is authorized to vote remotely in that committee for not more than three days, *and be it further*

Resolved: Such a member shall notify the committee chair and clerk that the member is exercising this remote voting authority, and shall count toward a committee quorum, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the committee clerk shall record any vote cast by the member as a remote vote, and shall track the number of days the member exercises this remote voting authority.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 9

Offered by Representatives Chapin of East Montpelier, Birong of Vergennes, Casey of Montpelier, Cordes of Bristol, Donahue of Northfield, Goslant of Northfield, LaMont of Morristown, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Mihaly of Calais, North of Ferrisburgh, and Yacovone of Morristown

Offered by Senators Hardy, Perchlik, and Watson

House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermonters who created the Tony Award-winning musical *Hadestown* and the Vermont theatrical youth ensembles now staging exhilarating teen performances

Whereas, shortly after New Haven's Anaïs Mitchell graduated from Middlebury College in 2004, she completed the original minimalist version of the future Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Hadestown*, a modern rendition of the Greek legend of Orpheus's ultimately futile journey into the underworld of Hades to return Eurydice, his wife, to the world of the living, and

Whereas, in 2006, Anaïs Mitchell; Lincoln's Michael Chorney, orchestrator; Montpelier's Ben T. Matchstick, co-creator; and other theatrically talented Vermonters premiered *Hadestown* at the Old Labor Hall in Barre, and in 2013, Anaïs Mitchell, in collaboration with Broadway director Rachel Chavkin, Michael Chorney, and others began revising *Hadestown* for greater theatrical glory, and East Montpelier's Robinson Morse has been an on-stage performing musician with the show since at least 2019, and

Whereas, on April 17, 2019, the dream became a reality when *Hadestown* debuted to rave reviews at Broadway's Walter Kerr Theater, and in June of 2019, the creators' unusual perseverance was recognized when *Hadestown* received eight Tony Awards (Broadway's highest accolade and the most any show won that year), among which were Best Musical, Best Direction of a Musical (Rachel Chavkin), Best Original Score (Anaïs Mitchell), and Best Orchestrations (Michael Chorney and Todd Sickafoose), and

Whereas, the young thespians of Peoples Academy in Morrisville and the nonprofit Very Merry Theatre in Burlington recently performed a new teen version of this Vermont-created and Tony Award-winning show, and

Whereas, under the leadership of U-32 Middle and High School Performing Arts Director Erin Galligan Baldwin, and the unique guidance of Anaïs Mitchell and Ben T. Matchstick, an ambitious U-32-Montpelier High School joint presentation of the teen production is currently being staged at U-32, and

Whereas, Vermont youngsters' presentation of the teen version of *Hadestown*, with the support of the musical's creators, is an unusual theatrical event worthy of celebration, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the Vermonters who created the Tony Award-winning musical *Hadestown* and the Vermont theatrical youth ensembles now staging exhilarating teen performances, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Anaïs Mitchell, Michael Chorney, Ben T. Matchstick, Rachel Chavkin, Robinson Morse, Peoples Academy, the Very Merry Theatre, Erin Galligan Baldwin, U-32 Middle and High School, and Montpelier High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 24, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 27

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission

H. 35

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets

Adjournment

At three o'clock and twenty-five minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, January 31, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Major Eric Stuepfert, Chaplain, Vermont National Guard.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 129

By Reps. Brady of Williston, Emmons of Springfield, and Taylor of Milton,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the State Aid for School Construction Program

To the Committee on Education.

H. 130

By Reps. Minier of South Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Arsenault of Williston, Bartley of Fairfax, Burrows of West Windsor, Headrick of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, McCann of Montpelier, and Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the membership and duties of the Advisory Council on Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Prevention in Schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 131

By Reps. Garofano of Essex and McGill of Bridport,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to Reach Up grant calculation

To the Committee on Human Services.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 31**

Rep. Black of Essex, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to claim edit standards and prior authorization requirements

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

House Resolution Adopted**H.R. 5**

Rep. Bartholmew of Hartland spoke for the Committee on Rules.

House resolution, entitled

House resolution authorizing limited remote committee voting through the remainder of calendar year 2025

Appearing on the Action Calendar pursuant to House Rule 52, was taken up and adopted.

Message from the Senate No. 11

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 10. House concurrent resolution designating February 6, 2025 as 3SquaresVT Awareness Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 11. House concurrent resolution in memory of extraordinary Bennington K-9 Police Officer Gracie.

H.C.R. 12. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 University of Vermont Catamounts on winning their school's first NCAA Division I men's soccer championship (College Cup).

H.C.R. 13. House concurrent resolution in memory of the former esteemed Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives Robert Louis Picher of Winooski.

H.C.R. 14. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Putney Library on the 20th anniversary of its current home.

H.C.R. 15. House concurrent resolution congratulating former Bennington Acting Police Chief Wally Mattison on his centennial birthday.

H.C.R. 16. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Bennington Select Board Chair, Representative, and Assistant Judge James H. Colvin.

H.C.R. 17. House concurrent resolution honoring the Green Mountain Hometown Heroes Banner Program and its recognized members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

H.C.R. 18. House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world class fiber optic service to rural communities.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and fifty-three minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 9.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 10

House concurrent resolution designating February 6, 2025 as 3SquaresVT Awareness Day at the State House

H.C.R. 11

House concurrent resolution in memory of extraordinary Bennington K-9 Police Officer Gracie

H.C.R. 12

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 University of Vermont Catamounts on winning their school's first NCAA Division I men's soccer championship (College Cup)

H.C.R. 13

House concurrent resolution in memory of the former esteemed Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives Robert Louis Picher of Winooski

H.C.R. 14

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Putney Library on the 20th anniversary of its current home

H.C.R. 15

House concurrent resolution congratulating former Bennington Acting Police Chief Wally Mattison on his centennial birthday

H.C.R. 16

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Bennington Select Board Chair, Representative, and Assistant Judge James H. Colvin

H.C.R. 17

House concurrent resolution honoring the Green Mountain Hometown Heroes Banner Program and its recognized members of the U.S. Armed Forces

H.C.R. 18

House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world class fiber optic service to rural communities

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pages Hayley Sherman of East Montpelier and Daphne Krohn of South Burlington led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 12

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 10. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 7, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 132

By Reps. Satcowitz of Randolph, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, Sheldon of Middlebury, and Torre of Moretown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the taking of furbearers

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 133

By Reps. Stevens of Waterbury, Headrick of Burlington, and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the statutes that authorize the State Lottery and sports wagering

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 134

By Reps. Kimbell of Woodstock, Nelson of Derby, O'Brien of Tunbridge, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to calculating land use change tax and creating a new land use change tax exemption for developing affordable housing

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 135

By Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to administrative and policy changes to Vermont tax laws and extending reimbursement to municipalities for tax abatement due to flooding

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 136

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Hango of Berkshire, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morgan, L. of Milton, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, and Taylor of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance coverage for biomarker testing

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 137

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 138

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington and Goodnow of Brattleboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to maximum liability of municipalities for tort claims

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 139

By Reps. Hango of Berkshire, Branagan of Georgia, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Kascenska of Burke, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lipsky of Stowe, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, M. of Milton, Noyes of Wolcott, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Walker of Swanton, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring licensed athletic trainers at secondary school athletic events and practices

To the Committee on Education.

H. 140

By Reps. Holcombe of Norwich and Masland of Thetford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the provision of grants for community nurses and community care coordinators working in collaboration with municipalities

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 141

By the Committee on Appropriations,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 18**

Offered by Representatives Sibia of Dover, Cooper of Pownal, and Greer of Bennington

House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world-class fiber-optic service to rural communities

Whereas, reliable broadband is a critical utility that enhances economic development, supports educational opportunities, facilitates telehealth services, enables remote work, and strengthens communities, and

Whereas, in order to solve the rural broadband crisis in Vermont, in 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 41, codified as 30 V.S.A. chapter 82, the General Assembly established the process for the formation and operation of a communications union district (CUD), and

Whereas, the CUD structure places long-term control of fiber-broadband assets in the hands of Vermonters through a governing board consisting of one representative from each town in the CUD, and

Whereas, these unique municipal subdivisions, currently nine in number, serve a pivotal role in addressing Vermont's digital divide, and their financing is acquired through the leveraging of municipal revenue bonds, securing grants from the Vermont Community Broadband Fund, entering into public-private partnerships, and using other financial resources, all without triggering financial liability for CUD member communities or individuals, and

Whereas, the leadership, staff, and volunteers of the CUDs have demonstrated extraordinary dedication and collaboration in their establishment of fiber-optic infrastructure in rural and remote areas of Vermont, resulting in a reduction from 100,000 to 20,000 of internet addresses with no or subpar broadband service, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world-class fiber-optic service to rural communities, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each CUD, the Vermont Community Development Board, and Governor Philip B. Scott.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 31, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 31**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to claim edit standards and prior authorization requirements

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Legislative Committee on Judicial Rules Appointments

Pursuant to 12 V.S.A. § 3, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Legislative Committee on Judicial Rules:

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington

Rep. Burditt of West Rutland

Rep. Rachelson of Burlington

Rep. Goodnow of Brattleboro

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and nineteen minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Kenneth Cadow, Vermont Humanities.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 142

By Rep. Austin of Colchester,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring inspection of wastewater systems

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 143

By Rep. Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a support service program for individuals who are DeafBlind

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 144

By Reps. Minier of South Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Dodge of Essex, Hango of Berkshire, Krasnow of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, and Sibia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enhancing food allergen awareness in food service establishments

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 145

By Rep. Harrison of Chittenden,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the disruption of proceedings governed by Vermont's Open Meeting Law

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 146

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to administration and enforcement of agricultural water quality requirements in the State

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 147

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Burditt of West Rutland, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cina of Burlington, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Kascenska of Burke, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Masland of Thetford, Nigro of Bennington, Noyes of Wolcott, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, Squirrell of Underhill, Surprenant of Barnard, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Recreational Trails Compensation Study Committee

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 148

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a statewide school district

To the Committee on Education.

H. 149

By Rep. Stevens of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding equal pay protections

To the Committee on General and Housing.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 10**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 10. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 7, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 7, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 34**

Rep. Graning of Jericho, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to workforce leadership in Vermont

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-one minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, February 6, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Brian Cina of Burlington.

Message from the Senate No. 13

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 7. An act relating to automobile insurance.

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

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 78. An act relating to the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 150

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City, Bosch of Clarendon, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Oliver of Sheldon, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, Southworth of Walden, Steady of Milton, Tagliavia of Corinth, Walker of Swanton, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reinstating the waiting period exemption for firearms transfers at gun shows

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 151

By Reps. McGill of Bridport, Burrows of West Windsor, Cole of Hartford, Headrick of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Morrow of Weston, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to implementing the Restaurant Meals Program

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 152

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bosch of Clarendon, Canfield of Fair Haven, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Graning of Jericho, Higley of Lowell, Keyser of Rutland City, Kimbell of Woodstock, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Nelson of Derby, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Priestley of Bradford, Wells of Brownington, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the permitting of pilot or demonstration projects to treat or destroy emerging contaminants

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 153

By Reps. Greer of Bennington, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Galfetti of Barre Town, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Burlington, Howland of Rutland Town, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Malay of Pittsford, McGill of Bridport, Morrissey of Bennington, Morrow of Weston, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding family access to certified copies of birth and death certificates

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 154

By Reps. Mrowicki of Putney, Austin of Colchester, Bartholomew of Hartland, Birong of Vergennes, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Bosch of Clarendon, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Canfield of Fair Haven, Coffin of Cavendish, Conlon of Cornwall, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Hunter of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Kleppner of Burlington, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Lalley of Shelburne, Laroche of Franklin, Long of Newfane, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, McCoy of Poultney, McGill of Bridport, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Morrow of Weston, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Scheu of Middlebury, Squirrel of Underhill, Steady of Milton, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, Taylor of Milton, Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, White of Bethel, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 155

By Reps. Torre of Moretown, Cordes of Bristol, Goldman of Rockingham, Hunter of Manchester, Lalley of Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, Morrow of Weston, and Pouech of Hinesburg,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Standard Offer Program

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 156

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting pharmacy benefit managers from owning or operating a pharmacy in Vermont

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 157

By Reps. North of Ferrisburgh, Harrison of Chittenden, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, and Sweeney of Shelburne,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Act 250 exemptions and delegation of stormwater permitting

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 158

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting municipal regulation of the use of hygienic face masks

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 159

By Reps. North of Ferrisburgh, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Canfield of Fair Haven, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Feltus of Lyndon, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Steady of Milton, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the Renewable Energy Standard

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 10

Offered by Representative McGill of Bridport

House concurrent resolution designating February 6, 2025 as 3SquaresVT Awareness Day at the State House

Whereas, food shelves, food pantries, meal sites, senior meal programs, the Vermont Foodbank, emergency shelters, Area Agencies on Aging, community groups, businesses, health providers, statewide coalitions, faith-based organizations, and concerned and dedicated individuals are working to end hunger in Vermont, and

Whereas, a major support for this effort is 3SquaresVT, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Vermont that the Department for Children and Families' Economic Services Division administers, and

Whereas, 3SquaresVT is an extremely effective and efficient antihunger program providing nine meals for every one meal that the charitable food system offers, and

Whereas, more than 65,000 Vermonters, comprising nearly 40,000 households of all ages and demographics, are recipients of 3SquaresVT benefits, and

Whereas, a large segment of 3SquaresVT recipients are children, seniors, or people living with disabilities, and

Whereas, 3SquaresVT serves the food needs of friends, neighbors, and families with privacy and dignity and mitigates the impact of poverty on our most vulnerable residents, and

Whereas, this federal program strengthens the economic vitality of Vermont's local communities and businesses, such as grocers and farmers, and our State economy, by keeping redeemed benefits from each meal within our State, and

Whereas, the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that the number of people at risk of hunger is only increasing, particularly households with children, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates February 6, 2025 as 3SquaresVT Awareness Day at the State House.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 31, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 134

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro moved that the Committee on Ways and Means be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to calculating land use change tax and creating a new land use change tax exemption for developing affordable housing

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, which was agreed to.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 34

House bill, entitled

An act relating to workforce leadership in Vermont

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 141

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury spoke for the Committee on Appropriations.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 87. Nays, 51.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston
Austin of Colchester
Bartholomew of Hartland
Berbeco of Winooski
Birong of Vergennes

Durfee of Shaftsbury
Eastes of Guilford
Emmons of Springfield
Garofano of Essex
Goldman of Rockingham

McGill of Bridport *
Mihaly of Calais
Minier of South Burlington
Morrow of Weston
Mrowicki of Putney *

Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington *	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harple of Glover	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Olson of Starksboro
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Pezzo of Colchester
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Houghton of Essex Junction	Rachelson of Burlington
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howard of Rutland City	Satcowitz of Randolph
Burrows of West Windsor	Hunter of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	James of Manchester	Sheldon of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimball of Woodstock	Squirrell of Underhill
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stone of Burlington
Cina of Burlington *	Krasnow of South Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Sweeney of Shelburne
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington *	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cooper of Pownal	LaMont of Morristown	Torre of Moretown
Corcoran of Bennington	Lipsky of Stowe	Waszazak of Barre City *
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	White of Waitsfield
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	White of Bethel
Dolan of Essex Junction	McCann of Montpelier	Wood of Waterbury
Duke of Burlington	McFaun of Barre Town	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nelson of Derby
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nielsen of Brandon
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh *
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Burt of Cabot	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Kascenska of Burke	Powers of Waterford
Casey of Hubbardton	Keyser of Rutland City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Charlton of Chester	Labor of Morgan	Quimby of Lyndon
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Southworth of Walden
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Steady of Milton
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Maguire of Rutland City	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Toof of St. Albans Town
Donahue of Northfield *	Marcotte of Coventry	Walker of Swanton
Feltus of Lyndon	Micklus of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Galfetti of Barre Town *	Morgan, L. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, M. of Milton	
	Morrissey of Bennington	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Branagan of Georgia	McCoy of Poultney	Priestley of Bradford
Christie of Hartford	Morris of Springfield	Sibilia of Dover
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	O'Brien of Tunbridge	Taylor of Milton
Hooper of Burlington	Pinsonault of Dorset	

Rep. Cina of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes in honor of Windsong Young, and all our unhoused neighbors who have died due to complications of unsheltered homelessness. I vote yes with hope that our unhoused neighbors not only survive, but also thrive.”

Rep. Donahue of Northfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Extending the length of stay for some people, resulting in cutting off access to shelter for others, is not the right way to support those most in need. It actually turns our backs on them.”

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

The policy that was nefariously slid through in this Budget Adjustment could and should have been considered in the light of day, as there was plenty of time to do it the right way.”

Rep. Greer of Bennington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

The State cannot continue to allocate the money, or resources, to the continuation of the program, authorized under Section 88 of H.141, that offers no systemic change and only enables the perpetrators of the drug and opioid crisis to destroy lives by using this program as a means of mass drug distribution, and centers of criminal activity, which jeopardizes the safety and well-being of children and families. Simultaneously, by amending this prior agreement, we continue to erode the principles of personal responsibility over one’s own choices. We cannot continue to help people that will not help themselves. In the interest of my constituents and for the other needed and valuable programs, I will support H.141.”

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

The BAA provides funding for the technology that’s now critical for basic court operations. It also provides a cost-of-living increase that was left out of last year’s budget for sheriffs who provide security at courthouses. The technology the courts use, and the security that sheriffs provide, are critical to ensuring our courts are functioning, and are able to tackle the backlog of cases, and speed up case processing, so that there are swift and certain consequences for criminal behavior.”

Rep. McGill of Bridport provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes because every child we fail today is a lost opportunity for Vermont’s future. Not just numbers, not just policy – human lives, children’s futures, and the strength of our State.”

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

If we look outside, we see weather no one should be unhoused in. With climate chaos, harsh weather is possible anytime of year. As we’ve waited years for a plan from the Administration, my vote is to see that no one is left out in this weather. Our thorough process came to agreement on 99% of the BAA from the Governor. Your Appropriations Committee worked hard to take in many points of view and came up with this bill that I am proud to vote for, in support of most especially of vulnerable Vermonters.”

Rep. North of Ferrisburgh provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote No on H.141 on principle. First, the BAA is not for policy alteration, which is what the 80-day extension of the 80-day limit was. Second, for affordability when we have the opportunity to pay down debt, we should do so. Thirdly, for the lack of compromise, which we said we would, compromise was offered and rejected.”

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

There are many issues involving homelessness that this body must solve, in the long term. Kicking people into the cold solves none of them and would cost lives, in the short term.”

Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 614, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee:

Rep. Campbell of St. Johnsbury

Rep. Priestley of Bradford

Rep. Sibia of Dover

Adjournment

At four o'clock and twenty minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, February 7, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Harmony Devoe, Vermont's first Youth Poet Laureate, Warren.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following name of the member of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Mark Huntley of Cavendish

Member of the House,
Sessions 2013-2016

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased member.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 160

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield, Priestley of Bradford, Marcotte of Coventry, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a right to repair for medical devices

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 161

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield, Priestley of Bradford, Marcotte of Coventry, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Fair Repair Act

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 162

By Reps. North of Ferrisburgh, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Morrow of Weston, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Sweeney of Shelburne, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the three-acre stormwater permit

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 163

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Duke of Burlington, Marcotte of Coventry, Olson of Starksboro, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to workers' compensation

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 164

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City, Priestley of Bradford, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Brady of Williston, Burditt of West Rutland, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Critchlow of Colchester, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Goslant of Northfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Keyser of Rutland City, Kimbell of Woodstock, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe,

Logan of Burlington, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrow of Weston, Nielsen of Brandon, Nugent of South Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Parsons of Newbury, Pezzo of Colchester, Rachelson of Burlington, Sibilia of Dover, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, Toof of St. Albans Town, Torre of Moretown, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the distribution of local option tax revenue and the PILOT Special Fund

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 165

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to funding inclusive schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 166

By Reps. Bos-Lun of Westminster, Goldman of Rockingham, Headrick of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, and Torre of Moretown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing requirements for hunting with dogs

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 167

By Reps. Cole of Hartford, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burt of Cabot, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Lipsky of Stowe, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrow of Weston, Nelson of Derby, Surprenant of Barnard, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 168

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington and McCann of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting academic freedom for prekindergarten through grade 12 educators

To the Committee on Education.

H. 169

By Reps. Dodge of Essex, Christie of Hartford, Cole of Hartford, Arsenault of Williston, Bartholomew of Hartland, Berbeco of Winooski, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Charlton of Chester, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Duke of Burlington, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Keyser of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Sibia of Dover, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, and Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending the prohibitions against discrimination in public accommodations and housing

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 170

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Bluemle of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to University of Vermont and State Agricultural College residential living space

To the Committee on Education.

H. 171

By Rep. Burditt of West Rutland,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Attorney General investigations into a law enforcement officer's use of a firearm

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Senate Bill Referred**S. 7**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to automobile insurance

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 12**

Offered by All Members of the House

Offered by All Members of the Senate

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 University of Vermont Catamounts on winning their school's first NCAA Division I men's soccer championship (College Cup)

Whereas, the saga of the 2024 University of Vermont (UVM) men's soccer squad, affectionately known as the "Cardiac Cats" in honor of their late game-winning goals, exceeds the allure of a Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, and

Whereas, although they were the 2024 America East men's soccer champions, unseeded UVM astounded the pundits as the Catamounts reached the coveted semifinal round, winning this penultimate soccer challenge against the third-seeded University of Denver in a thrilling 4–3 overtime triumph, and

Whereas, in the championship game, played at the WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, North Carolina, and bound for legendary status, UVM faced 13th-ranked Marshall University; and despite Marshall scoring first at the 67-minute mark, UVM rebounded with a goal in the 81st minute, forcing the game into a climactic overtime period, when the Cardiac Cats (16–2–6) clinched the NCAA title with a decisive goal less than five minutes into the extra time frame, and

Whereas, these amazing Catamounts were Lou Liedtka, Niklas Herceg, Nathan Siméon, Mike Bleeker, Cole Richardson, Adrian Schulze Solano, Connor Thompson, Andrew Millar, Niels Hartman, Maximilian Kissel, Nick Lockermann, Yaniv Bazini, Nash Barlow, David Ismail, Ethan Czapowski, Gianluca Armellino, Ioannis Vassiliou, Marcell Papp, Toby Grant, Karl Daly, Sydney Wathuta, TJ Liquori, Pieter Bultman, Ryan Zellefrow, Zach Barrett, Jeremy Tsang, Max Murray, and Mitchell Ringman, and

Whereas, Head Coach Robert Dow, Associate Head Coach Brad Cole, Assistant Coach Rory Twomey, Goalkeeper Coach Brendan Pulley, Assistant Athletic Performance Coach Mike Ederer, Athletic Trainer Hannah Tremel, Director of Operations Mack Walton, and student managers Eli Ross and Eric Bissell were all elated with this amazing victory, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 University of Vermont Catamounts on winning their school's first NCAA Division I men's soccer championship (College Cup), *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the University of Vermont Athletics Department.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 31, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 141

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 118

Rep. Arsenault of Williston, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 1455 is amended to read:

§ 1455. HATE-MOTIVATED CRIMES

(a) A person who commits, causes to be committed, or attempts to commit any crime and whose conduct is motivated, in whole or in part, by ~~the victim's~~ another person's or a group of persons' actual or perceived membership in a protected category shall be subject to the following penalties:

(1) If the maximum penalty for the underlying crime is one year or less, the penalty for a violation of this section shall be imprisonment for not more than two years or a fine of not more than \$2,000.00, or both.

(2) If the maximum penalty for the underlying crime is more than one year but less than five years, the penalty for a violation of this section shall be imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

(3) If the maximum penalty for the underlying crime is five years or more, the penalty for the underlying crime shall apply; however, the court shall consider the motivation of the defendant as a factor in sentencing.

(b) ~~The victim's~~ A person's or a group of persons' actual or perceived membership in a protected category or categories need not be the predominant reason or the sole reason for the defendant's conduct.

(c) As used in this section, "protected category" includes race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, service in the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard, disability as defined by 21 V.S.A. § 495d(5), sexual orientation, gender identity, and perceived membership in any such group.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Special Report of the Committee on Government Operations Agreed To

Special Committee Report on the request of Bruce Busa

for the House to judge the election and qualification

of its member in House District Bennington-1

Rep. Birong of Vergennes, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which has been referred the request of Bruce Busa for the House to judge the election and qualification of its member in House District Bennington-1, submitted the following report:

The Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs considered the request of Bruce Busa for the House to judge the election and qualification of its member in House District Bennington-1. The Committee affirms the certified election results and finds that Representative Jonathan Cooper of Pownal was duly elected and is qualified to represent House District Bennington-1 as a member of the House of Representatives.

Thereupon, **Rep. Birong of Vergennes** moved to accept the report.

Pending the question, Shall the House accept the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs on the House District Bennington-1 Contested Election?, **Rep. Higley of Lowell** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the House accept the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs on the House District Bennington-1 Contested Election?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 91. Nays, 42.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Emmons of Springfield	McGill of Bridport
Austin of Colchester	Feltus of Lyndon	Micklus of Milton
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Mihaly of Calais
Bartley of Fairfax	Goldman of Rockingham	Minier of South Burlington
Berbeco of Winooski	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Morrow of Weston
Birong of Vergennes	Graning of Jericho	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Hango of Berkshire	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Harple of Glover	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Harrison of Chittenden	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Headrick of Burlington	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Boutin of Barre City	Holcombe of Norwich	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Hooper of Randolph	Olson of Starksboro *
Brady of Williston	Hooper of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction*	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Quimby of Lyndon
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Rachelson of Burlington
Burrows of West Windsor	James of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Kascenska of Burke	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sheldon of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stevens of Waterbury
Cole of Hartford	Krasnow of South Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	Lailey of Shelburne	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cordes of Bristol	LaLonde of South Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Critchlow of Colchester	LaMont of Morristown	Torre of Moretown
Dodge of Essex	Logan of Burlington	Waszazak of Barre City
Dolan of Essex Junction	Long of Newfane	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Donahue of Northfield		White of Waitsfield
		White of Bethel

Duke of Burlington	Marcotte of Coventry	Wood of Waterbury
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Masland of Thetford	Yacovone of Morristown
Eastes of Guilford		

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	North of Ferrisburgh
Bosch of Clarendon	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Burt of Cabot	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Powers of Waterford
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Pritchard of Pawlet
Charlton of Chester	Lipsky of Stowe	Southworth of Walden
Coffin of Cavendish *	Luneau of St. Albans City	Steady of Milton
Corcoran of Bennington	Maguire of Rutland City *	Tagliavia of Corinth
Demar of Enosburgh	McFaun of Barre Town	Toof of St. Albans Town
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Morgan, L. of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Morgan, M. of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Galfetti of Barre Town	Morrissey of Bennington *	Winter of Ludlow
Goslant of Northfield	Nelson of Derby	
	Nielsen of Brandon	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Branagan of Georgia	Laroche of Franklin	Priestley of Bradford
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Malay of Pittsford	Sibilia of Dover
Christie of Hartford	McCann of Montpelier	Stone of Burlington
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney	Taylor of Milton
Greer of Bennington	Morris of Springfield	
	Pinsonault of Dorset	

Those members abstaining:

Cooper of Pownal

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

If this vote is truly about the disenfranchisement of the voters in Bennington-5, then we need to revote Bennington-5. As we found out that 14 voters in that district had the wrong ballots. We cannot ignore those voters if we believe that others have been disenfranchised. On the weight of this and the voices of my constituents as expressed to me, I must vote to revote.”

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes to support the hard work of the committee in a very hard situation, and their commitment to continue their work so this situation doesn’t happen again. Thank you.”

Rep. Maguire of Rutland City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted no because I am deeply concerned that if this situation does occur again, it has a precedent that has been set by our response and decision today.”

Rep. Morrissey of Bennington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote ‘No’ this morning on the House District Bennington-1 Contested Election Special Report because there needs to be a fair and legal process put in place for Vermont’s voters to feel that their vote counted. My vote does not reflect my preference of one candidate over the other, for I have respect for both candidates. Nor does it have anything to do with which political party either of the candidates belongs to. I would be voting the same way if the shoe was on the other foot today. My vote today reflects the need for a process that upholds the integrity of our democracy and the premise that a voter’s vote truly does count.”

Rep. Olson of Starksboro provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I’m voting ‘Yes.’ I rely on the 9-1-1 vote of the committee members who heard and considered all of the testimony.”

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Hango of Berkshire**, the following remarks by **Rep. Birong of Vergennes** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

Over the past four weeks, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs considered history, legal precedent, and practice during a review and judgment of the Bennington-1 election.

Based on the testimony of the House Clerk, Legislative Counsel, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of State, we determined that the House has the sole authority to judge the qualifications of its members. No court or

other branch of our State government has the authority to make this determination.

As we evaluated the decisions made by prior chambers, we found procedural guidance on how to resolve disputed elections and recounts but discovered no identical match to the facts of the Bennington-1 election. We considered past contested legislative elections, in particular elections that took place in 1983 and 1973, as they held the most similarities to this case. In the absence of a clear path to follow, the Committee was left to consider the will of the voters, the integrity of the House, and the authority and limitations set forth by the Vermont Constitution.

Ultimately, the Committee focused on two possible paths: the House could choose to affirm the certified election of the currently seated Representative, or the House could choose to structure a revote. Based on all available research, the House had never previously ordered a revote or special election in response to a request to judge the election and qualification of a member.”

As the Committee deliberated, it was apparent that a revote would not be a satisfactory remedy for this contested election. A revote could not recreate the time and context of the initial election. Accordingly, the Committee determined that the best course of action was to affirm the certified election of Representative Jonathan Cooper.

Madam Speaker, the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs considered the request of Bruce Busa for the House to judge the election and qualification of its member in House District Bennington-1. The Committee affirms the certified election results and finds that Representative Jonathan Cooper of Pownal was duly elected and is qualified to represent House District Bennington-1 as a member of the House of Representatives.”

Message from the Senate No. 14

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 19. House concurrent resolution congratulating Vermonter Noah Dines on establishing a new one-year world vertical skiing record of 3,590,097 feet.

H.C.R. 20. House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermonters who created the Tony Award-winning musical Hadestown and Montpelier High School's role in the Washington County teen performances.

H.C.R. 21. House concurrent resolution expressing strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designating February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 22. House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025 as Farm to School and Child Awareness Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 23. House concurrent resolution designating February 13, 2025 as Youth Mentoring Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 24. House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025, as Vermont Outdoor Recreation Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 25. House concurrent resolution recognizing the vital role of Vermont 211 on its 20th anniversary and recognizing February 11, 2025 as National 211 Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 26. House concurrent resolution congratulating Ilona Delsing Rosa Maher on her 2024 Paris Olympics rugby sevens bronze medal.

H.C.R. 27. House concurrent resolution honoring Joan W. Coursier for her exemplary community service devising and leading the Halifax senior meal program.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 10.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 19

House concurrent resolution congratulating Vermonter Noah Dines on establishing a new one-year world vertical skiing record of 3,590,097 feet

H.C.R. 20

House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermonters who created the Tony Award-winning musical Hadestown and Montpelier High School's role in the Washington County teen performances

H.C.R. 21

House concurrent resolution expressing strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designating February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 22

House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025 as Farm to School and Child Awareness Day at the State House

H.C.R. 23

House concurrent resolution designating February 13, 2025 as Youth Mentoring Day at the State House

H.C.R. 24

House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025, as Vermont Outdoor Recreation Day at the State House

H.C.R. 25

House concurrent resolution recognizing the vital role of Vermont 211 on its 20th anniversary and recognizing February 11, 2025 as National 211 Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 26

House concurrent resolution congratulating Ilona Delsing Rosa Maher on her 2024 Paris Olympics rugby sevens bronze medal

H.C.R. 27

House concurrent resolution honoring Joan W. Coursier for her exemplary community service devising and leading the Halifax senior meal program

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by David Robinson, Army veteran with K-9 Unit, Brattleboro.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Dean Roy of Stowe led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 15

A message was received from the Senate by Mr. Bloomer, its Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 11. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 14, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 172

By Reps. Krasnow of South Burlington, Torre of Moretown, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Hooper of Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, and Pezzo of Colchester,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a Common Interest Community Resource Center

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 173

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and Headrick of Burlington,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to granting public higher education employees the right to strike

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 174

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and Headrick of Burlington,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Labor Relations Board

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 175

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and Headrick of Burlington,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to clarifying the right of adjunct faculty to receive unemployment insurance benefits

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 176

By Reps. Burditt of West Rutland, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goodnow of Brattleboro, LaLonde of South Burlington, Malay of Pittsford, Oliver of Sheldon, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to developing the Department of Corrections' community restitution program

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 177

By Reps. Cordes of Bristol and Kleppner of Burlington,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to income-based education funding

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 178

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Steady of Milton, Taylor of Milton, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to refunding property tax overpayments to the City of Barre and to the Town of Milton

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 179

By Rep. McCann of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the membership of the State Board of Education and the reestablishment of the Vermont Department of Education

To the Committee on Education.

H. 180

By Reps. Olson of Starksboro, Boyden of Cambridge, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Charlton of Chester, Cordes of Bristol, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Masland of Thetford, Mrowicki of Putney, Page of Newport City, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Sweeney of Shelburne,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the closure of an elementary school

To the Committee on Education.

H. 181

By Reps. Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Austin of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Burke of Brattleboro, Dodge of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Headrick of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, Ode of Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standards

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 182

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes, Boyden of Cambridge, Noyes of Wolcott, and Nugent of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the licensure of early childhood educators

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 183

By Rep. Dobrovich of Williamstown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to strict liability for damages caused by domestic dogs

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 184

By Reps. Donahue of Northfield, Burrows of West Windsor, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, and LaMont of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a community health center pilot program

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 185

By Reps. Olson of Starksboro, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, Waszazak of Barre City, Wells of Brownington, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to developing and implementing a universal primary care program

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 186

By Rep. Taylor of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to removal of court discretion in sentencing a defendant for selling or dispensing a regulated drug with death resulting

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 187

By Rep. Garofano of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring the use of personal flotation devices during cold weather

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 188

By Reps. Nugent of South Burlington, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to cancellation of motor vehicle purchases

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 189

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to funding support services for persons who use drugs and eliminating misdemeanor criminal penalties for possessing or dispensing a personal use drug supply

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 190

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Priestley of Bradford, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to voluntary engagement in sex work

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

H. 44

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the laws governing impaired driving

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 25

Offered by House Committee on Human Services

House concurrent resolution recognizing the vital role of Vermont 211 on its 20th anniversary and recognizing February 11, 2025 as National 211 Day in Vermont

Whereas, United Ways of Vermont operates Vermont 211, a nationally accredited health and human services helpline that provides a 24-7 statewide information and referral service, and

Whereas, Vermont 211 provides streamlined easy access to over 1,000 community-based agencies, offering 2,900 programs and 10,800 services via phone, text, email, and website, and

Whereas, a team of 11 trained, empathetic Community Resource Specialists is employed at Vermont 211, and it is available to help Vermonters assess their needs in a safe and confidential manner, and

Whereas, Vermont 211 received over 57,000 contacts via phone calls, texts, and emails in 2024, resulting in over 12,500 referrals for programs and services, and

Whereas, the most commonly requested services were for basic needs such as access to housing, food, and utilities, and Vermont 211 helps to maintain the integrity of the 911 system as a responder to nonemergency calls, and

Whereas, the Department for Children and Families receives invaluable support from Vermont 211 through the management of after-hours general assistance calls, and

Whereas, Vermont 211 works with Vermont Emergency Management Services in the course of regional, statewide, and national emergencies such as flooding and pandemics, and

Whereas, the member organizations of the Food Security Roadmap Coalition value Vermont 211 as an essential partner and an essential tool for the provision of robust services, and

Whereas, Vermont 211 is celebrating 20 years of service as an essential community resource, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes the vital role of Vermont 211 on its 20th anniversary and recognizes February 11, 2025 as National 211 Day in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Vermont 211.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 118**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and eighteen minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Maddie Messier, sophomore at BFA St. Albans, violinist, and member of Vermont Youth Orchestra.

Message from the Senate No. 16

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 9. An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault.

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

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolutions of the following titles:

J.R.S. 12. Joint resolution providing for the election of a Sergeant at Arms, and three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College.

J.R.S. 13. Joint resolution establishing a procedure for the conduct of the election of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College trustees by plurality vote by the General Assembly in 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 191

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Hooper of Randolph, Logan of Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the use of private and for-profit correctional facilities

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 192

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting solitary confinement for children

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 193

By Reps. Bluemle of Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Garofano of Essex, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a child and parent legal representation working group

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 194

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Chapin of East Montpelier, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, and Minier of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to high-capacity, gender-neutral restrooms in schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 195

By Rep. McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to universal basic income payments for homeless and runaway youth

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 196

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to energy efficiency utility jurisdiction

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 197

By Reps. McGill of Bridport, Cole of Hartford, Maguire of Rutland City, and Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing peer support positions for housing stability

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 198

By Reps. Minier of South Burlington, Berbeco of Winooski, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Morrissey of Bennington, Nugent of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the reconstitution of the University of Vermont Board of Trustees

To the Committee on Education.

H. 199

By Reps. Burrows of West Windsor, Bartholomew of Hartland, Coffin of Cavendish, Cordes of Bristol, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to tuition charged by public schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 200

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to persons prohibited from possessing firearms

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 201

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington, Christie of Hartford, and Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting discrimination based on an individual's criminal history

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 202

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the transparency of prescription drug costs and spending

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 203

By Rep. Graning of Jericho,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding options for association health plans

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 204

By Reps. Taylor of Milton and Harple of Glover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the collection and recycling of waste motor vehicle tires

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 205

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Christie of Hartford, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, LaLonde of South Burlington, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to agreements not to compete

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 206

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Graning of Jericho, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Uniform Commercial Code

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 207

By Rep. Branagan of Georgia,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance coverage for diabetes treatment

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 208

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Marcotte of Coventry, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boyden of Cambridge, Brown of Richmond, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lipsky of Stowe, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Mihaly of Calais, Minier of South Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibilia of Dover, Stevens of Waterbury, Surprenant of Barnard, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to consumer data privacy and online surveillance

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 209

By Rep. Goldman of Rockingham,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to intranasal epinephrine in schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 210

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Marcotte of Coventry, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Brown of Richmond, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton,

Mihaly of Calais, Minier of South Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibia of Dover, Stevens of Waterbury, Surprenant of Barnard, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to an age-appropriate design code

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 211

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Marcotte of Coventry, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Brown of Richmond, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Mihaly of Calais, Minier of South Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibia of Dover, Stevens of Waterbury, Surprenant of Barnard, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, Waszazak of Barre City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to data brokers and personal information

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 212

By Rep. Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating incentives for AmeriCorps members

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 213

By Rep. Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending the bases and process of child abuse and neglect investigations

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Senate Bill Referred**S. 9**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

**Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar
Bill Referred to the Committee on Appropriations**

H. 13

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Joint Resolution Referred to Committee**J.R.H. 2**

Offered by Representatives Page of Newport City, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Donahue of Northfield, Goldman of Rockingham, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Marcotte of Coventry, McFaun of Barre Town, Nelson of Derby, Sibia of Dover, and Surprenant of Barnard

Joint resolution urging President Trump to refrain from imposing tariffs on goods and services imported from Canada

Whereas, the United States and Canada have been military and diplomatic allies and economic partners, even through episodes of commercial disagreement, since Canadian confederation in 1867, and most especially from World War II forward, and

Whereas, according to TD Bank, during the first three quarters of 2024, approximately \$683 billion in combined goods and services was shipped in both directions across the United States-Canada border, and

Whereas, the same report also noted that Canada is the United States' number one export market, and

Whereas, significant elements of this trade are integrated, especially in the automobile manufacturing sector, and

Whereas, even closer to home, the personal and commercial ties between Vermont and Canada are among the closest of any American state to its northern neighbor, and

Whereas, the personal aspect of this relationship is reflected in the State of Vermont offering its residents enhanced IDs for driver and nondriver identification, in order to facilitate easier cross-border travel, and

Whereas, for 2023, the Canadian Consulate in Boston reported that Vermont exported \$680 million in goods and \$165 million in services to Canada, and

Whereas, in 2023, Vermont imported \$2.6 billion in goods from Canada and Canadian investments in the State supported over 17,000 Vermont jobs, and

Whereas, according to the Department of Public Service, in 2023, 24 percent of Vermont's electric supply portfolio was served by Hydro-Québec, aside from any renewable energy credits, and Vermont Gas Systems receives 100 percent of its gas from Canada, and

Whereas, in recent years, Governor Philip Scott has repeatedly traveled to Montreal on trade missions and has strived to enhance Vermont-Quebec trade ties, and

Whereas, on Monday February 3, 2025, the United States came within hours of imposing a 25 percent tariff on most Canadian products entering our country and a corresponding 10 percent tariff on energy products and services, and

Whereas, the Government of Canada was prepared to respond in kind had the United States proceeded with its announced intentions to implement these tariffs, and

Whereas, shortly before the deadline, the United States announced a 30-day delay before any tariffs with Canada might be imposed, leaving a sense of immediate relief but a period of worrisome uncertainty, and

Whereas, the United States imports more steel and aluminum from Canada than from any other nation, and the 25 percent universally applicable tariff on these products, which the United States announced on February 10, 2025, will significantly impact both nations' economies, and

Whereas, the separate issue of a possible 25 percent tariff on most Canadian goods entering the United States and an associated 10 percent tariff on imports of Canadian energy products, along with the economic and daily living implications for Vermont and Vermonters, remains on the table, and

Whereas, Governor Philip Scott has established an interagency task force to prepare for the still real potential that these proposed tariffs, aside from those already imposed on steel and aluminum, will take effect, and

Whereas, although the Governor's foresight to develop a contingency plan for the worst-case scenario is prudent and appropriate, the ideal situation would be for the task force's contingencies to prove unnecessary, as the dueling tariffs could result in a disruption in long-established industrial and other commercial relationships and agreements, and the two nation's tariffs could prove costly for consumers on both sides of our shared international boundary, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges President Donald J. Trump to refrain from imposing tariffs on goods and services imported into the United States from Canada, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Donald J. Trump, Governor Philip B. Scott, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, Premier François Legault, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Was read, treated as bill, and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development pursuant to House Rule 52.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence

J.R.S. 11

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 11. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 14, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 14, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Joint Senate Resolution Placed on Calendar**J.R.S. 12**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 12. Joint resolution providing for the election of a Sergeant at Arms, and three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, February 20, 2025, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to elect a Sergeant at Arms, and three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College. In case election of all such officers shall not be made on that day, the two Houses shall meet in Joint Assembly at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed in such election, until all such officers are elected.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Joint Senate Resolution Placed on Calendar**J.R.S. 13**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 13. Joint resolution establishing a procedure for the conduct of the election of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College trustees by plurality vote by the General Assembly in 2025.

Whereas, in 1997 the election of three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College was decided by plurality vote, which required one ballot only, and

Whereas, in 1999 the election of three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College was decided by majority vote, which required a total of eight ballots, and

Whereas, in 2001 and subsequent bienniums the elections of three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College were decided by plurality vote, each of which required one ballot only, and

Whereas, if an election for multiple vacancies is to be decided by a plurality vote, then a great savings of time can be effectuated, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That, notwithstanding the current provisions of Joint Rule 10, and for this election only, the election of three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College at a Joint Assembly to be held on February 20, 2025, shall be governed by the following procedure:

(1) All candidates for the office of trustee shall be voted upon and decided on the same ballot; members may vote for any number of candidates up to and including the maximum number of vacancies to be filled, which in this case shall be three.

(2) The three candidates receiving the most votes shall be declared elected to fill the three vacancies.

(3) In the event that the first balloting for the trustee vacancies results in a tie vote for one or more of the three vacant positions, then voting shall continue on successive ballots until the vacancies have been filled, again by election declared of those candidates receiving the most votes.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 22

Offered by Representatives Cole of Hartford, Bartholomew of Hartland, Bishop of Colchester, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Brady of Williston, Branagan of Georgia, Burke of Brattleboro, Burtt of Cabot, Cina of Burlington, Conlon of Cornwall, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Greer of Bennington, Harvey of Castleton, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, Kimbell of Woodstock, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Mihaly of Calais, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrow of Weston, Nelson of Derby, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibilia of Dover, Surprenant of Barnard, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Waszazak of Barre City

House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025 as Farm to School and Child Awareness Day at the State House

Whereas, 2007 Acts and Resolves No. 24 established the Rozo McLaughlin Farm-to-School Program “to award local grants for the purpose of helping Vermont schools develop relationships with local farmers and producers,” and

Whereas, the Rozo McLaughlin Farm-to-School and Early Childhood Grant Program enables early childhood, elementary, and secondary students to eat healthy foods, and it establishes partnerships between Vermont’s farmers and local schools that contribute to the economic sustainability of the Vermont agricultural community, and

Whereas, the Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Network reports that 89 percent of the State’s schools purchase locally produced food, 56 percent of early childhood programs serve locally produced food at least once a week, and over 100 farms are selling their produce to schools and early childhood programs, and

Whereas, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has documented that most school children receive half their daily calories from school meals, and

Whereas, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 1264(a)(1)(A), all students in Vermont are eligible for universal school meals and 16 V.S.A. § 1264(a) codified the Local Food Incentive Grant Program, which serves as a “direct financial incentive to school districts and supervisory unions that meet local purchasing targets in their school meal programs,” and

Whereas, Farm-to-School exposes students to careers in agriculture and food systems, enabling them to envision a personal future in Vermont, and

Whereas, Rozo McLaughlin Farm-to-School Program participants are speaking with legislators today to share the Program’s personal importance for them and the value of the corresponding Farm to Early Childhood program for their younger siblings, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates February 12, 2025 as Farm to School and Child Awareness Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Network.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 24

Offered by: Representative White of Waitsfield

House concurrent resolution designating February 12, 2025, as Vermont Outdoor Recreation Day at the State House

Whereas, Vermont is proud of its unparalleled and diverse natural landscape, and it is a global destination for many types of world-class outdoor recreation, and

Whereas, our State's outdoor recreational assets consist of over 8,000 miles of public access trails, including 150 miles of recreational rail trails; 360,000 acres of wildlife management areas, State forests, and State parks; more than six million acres of hunting-accessible land; and over 40 alpine and cross-country ski areas, and

Whereas, in 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 77, the General Assembly designated skiing and snowboarding as the State's official winter sports, and

Whereas, the importance of welcoming everyone, regardless of ethnicity or background, to enjoy outdoor recreational pursuits is recognized, and outdoor recreational venues embrace the intrinsic community values of inclusion and representation, and

Whereas, outdoor recreation creates business opportunities, attracts new residents, and offers workforce pathways that incentivize young Vermonters to remain in the State, and

Whereas, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in fiscal year 2023, in businesses located in all 14 Vermont counties, outdoor recreation generates \$2.1 billion in economic import, and the industry employed over 16,000 persons, comprising just over five percent of the Vermont workforce, and

Whereas, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Day is an occasion to celebrate the importance of outdoor recreation to the economy, the quality of life, and the mental and physical well-being of Vermonters and visitors, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates February 12, 2025, as Vermont Outdoor Recreation Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development; the Secretary of Natural Resources; the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation; the Commissioner of Tourism and Marketing; the Executive Director of the Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance; the Executive Director of

the Vermont Mountain Bike Association; and the President of the Vermont Ski Areas Association.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 41

Rep. Burditt of West Rutland, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a felony penalty for abuse of a corpse

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 3761a is added to read:

§ 3761a. ABUSE OF THE DEAD BODY OF A PERSON

(a) No person shall, knowingly without legal authorization, intentionally burn, mutilate, disfigure, dismember, or destroy the dead body of a person.

(b)(1) No person shall intentionally bury, transport, hide, conceal, burn, mutilate, disfigure, dismember, or destroy the dead body of a person for the purpose of concealing a crime or avoiding apprehension, prosecution, or conviction of a crime.

(2) No person shall commit sexual conduct upon the dead body of a person.

(c)(1) A person who violates subsection (a) of this section shall be imprisoned for not more than five years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both.

(2) A person who violates subsection (b) of this section shall be imprisoned not more than 15 years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

(d) As used in this section:

(1) "Dead body of a person" does not include the cremated remains of a person.

(2) "Sexual conduct" means any of the following committed against the dead body of a person:

(A) any conduct involving contact between the penis and the vulva, the penis and the penis, the penis and the anus, the mouth and the penis, the mouth and the anus, the vulva and the vulva, or the mouth and the vulva;

(B) any intrusion, however slight, by any part of an individual's body or any object into any part of a dead human body with the intent of arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any individual;

(C) any touching of the dead human body with the intent of arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any individual;

(D) masturbation; or

(E) bestiality.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 5211 is amended to read:

§ 5211. UNAUTHORIZED BURIAL OR REMOVAL; PENALTY

A person who buries, entombs, transports, or removes the dead body of a person without a burial-transit permit so to do, or in any other manner or at any other time or place than as specified in such permit, shall be ~~imprisoned not more than five years or~~ fined not more than \$1,000.00, ~~or both.~~

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to abuse of the dead body of a person"

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-eight minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, February 13, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Brenda Steady of Milton.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 13th day of February 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 78 An act relating to the use of the Australian ballot system in local elections**Message from the Senate No. 17**

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 30. An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107.

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

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 35. An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 214

By Rep. Bluemle of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Safe Harbor Award Program for expenses related to reproductive and gender-affirming health care services

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 215

By Rep. Nugent of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the compensation of members of the General Assembly and the Governor

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 216

By Rep. Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to authorizing the Clean Heat Standard rules

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 217

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Branagan of Georgia, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Goslant of Northfield, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Lipsky of Stowe, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Southworth of Walden, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting geoengineering

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 218

By Rep. Wood of Waterbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 219

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, LaLonde of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morrissey of Bennington, Sweeney of Shelburne, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a family support pilot program for incarcerated parents and guardians

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 220

By Reps. Christie of Hartford and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a task force to update Vermont's CHINS laws

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Senate Bill Referred

S. 30

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Health Care.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 23

Offered by Representative Cordes of Bristol

House concurrent resolution designating February 13, 2025 as Youth Mentoring Day at the State House

Whereas, now more than ever, youth need supportive and committed mentors in their lives, who see, hear, and champion them, and

Whereas, caring and committed mentors offer support for youth, providing them a consistent friend, helping to ignite a young person's curiosities, solidifying their passions, and leveraging their talents, and

Whereas, mentored youths exhibit improved resiliency and better relationships with peers, family, schools, and community, and

Whereas, 96 percent of mentored youths agree or strongly agree that "my mentor makes me feel like I matter," and 92 percent agree or strongly agree that "having a mentor has made a positive difference in my life," and

Whereas, mentoring relationships provide individualized attention and support, which were primary components of personal rebounding from the pandemic, and

Whereas, Vermont mentoring agencies, including MENTOR Vermont and other public and private organizations throughout the State, are committed to working collaboratively to empower youth, advance the Vermont mentoring field, and broaden the reach of mentoring relationships in our communities, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates February 13, 2025 as Youth Mentoring Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to MENTOR Vermont.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 41

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a felony penalty for abuse of a corpse

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 98

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until February 18, 2025.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 12**

Joint resolution providing for the election of a Sergeant at Arms, and three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College

Was taken up and adopted in concurrence.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 13**

Joint resolution establishing a procedure for the conduct of the election of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College trustees by plurality vote by the General Assembly in 2025

Was taken up and adopted in concurrence.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and twenty-five minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, February 14, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Rob North of Ferrisburgh.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following name of the member of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Sandra L. Baird of Burlington

Member of the House,
Sessions 1993-1996

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased member.

Pages Honored

In appreciation of their many services to the members of the General Assembly, the Speaker recognized the following named Pages who completed their service today and presented them with commemorative pins:

Peter Burkholder of Barnard
Salvador Doyle of Montpelier
Lucy Hakim of Shelburne
Daphne Krohn of South Burlington
Dean Roy of Stowe
Hayley Sherman of East Montpelier
Henry Smith of Shelburne

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 221

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Christie of Hartford, LaLonde of South Burlington, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group
To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 222

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Christie of Hartford, Goslant of Northfield, LaLonde of South Burlington, and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to participation in a domestic violence accountability program as a condition of a final relief from abuse prevention order

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 223

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stalking through the use of tracking technology

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 224

By Rep. Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a thermal benefits charge

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 225

By Rep. Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to conducting a climate health study

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 226

By Rep. Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to conducting a Clean Heat Standard study

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 19**

Offered by Representatives Lipsky of Stowe, Morrow of Weston, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Hunter of Manchester, Kleppner of Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Masland of Thetford, McCoy of Poultney, Morgan, L. of Milton, North of Ferrisburgh, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Priestley of Bradford, Sheldon of Middlebury, Tagliavia of Corinth, Torre of Moretown, Wells of Brownington, and White of Waitsfield

House concurrent resolution congratulating Vermonter Noah Dines on establishing a new one-year world vertical skiing record of 3,590,097 feet

Whereas, uphill or vertical skiing entails different modes of energy and exertion than a downhill traverse, and when a skier accumulates millions of feet in the condensed time frame of one year, the stamina and strength required is most impressive, and

Whereas, Vermonter Noah Dines set out to establish a new world record for the most number of feet skied vertically in a single year, an ambitious goal since the existing record, set in 2016, was 2,500,000 feet, and

Whereas, the mileage required to meet his objective was undeniably daunting, but Noah Dines was hardly deterred; he pursued this project with the utmost enthusiasm, and

Whereas, he commenced this endeavor on his home mountain in Stowe, ascending upwards nearly 10,000 feet each day, plus the requisite descent necessitated to complete each round trip, and

Whereas, realizing that year-round snow, not merely the limited months it was accessible in Stowe, was essential for his mission, Noah Dines traveled within the United States to Colorado, Oregon, and Utah, and abroad to Austria, Chile, and France, and

Whereas, in pursuit of his target, Noah Dines maximized three pairs of ski boots, five sets of skis, and 12 pairs of skins, and

Whereas, in September 2024, Noah Dines broke the then-existing 2,500,000-foot record, but he was hardly finished, as his original hope was to ski 3,000,000 feet, and

Whereas, he far exceeded that mark, concluding on December 30, 2024, having skied vertically 3,590,097 feet, with supporting statistics of 6,082 total miles and 2,268.34 total hours skied, and having averaged a daily 9,836 vertical feet, 6.13 hours, 16.66 miles, and 1.8 bags of candy,
now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Vermonter Noah Dines on establishing a new one-year world vertical skiing record of 3,590,097 feet, the equivalent of 120 ascents of Mount Everest, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Noah Dines.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Message from the Senate No. 18

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted Senate concurrent resolution of the following title:

S.C.R. 2. Senate concurrent resolution honoring the Vermont Old Cemetery Association.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 28. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax High School Bullets Division III championship baseball team.

H.C.R. 29. House concurrent resolution congratulating Montgomery runner Elinor Purrier St. Pierre on her outstanding athletic achievement at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

H.C.R. 30. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative, House Republican Leader, and Milton Town Manager Donald H. Turner Jr..

H.C.R. 31. House concurrent resolution in memory of former University of Vermont associate professor, poet, and community leader Mary Jane Dickerson.

H.C.R. 32. House concurrent resolution honoring former Killington Town Clerk and Treasurer Lucrecia Wonsor for her insightful municipal government leadership.

H.C.R. 33. House concurrent resolution honoring criminal defense and personal injury attorney and Thetford Academy indoor track coach Charles Buttrey of Thetford.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and fifty-eight minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 11.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 28

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax High School Bullets Division III championship baseball team

H.C.R. 29

House concurrent resolution congratulating Montgomery runner Elinor Purrier St. Pierre on her outstanding athletic achievement at the 2024 Paris Olympics

H.C.R. 30

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative, House Republican Leader, and Milton Town Manager Donald H. Turner Jr.

H.C.R. 31

House concurrent resolution in memory of former University of Vermont associate professor, poet, and community leader Mary Jane Dickerson

H.C.R. 32

House concurrent resolution honoring former Killington Town Clerk and Treasurer Lucrecia Wonsor for her insightful municipal government leadership

H.C.R. 33

House concurrent resolution honoring criminal defense and personal injury attorney and Thetford Academy indoor track coach Charles Buttrey of Thetford

S.C.R. 2

Senate concurrent resolution honoring the Vermont Old Cemetery Association.

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Phil Pouech of Hinesburg.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pages Cecilia Huling of Thetford and Mary Rogerson of Cabot led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 19

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 14. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 21, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 227

By Reps. Bos-Lun of Westminster, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Chapin of East Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a residential peer respite facility in southern Vermont

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 228

By Reps. Cole of Hartford and Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to hospital employee compensation and administrative staffing ratios

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 229

By Reps. Burke of Brattleboro, Boyden of Cambridge, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burt of Cabot, Nelson of Derby, O'Brien of Tunbridge, and Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund to provide grants for losses to farms and forestry operations due to weather conditions

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 230

By Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 231

By Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections to fish and wildlife statutes

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 232

By Rep. Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Vermont Municipal Response and Recovery Special Fund

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 233

By Reps. Nugent of South Burlington, Brown of Richmond, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Hooper of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Torre of Moretown, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requirements for State-funded grants

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 234

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to determining the appropriateness of a collective bargaining unit for adjunct faculty

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 235

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unemployment insurance eligibility and benefits

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 236

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott, Bailey of Hyde Park, Boyden of Cambridge, LaMont of Morristown, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to authorizing the use of State waters by hydroelectric generation facilities

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 237

By Reps. McFaun of Barre Town, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Demar of Enosburgh, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goldman of Rockingham, and Page of Newport City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 238

By Reps. Sheldon of Middlebury and Chapin of East Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the phaseout of consumer products containing added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 239

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Casey of Montpelier, Cordes of Bristol, Hooper of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to temporary State employees

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 240

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott, Bailey of Hyde Park, Boyden of Cambridge, LaMont of Morristown, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to authorizing drawdown of dams during emergency flood events

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 241

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes, Bartley of Fairfax, Bluemle of Burlington, Bosch of Clarendon, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Canfield of Fair Haven, Cole of Hartford, Critchlow of Colchester, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Randolph, Howland of Rutland Town, Kascenska of Burke, Kleppner of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Noyes of Wolcott, Oliver of Sheldon, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Sibilia of Dover, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Toof of St. Albans Town, Wells of Brownington, White of Bethel, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amendments to the scope of practice for optometrists

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 242

By Reps. Satcowitz of Randolph, Sheldon of Middlebury, and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to regulating short-term rentals

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 243

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Graning of Jericho, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 244

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington and Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 245

By Reps. Olson of Starksboro, Donahue of Northfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, and McCann of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to hospital and health network budgets

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 246

By Reps. McGill of Bridport, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burrows of West Windsor, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Eastes of Guilford, Logan of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supports to help students experiencing homelessness and students exiting the foster care system succeed in postsecondary educational institutions

To the Committee on Education.

H. 247

By Reps. Micklus of Milton, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Hango of Berkshire, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nielsen of Brandon, Steady of Milton, and Taylor of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to cardiac emergency response plans in schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 248

By Reps. Gregoire of Fairfield and Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 249

By Reps. Taylor of Milton, Bartley of Fairfax, Burditt of West Rutland, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to an income tax deduction for home study programs

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 250

By Reps. Morris of Springfield, Austin of Colchester, Bartholomew of Hartland, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Casey of Montpelier, Logan of Burlington, Pritchard of Pawlet, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sheldon of Middlebury, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in firefighting personal protective equipment and station wear

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 251

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a competency restoration process

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 252

By Reps. Pritchard of Pawlet, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Casey of Hubbardton, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Morrow of Weston, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Walker of Swanton, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting earned time for second or subsequent felony convictions

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 253

By Reps. Holcombe of Norwich and Lalley of Shelburne,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to workforce housing zones

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 254

By Reps. Luneau of St. Albans City, Bartley of Fairfax, Boutin of Barre City, Galfetti of Barre Town, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Laroche of Franklin, Malay of Pittsford, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Oliver of Sheldon, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Walker of Swanton, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to orders permitting alternate service of process in civil proceedings

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 255

By Reps. Krasnow of South Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Duke of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, Sweeney of Shelburne, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing increased criminal penalties for an assault of a public transit worker

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 256

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Judiciary Employees Labor Relations Act

To the Committee on General and Housing.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 11**

Offered by Representatives Morrissey of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Greer of Bennington, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Nigro of Bennington, and Pinsonault of Dorset

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

House concurrent resolution in memory of extraordinary Bennington K-9 Police Officer Gracie

Whereas, K-9 police officers serve a unique and essential law enforcement role, and this fact has been especially reflected in the operations of the Bennington Police Department, where K-9 Gracie was a star of much renown, serving in a program that Bennington Police Chief Paul J. Doucette Jr. and Lt. Camillo A. Grande established, and

Whereas, the achievements of this dedicated police officer were undeniably impressive as enumerated in her over 500 deployments and location of more than 70 persons, and she mightily contributed to the recovery of drugs and currency valued in excess of \$1.6 million, and

Whereas, her service on behalf of the Bennington citizenry was widely respected, and this stalwart police officer was a welcomed visitor at local schools and was present at many community events, and

Whereas, her sudden death on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 2024, shocked and saddened Benningtonians, and

Whereas, her memorial service, with more than 500 persons in attendance, served as a dignified and emotional farewell featuring the participation of many fans and admirers; a choral musical performance; the presentation of a tribute American flag to Gracie's human caretaker, Officer Robert Murawski; and concluded with a much-befitting 21-gun salute, and

Whereas, a new K-9 training yard, to be constructed in Bennington, will be dedicated in K-9 Gracie's honor, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its condolences to the Bennington Police Department and the many admirers of K-9 Gracie on the death of this outstanding police officer, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Bennington Police Department, Police Chief Paul J. Doucette Jr., Lt. Camillo A. Grande, and Officer Robert Murawski.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 31, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 98

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until February 19, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 13

Rep. Noyes of Wolcott, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 900 is amended to read:

§ 900. DEFINITIONS

~~Unless otherwise required by the context, the words and phrases in this chapter shall be defined as follows~~ As used in this chapter:

* * *

(7) “Home- and community-based services” means the following services provided pursuant to Vermont’s Global Commitment to Health Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration or a successor program:

(A) long-term services and supports provided to older adults and adults with disabilities in a home or community setting other than a nursing home, including enhanced residential care services;

(B) home health and hospice services, adult day rehabilitation services, and assistive community care services; and

(C) short- and long-term services and supports provided to individuals with mental conditions, individuals with substance use disorders, individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities, and individuals with a brain injury, in a home or community setting for which the Medicaid rates are not otherwise established pursuant to statute or rule.

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 911 is added to read:

§ 911. PAYMENT RATES FOR PROVIDERS OF HOME- AND

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

(a) The Secretary of Human Services shall determine payment rates for providers of home- and community-based services that are reasonable and adequate to achieve the required outcomes for the populations they serve. When determining these payment rates, the Secretary shall adjust the rate amounts to take into account factors that include:

(1) the reasonable cost of any governmental mandate that has been enacted, adopted, or imposed by any State or federal authority; and

(2) a cost adjustment factor to reflect changes in reasonable costs of goods to and services of providers of home- and community-based services, including those attributed to inflation and labor market dynamics.

(b) When determining reasonable and adequate rates of payment for providers of home- and community-based services, the Secretary may consider geographic differences in wages, benefits, housing, and real estate costs in each region of the State.

(c) The Secretary shall establish a methodology for determining payment rates for providers of home- and community-based services in accordance with this section. The methodology shall:

(1) provide a schedule for conducting studies of the Medicaid reimbursement rates paid to the providers of home- and community-based services, including the rates' adequacy and their underlying methodologies, that includes studying the rates paid to providers for each type of service at least once every five years;

(2) set forth a predictable timeline for redetermination of base rates;

(3) include a process for determining an annual inflationary rate adjustment;

(4) to the extent permitted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, take into account the financial needs of providers whose reimbursements may be negatively affected by client absences; and

(5) use Vermont labor market rates and Vermont costs of operation.

(d) The Secretary shall establish a process by which a provider whose financial condition places it at imminent risk of closure may seek extraordinary financial relief from the Agency.

(e) The Secretary shall redetermine the payment rates for providers of home- and community-based services in accordance with this section at least annually and shall report those rates, and the amounts necessary to fund them, to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Human Services, and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare annually as part of the Agency's budget presentation.

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 8914 is amended to read:

§ 8914. RATES OF PAYMENTS TO DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED
SERVICE AGENCIES

~~(a) The Secretary of Human Services shall have sole responsibility for establishing~~ determine the Departments of Health's, of Mental Health's, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living's rates of payments for designated and specialized service agencies ~~that are reasonable and adequate to achieve the required outcomes for designated populations in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 911.~~ When establishing rates of payment for designated and specialized service agencies, the Secretary shall adjust rates to take into account factors that include:

~~(1) the reasonable cost of any governmental mandate that has been enacted, adopted, or imposed by any State or federal authority; and~~

~~(2) a cost adjustment factor to reflect changes in reasonable costs of goods and services of designated and specialized service agencies, including those attributed to inflation and labor market dynamics.~~

~~(b) When establishing rates of payment for designated and specialized service agencies, the Secretary may consider geographic differences in wages, benefits, housing, and real estate costs in each region of the State.~~

Sec. 4. PAYMENT RATES FOR PROVIDERS OF HOME- AND
COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES; UPDATE ON
IMPLEMENTATION; REPORT

On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committees on Human Services and on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with an update on the Agency's implementation of 33 V.S.A. § 911, as added by Sec. 2 of this act, including

the Agency's proposed schedule for Medicaid rate studies and the methodology the Agency developed for determining payment rates for providers of home- and community-based services.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers"

Rep. Yacovone of Morristown, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Human Services.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Human Services agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 44

Rep. Goodnow of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the laws governing impaired driving

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 4 V.S.A. § 33 is amended to read:

§ 33. JURISDICTION; FAMILY DIVISION

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Family Division shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and dispose of the following proceedings filed or pending on or after October 1, 1990:

* * *

(8) All juvenile proceedings filed pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapters 51, 52, 52A, and 53, including proceedings involving "youthful offenders" pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 5281 whether the matter originated in the Criminal or Family Division of the Superior Court, except for a proceeding charging the holder of a commercial driver's license as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4103 with an offense or violation listed in 23 V.S.A. § 4116 that would result in the license holder being disqualified from driving a commercial motor vehicle if convicted.

* * *

(b) The Family Division of the Superior Court has jurisdiction to hear and dispose of proceedings involving ~~misdemeanor~~ motor vehicle offenses filed ~~or pending on or after July 1, 2016,~~ pursuant to 33 V.S.A. §§ 5201, 5203, and 5280, and 5281. The Family Division of the Superior Court shall forward a record of any conviction or adjudication for violation of a law related to motor vehicle traffic control, other than a parking violation, to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 1709. As used in this subsection, “conviction” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(60).

Sec. 2. 23 V.S.A. chapter 13, subchapter 13 is amended to read:

Subchapter 13. Drunken Driving

§ 1200. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

* * *

(11) “Serious bodily injury” has the same meaning as in 13 V.S.A. § 1021(a)(2)(A).

§ 1201. OPERATING VEHICLE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF

ALCOHOL OR OTHER SUBSTANCE; CRIMINAL REFUSAL;

ENHANCED PENALTY FOR BAC OF 0.16 OR MORE

(a) A person shall not operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway:

(1) when the person’s alcohol concentration is:

(A) 0.08 or more; or

(B) 0.02 or more if the person is operating a school bus as defined in subdivision 4(34) of this title; or

(C) 0.04 or more if the person is operating a commercial vehicle as defined in subdivision 4103(4) of this title; or

(2) when the person is under the influence of alcohol; or

(3) when the person is under the influence of any other drug or under the combined influence of alcohol and any other drug.

(b) A person who has previously been convicted of a violation of this section shall not operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway and refuse a law enforcement officer’s reasonable request under the circumstances for an evidentiary test where the officer had reasonable grounds to believe the person was in violation of subsection (a) of this section.

(c) A person shall not operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway and be involved in a crash or collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another and refuse a law enforcement officer's reasonable request under the circumstances for an evidentiary test where the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the person has any amount of alcohol or drugs in ~~his or her~~ the person's system.

(d)(1) A person who is convicted of a second or subsequent violation of subsection (a), (b), or (c) of this section when the person's alcohol concentration is proven to be 0.16 or more shall not, for three years from the date of the conviction for which the person's alcohol concentration is 0.16 or more, operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway when the person's alcohol concentration is 0.02 or more. The prohibition imposed by this subsection shall be in addition to any other penalties imposed by law.

(2) A person shall not operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway when the person's alcohol concentration is 0.02 or more if the person has previously been convicted of a second or subsequent violation of subsection (a), (b), or (c) of this section within the preceding three years and the person's alcohol concentration for the second or subsequent violation was proven to be 0.16 or greater. A violation of this subsection shall be considered a third or subsequent violation of this section and shall be subject to the penalties of subsection 1210(d) of this title.

(e) The fact that a person charged with a violation of this section is or has been entitled to use a drug under the laws of this State shall not constitute a defense against any charge of violating this section.

(f) A person may not be convicted of more than one violation of subsection (a) or (j) of this section arising out of the same incident.

(g) For purposes of this section and section 1205 of this title, the defendant may assert as an affirmative defense that the person was not operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of the vehicle because the person:

- (1) had no intention of placing the vehicle in motion; and
- (2) had not placed the vehicle in motion while under the influence.

(h) As used in subdivision (a)(3) of this section, "under the influence of a drug" means that a person's ability to operate a motor vehicle safely is diminished or impaired in the slightest degree. This subsection shall not be construed to affect the meaning of the term "under the influence of alcohol."

(i) Evidence of the results of a standardized field sobriety test conducted by a law enforcement officer trained in Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement or a certified Drug Recognition Expert's systematic evaluation of observable signs and symptoms of a person charged with a violation of this section shall be presumptively admissible at trial to demonstrate whether or not the person was operating under the influence in violation of this section.

(j) A person suspected of violating this section shall not refuse to submit to the collection of an evidentiary blood sample when a warrant for that person's blood is issued pursuant to subdivision 1202(f)(1) of this title. This subsection shall not be construed as impairing a person's right to challenge the validity of a search warrant in any subsequent legal proceedings.

* * *

§ 1202. CONSENT TO TAKING OF TESTS TO DETERMINE BLOOD
ALCOHOL CONTENT OR PRESENCE OF OTHER DRUG

(a)(1) Implied consent. Every person who operates, attempts to operate, or is in actual physical control of any vehicle on a highway in this State is deemed to have given consent to an evidentiary test of that person's breath for the purpose of determining the person's alcohol concentration or the presence of other drug in the blood. The test shall be administered at the direction of a law enforcement officer.

(2) Blood test. If breath testing equipment is not reasonably available or if the officer has reason to believe that the person is unable to give a sufficient sample of breath for testing or if the law enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is under the influence of a drug other than alcohol, the person is deemed to have given consent to the taking of an evidentiary sample of blood. If in the officer's opinion the person is incapable of decision or unconscious or dead, it is deemed that the person's consent is given and a sample of blood shall be taken. A blood test sought pursuant to this subdivision shall be obtained pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

(3) Saliva test. If the law enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is under the influence of a drug other than alcohol, or under the combined influence of alcohol and a drug, the person is deemed to have given consent to providing of an evidentiary sample of saliva. A saliva test sought pursuant to this subdivision shall be obtained pursuant to subsection (f) of this section. Any saliva test administered under this section shall be used only for the limited purpose of detecting the presence of a drug in the person's body and shall not be used to extract DNA information.

(4) Evidentiary test. The evidentiary test shall be required of a person when a law enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title.

(5) Fatal collision or incident resulting in serious bodily injury. The evidentiary test shall also be required if the person is the surviving operator of a motor vehicle involved in a fatal incident or collision or an incident or collision resulting in serious bodily injury and the law enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person has any amount of alcohol or other drug in ~~his or her~~ the person's system.

* * *

(d) At the time a test is requested, the person shall be informed of the following statutory information:

(1) Vermont law authorizes a law enforcement officer to request a test to determine whether the person is under the influence of alcohol or other drug.

(2) If the officer's request is reasonable and testing is refused, the person's license or privilege to operate will be suspended for at least six months.

(3) If a test is taken and the results indicate that the person is under the influence of alcohol or other drug, the person will be subject to criminal charges and the person's license or privilege to operate will be suspended for at least 90 days.

(4) A person who is requested by a law enforcement officer to submit to an evidentiary test or tests has the limited right to consult an attorney before deciding whether or not to submit to such a test or tests. The person must decide whether or not to submit to the evidentiary test or tests within a reasonable time and not later than 30 minutes from the time of the initial attempt to contact the attorney, regardless of whether a consultation took place. The person also has the right to have additional tests made by someone of the person's own choosing at the person's own expense. The person shall also be informed of the location of one or more facilities available for drawing blood.

(5) A person who is requested by a law enforcement officer to submit to an evidentiary test administered with an infrared breath-testing instrument may elect to have a second infrared test administered immediately after receiving the results of the first test.

(6) If the person refuses to take an evidentiary test, the refusal may be offered into evidence against the person at trial, whether or not a search warrant is sought. The person may be charged with the crime of criminal refusal if the person:

(A) has previously been convicted of a violation of section 1201 of this title; ~~or~~

(B) is involved in a crash or collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another, in which case the court may issue a search warrant and order the person to submit to a blood test, the results of which may be offered into evidence against the person at trial; or

(C) refuses the collection of an evidentiary blood sample when a warrant for that person's blood is issued pursuant to subdivision (f)(1) of this section.

(e) In any proceeding under this subchapter, a law enforcement officer's testimony that ~~he or she~~ the officer is certified pursuant to section 20 V.S.A. § 2358 shall be prima facie evidence of that fact.

(f)(1) If a blood test is sought from a person pursuant to subdivision (a)(2) of this section, or if a person who has been involved in a crash or collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another refuses an evidentiary test, a law enforcement officer may apply for a search warrant pursuant to Rule 41 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure to obtain a sample of blood for an evidentiary test. Pursuant to subdivision (d)(6) of this section, if a blood sample is obtained by search warrant, the fact of the refusal may still be introduced in evidence, in addition to the results of the evidentiary test. Once a law enforcement official begins the application process for a search warrant, the law enforcement official is not obligated to discontinue the process even if the person later agrees to provide an evidentiary sample. The limitation created by Rule 41(g) of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure regarding blood specimens shall not apply to search warrants authorized by this section.

(2) If an evidentiary saliva test is sought from a person pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section, a law enforcement officer may apply for a search warrant pursuant to Rule 41 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure to obtain a sample of saliva for the evidentiary test. Pursuant to subdivision (d)(6) of this section, if a saliva sample is obtained by search warrant, the fact of the refusal may still be introduced in evidence, in addition to the results of the evidentiary test.

(g) The Defender General shall provide statewide 24-hour coverage seven days a week to ensure that adequate legal services are available to persons entitled to consult an attorney under this section.

* * *

§ 1205. CIVIL SUSPENSION; SUMMARY PROCEDURE

(a) Refusal; alcohol concentration at or above legal limits; suspension periods.

* * *

(2) Upon affidavit of a law enforcement officer that the officer had reasonable grounds to believe that the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title and that the person submitted to a test and the test results indicated that the person's alcohol concentration was at or above a limit specified in subsection 1201(a) of this title, at the time of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control, the Commissioner shall suspend the person's operating license or nonresident operating privilege or the privilege of an unlicensed operator to operate a vehicle for a period of 90 days and until the person complies with section 1209a of this title. However, during the suspension, an eligible person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL or ignition interlock certificate issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title.

* * *

(b) Form of officer's affidavit. A law enforcement officer's affidavit in support of a suspension under this section shall be in a standardized form for use throughout the State and shall be sufficient if it contains the following statements:

(1) The officer is a certified law enforcement officer.

(2) The officer who administered the test was certified to operate the testing equipment.

(3) The officer had reasonable grounds to believe the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title (noting the time and date of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control).

(4) The officer informed the person of ~~his or her~~ the person's rights under subsection 1202(d) of this title.

(5) The officer obtained an evidentiary test (noting the time and date the test was taken) and the test indicated that the person's alcohol concentration was at or above a legal limit specified in subsection 1201(a) or (d) of this title, or the person refused to submit to an evidentiary test.

(6) The officer complied with the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, codified at 50 U.S.C. chapter 50.

(7) The officer confirmed the person's correct mailing address.

(c) Notice of suspension. On behalf of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, a law enforcement officer requesting or directing the administration of an evidentiary test shall serve notice of intention to suspend and of suspension on a person who refuses to submit to an evidentiary test or on a person who submits to a test the results of which indicate that the person's alcohol concentration was at or above a legal limit specified in subsection 1201(a) or (d) of this title, at the time of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title. The notice shall be signed by the law enforcement officer requesting the test. A copy of the notice shall be sent to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, and a copy shall be mailed or given to the defendant within three business days after the date the officer receives the results of the test. If mailed, the notice is deemed received three days after mailing to the address provided by the defendant to the law enforcement officer. A copy of the affidavit of the law enforcement officer shall also be mailed by first-class mail or given to the defendant and the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles within seven days after the date of notice.

* * *

(f) Review by Superior Court. Within seven days following receipt of a notice of intention to suspend and of suspension, a person may make a request for a hearing before the Superior Court by mailing or delivering the form provided with the notice. The request shall be mailed or delivered to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, who shall then notify the Criminal Division of the Superior Court that a hearing has been requested and provide the Criminal Division and the State's Attorney with a copy of the notice of intention to suspend and of suspension and the officer's affidavit.

* * *

(h) Final hearing.

(1) If the defendant requests a hearing on the merits, the court shall schedule a final hearing on the merits to be held within 21 days after the date of the preliminary hearing. In no event may a final hearing occur more than 42 days after the date of the alleged offense without the consent of the

defendant or for good cause shown. The final hearing may only be continued by the consent of the defendant or for good cause shown. The issues at the final hearing shall be limited to the following:

(A) Whether the law enforcement officer had reasonable grounds to believe the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title.

(B) Whether at the time of the request for the evidentiary test the officer informed the person of the person's rights and the consequences of taking and refusing the test substantially as set out in subsection 1202(d) of this title.

(C) Whether the person refused to permit the test.

(D) Whether the test was taken and the test results indicated that the person's alcohol concentration was at or above a legal limit specified in subsection 1201(a) or (d) of this title, at the time of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title, whether the testing methods used were valid and reliable, and whether the test results were accurate and accurately evaluated. Evidence that the test was taken and evaluated in compliance with rules adopted by the Department of Public Safety shall be prima facie evidence that the testing methods used were valid and reliable and that the test results are accurate and were accurately evaluated.

(E) Whether the requirements of section 1202 of this title were complied with.

(2) No less than seven days before the final hearing, and subject to the requirements of Vermont Rule of Civil Procedure 11, the defendant shall provide to the State and file with the court a list of the issues (limited to the issues set forth in this subsection) that the defendant intends to raise. Only evidence that is relevant to an issue listed by the defendant may be raised by the defendant at the final hearing. The defendant shall not be permitted to raise any other evidence at the final hearing, and all other evidence shall be inadmissible.

(i) Finding by the court. The court shall electronically forward a report of the hearing to the Commissioner. Upon a finding by the court that the law enforcement officer had reasonable grounds to believe that the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201 of this title and that the person refused to submit to a test, or upon a finding by the court that the law enforcement officer had reasonable grounds to believe that the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control of a vehicle in violation of section 1201

of this title and that the person submitted to a test and the test results indicated that the person's alcohol concentration was at or above a legal limit specified in subsection 1201(a) or (d) of this title, at the time the person was operating, attempting to operate, or in actual physical control, the person's operating license, or nonresident operating privilege, or the privilege of an unlicensed operator to operate a vehicle shall be suspended or shall remain suspended for the required term and until the person complies with section 1209a of this title. Upon a finding in favor of the person, the Commissioner shall cause the suspension to be canceled and removed from the record, without payment of any fee.

* * *

(n) Presumption. In a proceeding under this section, if at any time within two hours of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control of a vehicle a person had an alcohol concentration ~~of~~ at or above a legal limit specified in subsection 1201(a) or (d) of this title, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that the person's alcohol concentration was above the applicable limit at the time of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control.

* * *

§ 1210. PENALTIES

* * *

(f) Death resulting.

(1) If the death of any person results from a violation of section 1201 of this title, the person convicted of the violation shall be fined not more than \$10,000.00 or imprisoned not less than one year nor more than 15 years, or both. The provisions of this subsection do not limit or restrict prosecutions for manslaughter.

(2) If the death or serious bodily injury of more than one person results from a violation of section 1201 of this title, the operator may be convicted of a separate violation of this subdivision for each decedent or person injured.

(3)(A) If the death of any person results from a violation of section 1201 of this title and the person convicted of the violation previously has been convicted two or more times of a violation of that section, a sentence ordered pursuant to this subsection shall, except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (3), include at least a five-year term of imprisonment. The five-year minimum term of imprisonment required by this subdivision (3)(A) shall be served and may not be suspended, deferred, or served as a supervised sentence. The defendant shall not be eligible for probation, parole, furlough,

or any other type of early release until the expiration of the five-year term of imprisonment.

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), if the death or serious bodily injury of any person results from a violation of section 1201 of this title and the person convicted of the violation previously has been convicted two or more times of a violation of that section, the court may impose a sentence that does not include a term of imprisonment or that includes a term of imprisonment of less than five years if the court makes written findings on the record that such a sentence will serve the interests of justice and public safety.

(g) Injury resulting.

(1) If serious bodily injury, ~~as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021(2)~~, results to any person other than the operator from a violation of section 1201 of this title, the person convicted of the violation shall be fined not more than \$5,000.00 or imprisoned not more than 15 years, or both.

(2) If serious bodily injury ~~as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021(2)~~ or death results to more than one person other than the operator from a violation of section 1201 of this title, the operator may be convicted of a separate violation of this subdivision for each person injured or decedent.

(3)(A) If serious bodily injury ~~as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021(2)~~ results to any person other than the operator from a violation of section 1201 of this title and the person convicted of the violation previously has been convicted two or more times of a violation of section 1201, a sentence ordered pursuant to this subsection shall, except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (3), include at least a five-year term of imprisonment. The five-year minimum term of imprisonment required by this subdivision (3)(A) shall be served and may not be suspended, deferred, or served as a supervised sentence. The defendant shall not be eligible for probation, parole, furlough, or any other type of early release until the expiration of the five-year term of imprisonment.

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), if serious bodily injury ~~as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1021(2)~~ results to any person other than the operator from a violation of section 1201 of this title and the person convicted of the violation previously has been convicted two or more times of a violation of section 1201, the court may impose a sentence that does not include a term of imprisonment or that includes a term of imprisonment of less than five years if the court makes written findings on the record that such a sentence will serve the interests of justice and public safety.

* * *

Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. § 5202 is amended to read:

§ 5202. ORDER OF ADJUDICATION; NONCRIMINAL

(a)(1) An order of the Family Division of the Superior Court in proceedings under this chapter shall not:

(A) be deemed a conviction of crime;

(B) impose any civil disabilities sanctions ordinarily resulting from a conviction; or

(C) operate to disqualify the child in any civil service application or appointment.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, ~~an order of delinquency in proceedings~~ a merits adjudication order issued pursuant to section 5229 of this title in proceedings concerning a child or youthful offender who is alleged to have committed a violation of those sections specified in 23 V.S.A. § 801(a)(1) shall be an event in addition to those specified therein, enabling the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to require proof of financial responsibility under 23 V.S.A. chapter 11.

(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, a merits adjudication order issued pursuant to section 5229 of this title in proceedings concerning a child or youthful offender who is alleged to have committed a violation of 23 V.S.A. chapter 13, subchapter 13 shall be reported to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles in accordance with the provisions of 23 V.S.A. § 1709.

* * *

Sec. 4. 33 V.S.A. § 5229 is amended to read:

§ 5229. MERITS ADJUDICATION

* * *

(g) If, based on the child's admission or the evidence presented, the court finds beyond a reasonable doubt that the child has committed a delinquent act, the court shall order the Department to prepare a disposition case plan not later than seven business days before the disposition hearing and shall send a record of the adjudication to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles within 10 days following its issuance. In no event shall a disposition hearing be held later than 35 days after a finding that a child is delinquent.

* * *

Sec. 5. IMPAIRED DRIVING; IMPLIED CONSENT; PROCESSING; TASK FORCE; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Impaired Driving Processing Task Force to study the concept of implied consent during impaired driving investigations with the objective to recommend approaches that minimize the duration for which impaired driving suspects are held during investigations and to streamline the processing and paperwork associated with such investigations.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Chief Judge of the Superior Court or designee;

(2) the Defender General or designee;

(3) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

(4) the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles or designee;

(5) the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee; and

(6) a representative from the Vermont Police Association.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall study impaired driving investigations in Vermont, including the following issues:

(1) the constitutional and statutory requirements of implied consent;

(2) how constitutional and statutory requirements related to implied consent affect the duration for which suspected impaired drivers are held by law enforcement;

(3) methods to minimize statutory requirements related to implied consent that pass constitutional muster; and

(4) any other relevant issues in accordance with subsection (a) of this section.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Public Safety.

(e) Report. On or before November 15, 2025, the Task Force shall submit a written report in the form of proposed legislation to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary with any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Public Safety or designee shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) The Task Force shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) The Task Force shall meet not more than six times.

(4) A majority of the Task Force's membership shall constitute a quorum.

(5) The Task Force shall cease to exist on February 1, 2026.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task Force who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Squirrel of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Judiciary be amended in Sec. 5, impaired driving; implied consent; processing; task force; report, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Chief Judge of the Superior Court or designee;

(2) the Defender General or designee;

(3) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

(4) the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles or designee;

(5) the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee;

(6) the President of the Vermont Sheriffs' Association or designee; and

(7) a representative from the Vermont Police Association.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Judiciary was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Judiciary, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

**Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future
Appointments**

Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1960, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain's Future:

Rep. Ode of Burlington

Rep. Branagan of Georgia

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and forty-eight minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Devon Thomas, Lutheran Church, Burlington.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 257

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Boyden of Cambridge, Chapin of East Montpelier, Micklus of Milton, and Sibilia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Office of Entrepreneurship

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 258

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to law enforcement interrogation policies

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 259

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 260

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Cole of Hartford, Chapin of East Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Howard of Rutland City, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, North of Ferrisburgh, Nugent of South Burlington, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting certain substances in food manufactured, sold, or distributed in Vermont

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 261

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a 32-hour workweek

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 262

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Chapin of East Montpelier, Hooper of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to restricting electronic monitoring of employees and the use of employment-related automated decision systems

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 263

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, and Minier of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a right for employees to disconnect from work

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 264

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Black of Essex, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Goldman of Rockingham, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Nugent of South Burlington, Priestley of Bradford, and Scheu of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to safe storage of firearms

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 265

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the imposition of convenience fees on online municipal utility payments

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 266

By Rep. Black of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protections for 340B covered entities and 340B contract pharmacies

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 267

By Rep. McFaun of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Hospital Security Plan

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 268

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to consumer protections related to the towing and storage of vehicles

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 269

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott, Birong of Vergennes, Goldman of Rockingham, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the federal benefits of youth in State custody

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 270

By Reps. Krasnow of South Burlington, Burt of Cabot, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Dodge of Essex, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Graning of Jericho, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, LaMont of Morristown, Luneau of St. Albans City, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confidentiality for peer support counseling among emergency service providers

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 271

By Reps. Cordes of Bristol and Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance and Medicaid coverage for physical therapy services

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 272

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Maguire of Rutland City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, and L. of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to development on slopes

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 273

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bishop of Colchester, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Cole of Hartford, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Harvey of Castleton, Hooper of Burlington, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Surprenant of Barnard, Tagliavia of Corinth, Toof of St. Albans Town, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Use Value Appraisal Program

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 274

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bosch of Clarendon, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Higley of Lowell, Keyser of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Powers of Waterford, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a hospital patient's right not to be denied care based on vaccination status

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 275

By Reps. Coffin of Cavendish, Biron of Vergennes, Boyden of Cambridge, Greer of Bennington, Hooper of Burlington, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enrollment in Medicare supplement insurance policies

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 276

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the designation of State wildlands

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 277

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to weatherization funding and weatherization workforce recruitment

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 278

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Eastes of Guilford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a plan on energy storage development

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 279

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Eastes of Guilford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to sharing the costs of electric grid upgrades

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 280

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Higley of Lowell, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the siting of an expanded polystyrene foam densifier in the State

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 281

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Cordes of Bristol, Graning of Jericho, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending a death certificate to reflect gender identity

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 282

By Reps. Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Bartley of Fairfax, Burditt of West Rutland, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to driver education for students participating in the home study program

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 283

By Reps. Harple of Glover, Priestley of Bradford, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Dodge of Essex, Hunter of Manchester, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, Nelson of Derby, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Southworth of Walden, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to delegation of authority to regulate use of State waters

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 284

By Reps. Burke of Brattleboro and Pouech of Hinesburg,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requirements for older drivers to renew operator's licenses and for the operation of motor homes

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 285

By Rep. Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making motor vehicle inspections more affordable

To the Committee on Transportation.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence

J.R.S. 14

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 14. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 21, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 21, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 21

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution expressing strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designating February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont

Whereas, the education of Vermont's youth is of great importance, and the role of local school board members is essential in this process, and

Whereas, all too often, Vermonters do not fully appreciate the scope of the commitment school board members must make to their duties and the challenges they encounter in performing this critical civic role, and

Whereas, as the citizens of Vermont, and the General Assembly in particular, engage in a major examination of education financing in our State, school board members will be important contributors to this critical discussion, and

Whereas, these special community public servants deserve our admiration and respect for their continuing devotion to the success of public education in Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designates February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont School Boards Association.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 175

Rep. Mihaly of Calais moved that the Committee on General and Housing be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to clarifying the right of adjunct faculty to receive unemployment insurance benefits

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, which was agreed to.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 98

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 15A V.S.A. § 1-114 is added to read:

§ 1-114. CONFIRMATORY ADOPTION FOR CHILDREN BORN
THROUGH ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Assisted reproduction" means a method of causing pregnancy other than sexual intercourse and includes:

- (A) intrauterine, intracervical, or vaginal insemination;
- (B) donation of gametes;
- (C) donation of embryos;
- (D) in vitro fertilization and transfer of embryos; and
- (E) intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

(2) “Donor” means a person who contributes a gamete or gametes or an embryo or embryos to another person for assisted reproduction or gestation, whether or not for consideration. This term does not include:

(A) a person who gives birth to a child conceived by assisted reproduction except as otherwise provided in 15C V.S.A. chapter 8; or

(B) a parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 7 or an intended parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 8.

(3) “Marriage” includes civil union and any legal relationship that provides substantially the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities as marriage and is recognized as valid in the state or jurisdiction in which it was entered.

(4) “Petitioners” means the persons filing a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(b) Whenever a child is born as a result of assisted reproduction and the person or persons who did not give birth are a parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 703 or presumed parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 401 and the parents seek to file a petition to confirm parentage through an adoption of the child, the court shall permit the parents to file a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(c) A complete petition shall comprise the following:

(1) the petition for adoption signed by all parents;

(2) a copy of the petitioners’ marriage certificate, if petitioners are married;

(3) a declaration signed by the parents explaining the circumstances of the child’s birth through assisted reproduction, attesting to their consent to assisted reproduction, and stating that there are no other persons with a claim to parentage of the child under Title 15C; and

(4) a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate.

(d) A complete petition for adoption, as described in subsection (c) of this section, shall serve as the petitioners' written consents to adoption and no additional consent or notice shall be required.

(e) If the petitioners conceived through assisted reproduction with donor gametes or donor embryos, the court shall not require notice of the adoption to the donor or consent to the adoption by the donor.

(f) Unless otherwise ordered by the court for good cause shown and supported by written findings of the court demonstrating good cause, for purposes of evaluating and granting a petition for adoption pursuant to this section, the court shall not require:

(1) an in-person hearing or appearance, although the court may require a remote hearing;

(2) an investigation or home study by, a notice to, or the approval of the Department for Children and Families;

(3) a criminal-record check;

(4) verification that the child is not registered with the federal register for missing children or the central register; or

(5) a minimum residency period in the home of the petitioners.

(g) The court shall grant the adoption under this section and issue an adoption decree promptly after the filing of a complete petition and upon finding that:

(1) for marital parents, the parent who gave birth and the spouse were married at the time of the child's birth and the child was born through assisted reproduction; or

(2) for nonmarital parents:

(A) the person who gave birth and the nonmarital parent consented to the assisted reproduction; and

(B) no other person has a claim to parentage pursuant to Title 15C or that any other person with a claim to parentage of the child who is required to be provided notice of, or who must consent to, the adoption has been notified or provided consent to the adoption.

(h) A petition to adopt a child pursuant to this section shall not be denied on the basis that any of the petitioners' parentage is already presumed or legally recognized in Vermont.

(i) When parentage is presumed or legally recognized pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 201, the fact that a person did not petition for adoption pursuant to this section shall not be considered as evidence when two or more presumptions conflict, nor in determining the best interests of the child.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 13

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies

H. 44

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the laws governing impaired driving

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 154

Rep. Hooper of Burlington, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee Appointment

Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9390, the Speaker appointed the following member to the Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Rep. Goldman of Rockingham from the Committee:

Rep. Cordes of Bristol

Adjournment

At three o'clock and forty minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, February 20, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Dr. Walter Brownridge of Christ the Episcopal Church, Montpelier.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 19th day of February, 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 35 An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 286

By Reps. Masland of Thetford and Mrowicki of Putney,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to drinking water standards for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 287

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington, Bosch of Clarendon, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Hooper of Randolph, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a consortium on nuclear power feasibility

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 288

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington, Birong of Vergennes, Bosch of Clarendon, Boyden of Cambridge, Burtt of Cabot, Casey of Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hooper of Randolph, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reduced motor vehicle registration fees for veterans

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 289

By Reps. McCoy of Poultney, Harrison of Chittenden, Bailey of Hyde Park, Howland of Rutland Town, and Southworth of Walden,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to affordable climate initiatives

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 290

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the State Employees Labor Relations Act

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 291

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Eastes of Guilford, Kimbell of Woodstock, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enrollment of posted land in the Use Value Appraisal Program

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 292

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the land application and sale of biosolids containing PFAS

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 293

By Rep. Maguire of Rutland City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health equity data reporting and registry disclosure requirements

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 294

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Chapin of East Montpelier, Logan of Burlington, and McCann of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to commissary and telecommunications prices in State correctional facilities and fair compensation for incarcerated labor

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 295

By Reps. Greer of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Hooper of Burlington, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, LaMont of Morristown, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Malay of Pittsford, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrow of Weston, Nielsen of Brandon, Nigro of Bennington, and Pouech of Hinesburg,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to payment of vacation leave upon separation from employment

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 296

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes, Hango of Berkshire, Minier of South Burlington, Austin of Colchester, Gregoire of Fairfield, Lalley of Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nugent of South Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Stone of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Vermont's adoption of the Dietician Licensure Compact

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 297

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Branagan of Georgia, Burke of Brattleboro, Chapin of East Montpelier, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Marcotte of Coventry, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Mrowicki of Putney, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sweeney of Shelburne, and White of Waitsfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Free Degree Promise Grant Program for the Community College of Vermont

To the Committee on Education.

H. 298

By Reps. Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Donahue of Northfield, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to restricting the Department of Corrections' cooperation with federal immigration authorities

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 299

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the transfer of Family Court cases to criminal court when the offender is a victim of human trafficking

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 300

By Reps. Morgan, M. of Milton, Boyden of Cambridge, Hango of Berkshire, Hooper of Burlington, Morgan, L. of Milton, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to an income tax credit for emergency first responders

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 98**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 1, 15A V.S.A. § 1-114, by adding a new subsection (h) to read as follows:

(h) Unless notice has been waived or consent given for the adoption, a copy of the petition and notice of a proceeding under this section shall be served upon any person entitled to notice within 30 days after the petition is filed. The notice shall include the address and telephone number of the court where the petition is pending and a statement that the person served with the notice and petition shall file a written appearance in the proceeding within 20 days after service in order to participate in the proceeding and to receive further notice of the proceeding, including notice of the time and place of any hearing. Service of the notice and petition shall be made in a manner appropriate under the Vermont Rules of Probate Procedure unless the court otherwise directs. Proof of service on each person entitled to receive notice shall be on file with the court before the court acts on the petition.

and by redesignating the remaining subsections to be alphabetically correct.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 154**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and fourteen minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, February 21, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Saudia LaMont of Morristown.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 301

By Rep. Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to age verification in social media

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 302

By Reps. Bartley of Fairfax, Boyden of Cambridge, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Dodge of Essex, Hooper of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Micklus of Milton, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance and Medicaid coverage for fertility care

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 303

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Charlton of Chester, Cole of Hartford, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Lipsky of Stowe, McGill of Bridport, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of septage, sludge, and biosolids

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 304

By Reps. Morgan, L. of Milton and Morgan, M. of Milton

House bill, entitled

An act relating to traffic cameras and traffic violations for illegally passing a school bus

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 305

By Reps. Berbeco of Winooski, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Donahue of Northfield, Goldman of Rockingham, Kleppner of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, McFaun of Barre Town, Page of Newport City, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescriptions for psychotropic medications used by children and youth in the Dr. Dynasaur program

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 306

By Reps. Graning of Jericho, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Marcotte of Coventry, Micklus of Milton, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting deed restrictions or covenants that prohibit use of property for commercial or industrial purposes

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 307

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the establishment of the Vermont Community Radio Grant Program

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 308

By Reps. Bartley of Fairfax, Charlton of Chester, Krasnow of South Burlington, Parsons of Newbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exempting sales of building materials and supplies from sales and use tax

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 309

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a Housing and Conservation Trust Fund checkoff on the Vermont personal income tax return

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 310

By Reps. Toof of St. Albans Town, Birong of Vergennes, Austin of Colchester, Black of Essex, Bosch of Clarendon, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Charlton of Chester, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Emmons of Springfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Kascenska of Burke, Krasnow of South Burlington, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, McCoy of Poultney, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh,

Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to education on the evolving nature of antisemitism

To the Committee on Education.

House Resolution Referred to Committee

H.R. 6

Offered by Representatives LaLonde of South Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Morgan, M. of Milton, Ode of Burlington, and Taylor of Milton

House resolution amending House Rules relating to the House Ethics Panel

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body amends Rule 90(b) of the Rules and Orders of the House of Representatives as follows:

(b) Ethics.

(1) Standards of ethical conduct. The House of Representatives, without qualification, is opposed to and prohibits violations of the Vermont Constitution and House Rules standards of ethical conduct. This policy covers the conduct of Representatives and persons employed in the Speaker's Office and House Clerk's Office.

(A) A member shall respect and comply with the law, these Rules, and any other standard of conduct applicable to the member in the performance of the member's duties in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of the House.

(B) A member shall comply with 17 V.S.A. § 2414 (legislative candidate disclosure form).

(C) On or before the 10th day of the beginning of the biennium, each member shall submit to the Clerk a disclosure form prepared by the Clerk. The form shall be signed by the member, be publicly available on the official webpages of the House of Representatives and of the Clerk of the House, and may be updated. The form shall set forth, to the best of the member's ability, the following information applicable as of the date of submission:

(i) any boards, commissions, or similar entities that are regulated by law or that receive funding from the State on which the member serves; the member's position on the board, commission, or similar entity; and, except in the case of legislative appointments, whether the member receives any form of remuneration for that position; and

(ii) the member's employer.

(2) House Ethics Panel. The House Rules Committee shall, at the beginning of the biennium, appoint an Ethics Panel composed of five members of the House who shall serve until successors are appointed.

(A)(i) The Panel shall elect a chair, adopt procedures to conduct its business to implement the provisions of this ethics rule, and provide copies of the adopted procedures to all members of the House and persons employed in the Speaker's Office and House Clerk's Office.

(ii) The Panel may meet remotely during adjournment to consider complaints as set forth in the Procedure of the Panel ~~Procedure for Handling Ethics Complaints~~. However, if the Panel conducts a hearing at which arguments are presented, evidence is presented, or witnesses are questioned, at least a quorum of the members of the Panel shall be physically present at the hearing. The Panel, at the discretion of the Panel Chair, may allow members, witnesses, or other necessary participants to participate using contemporaneous video or audio conference transmission from one or more different remote locations.

(B) The Panel shall advise individual members and provide training to all members on House member standards of ethical conduct, including compliance with House Rule 75.

(C) The Panel shall receive and investigate complaints of alleged violations of House member standards of ethical conduct made against members of the House, and may investigate such alleged violations on its own initiative.

(i) The Panel, by a vote of at least four of its members, may subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documents and other items as it deems necessary to conduct an investigation.

(ii) In the case of a Panel member's recusal or other absence during the Panel's review of a complaint, the House Rules Committee may appoint an ad hoc member to the Panel for that matter, upon request of the Chair of the Panel.

(D) If a complaint before the Panel or the pendency of an investigation by the Panel is generally known to the public, through independent sources, and the subject matter of the complaint is of broad public interest or speculation, and public confidence in the Panel's administration of these Rules or the Procedure of the Panel may be threatened because of lack of information concerning the status of the investigation, the Panel may issue a brief statement as it may deem appropriate to confirm the existence of the

investigation, to clarify the procedural aspects of the investigation, and to explain that the respondent is entitled to due process.

(E) The Panel may recommend to the House any disciplinary action against a member for an ethical violation.

(F) The Panel shall issue a closure report regarding the final disposition of each complaint submitted to the Panel. The closure report shall not identify the complainant, respondent, or any other person by name, but shall contain a summary of the complaint allegations, the final disposition of the complaint, and the basis therefor. The Panel shall maintain its closure reports in a registry on its webpage.

(G) Except as provided in these Rules and in the Procedure of the Panel:

(i) Members of the Panel and Panel staff shall keep confidential any information received and any records produced or acquired in accordance with these Rules or the Procedure of the Panel, provided that the Panel may disclose information and records received under these Rules and the Procedure of the Panel as follows:

(I) to a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to a court order;

(II) to a State or federal law enforcement agency in the course of the agency's investigation, provided that the agency agrees to maintain the confidentiality of the information or records provided;

(III) to the members or staff of the Discrimination Prevention Panel or the members or staff of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Panel to inform an investigation under these Rules by either Panel, provided that the members agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information or records provided.

(ii) All records produced or acquired in accordance with these Rules and in the Procedure of the Panel are not subject to the Public Records Act.

(E)(H) Annually, on or before December 31, the Panel shall report to the House the number of complaints filed, a general description of the topic of each complaint, the disposition of those complaints, and the number of member requests for ethical advice.

(3) Retaliation prohibited. These Rules prohibit retaliation against a person who complains, reports, or cooperates in an investigation of an ethics violation.

Was read by title, treated as a bill, and referred to the Committee on Rules pursuant to House Rule 52.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 6

Offered by Representatives Morgan, M. of Milton, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Steady of Milton, and Taylor of Milton

Offered by Senator Mattos

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Milton High School Yellowjackets girls' soccer team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship

Whereas, the vibrancy of Milton High School's girls' soccer program was convincingly renewed during the fall 2024 season, as the top-ranked Yellowjackets (17–1) proved their command of the pitch, and

Whereas, at the 2024 Division II championship game, played at Burlington's Buck Hard Field, the Yellowjackets exhibited commanding soccer prowess against the seventh-seeded Mt. Abraham Union High School Eagles, scoring goals in the 15th minute of play and then again with 17:36 remaining in regulation time to tally both the school's 18th divisional championship and 11th shutout this season, and

Whereas, the victorious Yellowjackets were Samantha Provost, Dasie May Gabree, Sydney Greenfield, Cianna Tomasi, Kaitlyn Bombard, Molly St. Amand, Madison Rose, Grace Dowling, Holley MacLellan, Callie Fougere, Lucy Spaulding, Taylor Shappy, Savannah Monahan, Caitlyn Fortier, Antoinette Brynga, Emily Banacos, Avery Turner, Hannah Smiley, Allessandra Hoffman, Lajla Pasic, Catherine Preuss, Marlie Bushey, Logan Freeman, Lila Martin, and Lily Daunais, and

Whereas, Head Coach Caitlyn Fogel, assistant coaches Scott Tomasi and Rebecca Brynga, and Team Manager Meghan Abare were all proud of Milton's 2024 outstanding girls' soccer season, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Milton High School Yellowjackets girls' soccer team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Milton High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and fifty minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 14.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 34

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Union High School Chieftains Division III championship boys soccer team

H.C.R. 35

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the March 13, 1775 Westminster Massacre

H.C.R. 36

House concurrent resolution honoring Charlotte Board of Civil Authority Chair, and Ski and Ride Program Coordinator Michael Krasnow

H.C.R. 37

House concurrent resolution congratulating Meara Seery of Brattleboro on being named Miss Vermont 2024

H.C.R. 38

House concurrent resolution honoring dedicated Jamaica community leader and volunteer Clara Robinson

H.C.R. 39

House concurrent resolution designating February 19, 2025 as Recovery Day at the State House

H.C.R. 40

House concurrent resolution designating February 20, 2025 as NEK Day at the State House

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Kris Brown, voice actor and podcast host, Colchester.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Manny Van Fleet of Worcester led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 311

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Dodge of Essex, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Harrison of Chittenden, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Luneau of St. Albans City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Page of Newport City, Pritchard of Pawlet, Taylor of Milton, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the retirement allowance for interim educators

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 312

By Reps. Graning of Jericho, Arsenault of Williston, Burrows of West Windsor, and Sibilila of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the appointment of members of the State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education

To the Committee on Education.

H. 313

By Reps. Sibilila of Dover and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to ranked-choice voting for presidential primary elections

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 314

By Reps. Sibilila of Dover and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a top-four nonpartisan primary election system

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 315

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to nondiscrimination concerning a parent with a disability

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 316

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the governance of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation and the University of Vermont

To the Committee on Education.

H. 317

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier, Biron of Vergennes, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Maguire of Rutland City, Masland of Thetford, Morris of Springfield, Ode of Burlington, Pinsonault of Dorset, Sibilila of Dover, Squirrell of Underhill, Toof of St. Albans Town, Waszazak of Barre City, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to credit card fees on taxes and gratuities

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 318

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to computer science in Vermont's public schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 319

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous environmental subjects

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 320

By Reps. Labor of Morgan, Demar of Enosburgh, Galfetti of Barre Town, Higley of Lowell, Maguire of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, Page of Newport City, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stabilizing Vermont's rural hospitals

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 321

By Reps. Birong of Vergennes and Boyden of Cambridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 322

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington and Cina of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to social worker licensure requirements

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 323

By Reps. Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, and McFaun of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to mental health programming funded by the Mental Health Innovation Special Fund

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 324

By Rep. Burditt of West Rutland,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to mandatory retirement age of the Vermont State Retirement System

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 325

By Rep. Berbeco of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Vermont's adoption of the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 326

By Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of the use of rodenticides

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 327

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to labor requirements for certain energy projects

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 328

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to compliance with the environmental justice State policy

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 329

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the towing and storage of abandoned motor vehicles

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 330

By Reps. Boyden of Cambridge and Burrows of West Windsor,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to authorizing the use of electronic and remote voting for annual meetings of municipal corporations

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 331

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a victim's right to be heard at an appeal or postconviction remedy hearing

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 332

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Bishop of Colchester, Boyden of Cambridge, Cole of Hartford, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Olson of Starksboro, and Sibia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Small Business Technical Assistance Exchange

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 333

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to collective bargaining for agricultural workers

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 334

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to limiting employer restrictions on individuals separating from employment

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 335

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to payroll records of workers on State construction projects

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 336

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enhancing enforcement of employment laws

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 337

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to duties of the Commissioner of Labor

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 338

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unemployment compensation

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 339

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to removing the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 340

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Cole of Hartford, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Sibia of Dover, and White of Waitsfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to regulating developers and deployers of certain automated decision systems

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 341

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Cole of Hartford, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Sibia of Dover, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating oversight and safety standards for developers and deployers of inherently dangerous artificial intelligence systems

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 342

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Casey of Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 343

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making State lands available for farming by citizens of State-recognized Native American Indian tribes

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 344

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a good cause standard for termination of employment

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 345

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the sale or distribution of glitter containing intentionally added synthetic polymers

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 346

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to charges for towing and storage of motor vehicles belonging to crime victims

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 347

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Priestley of Bradford, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding coverage of the minimum wage and overtime laws and maintaining the authority of the Attorney General to enforce complaints of employee misclassification

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 348

By Reps. Casey of Montpelier and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting workers from extreme temperatures in the workplace

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 349

By Rep. Howard of Rutland City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Vermont State Building Security Board

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 350

By Rep. Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to automatic opening knives

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 3**

Offered by Representatives Demar of Enosburgh, Hango of Berkshire, Gregoire of Fairfield, Laroche of Franklin, Oliver of Sheldon, and Walker of Swanton

Offered by Senators Brock and Norris

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Enosburg Falls High School Hornets Division II championship softball team

Whereas, the matchup in Castleton of the first-seeded Enosburg Falls High School Hornets and the second-seeded Lyndon Institute Vikings for the 2024 Division II softball honors was hardly surprising, but what transpired on the diamond was the Hornets' amazing saga of perseverance, and

Whereas, after a scoreless first inning, in the top of the second, the Vikings powerfully scored eight runs, potentially sealing the game's outcome, and

Whereas, in their subsequent trips to the batter's box, the talented Hornets proved worthy of their top-tier ranking as they stopped additional Vikings from scoring and tallied two runs in the bottom of the second, three in the third, one in the fourth, two in the fifth, and two more in the sixth to cap an amazing comeback and secure a stunning 10–8 triumph, and

Whereas, the impressive Hornets were Camryn Benoit, Cassidy Blaney, Ava Burns, Miley Decker, Annabelle Elwood, Leah Gervais, Erica Goodhue, Addyson Longe, Makenna Lovelette, Kailie Morrill, Annalise Robtoy, Lillian Robtoy, Rory Schreindorfer, Gretchen Stiebris, and Allie Wells, and

Whereas, Head Coach Randy Wells; assistant coaches Brad Lovelette, Shawna Lovelette, and Ryan Wells; and student manager Natalie Lovelette were proud of their team's athletic accomplishment, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Enosburg Falls High School Hornets Division II championship softball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Enosburg Falls High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 17, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 26

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution congratulating Ilona Delsing Rosa Maher on her 2024 Paris Olympics rugby sevens bronze medal

Whereas, rugby is not the most commonly played team sport in the United States, but none is more exhilarating or exciting, and no Vermonter or American is more adept on the rugby field than Ilona Maher, and

Whereas, Ilona Maher graduated in 2014 from Burlington High School, where she enthusiastically played basketball, field hockey, soccer, and softball, and she started her love affair with rugby as a member of the South Burlington High School's rugby football club, and

Whereas, initially attending Norwich University, the Quinnipiac University Bobcats rugby coach recruited her, and for the next three years, she excelled as the Bobcats won three National Intercollegiate Rugby Association (NIRA) women's championships; in each of these years, the NIRA named her to its All-American women's team, and in 2017, the NIRA honored Ilona Maher as the nation's top collegiate women's rugby player, and

Whereas, this Quinnipiac University nursing graduate and master's degree graduate of DeVry University debuted as a women's USA Rugby World Cup Sevens team member in 2018 and represented the United States in 2021 at the Tokyo Olympics, and even more exciting was her 2024 Paris Olympics appearance, where the U.S. women's rugby sevens team won its first-ever Olympic medal—a bronze—upon defeating Australia 14–12, and

Whereas, following her return from France, Ilona Maher was honored at an ebullient welcome home ceremony in Burlington's Battery Park, and she has used her rugby fame to promote women's sports and body positivity, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Ilona Delsing Rosa Maher on her 2024 Paris Olympics rugby sevens bronze medal, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Ilona Maher.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Message from the Senate No. 20

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 34. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Union High School Chieftains Division III championship boys soccer team.

H.C.R. 35. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the March 13, 1775 Westminster Massacre.

H.C.R. 36. House concurrent resolution honoring Charlotte Board of Civil Authority Chair, and Ski and Ride Program Coordinator Michael Krasnow.

H.C.R. 37. House concurrent resolution congratulating Meara Seery of Brattleboro on being named Miss Vermont 2024.

H.C.R. 38. House concurrent resolution honoring dedicated Jamaica community leader and volunteer Clara Robinson.

H.C.R. 39. House concurrent resolution designating February 19, 2025 as Recovery Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 40. House concurrent resolution designating February 20, 2025 as NEK Day at the State House.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and twenty-one minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Jed Lipsky of Stowe.

Message from the Senate No. 21

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 141. An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 351

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to operator's licenses, privilege cards, and nondriver identification cards

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 352

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Renewable Energy for Communities Program

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 353

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to updates to the State energy policy

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 354

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a thermal efficiency benefits charge

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 355

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to review of orders placing the Vermont National Guard in federal active duty status

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 356

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Burrows of West Windsor, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, and Pouech of Hinesburg,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Unemployment Compensation Benefit Modernization Advisory Committee

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 357

By Rep. Burrows of West Windsor,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Office of Racial Equity

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 358

By Rep. Boutin of Barre City,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to motor vehicle inspections
To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 359

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to privatization contracts
To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 360

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, and White of Bethel,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to privacy protections for mobile identification
To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 361

By Rep. Christie of Hartford,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to creating municipal and regional civilian oversight of law enforcement
To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 362

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,
House bill, entitled
An act relating to State recognition of Native American tribes and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 363

By Reps. Hooper of Burlington and Nugent of South Burlington,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to town, city, and village elections for single-seat offices
using ranked-choice voting

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 364

By Reps. Walker of Swanton and Oliver of Sheldon,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the annexation of property by the Village of
Swanton

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 365

By Reps. Arsenaault of Williston and Graning of Jericho,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of social media platforms and artificial
intelligence systems

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 366

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, Priestley of Bradford, Logan of Burlington,
and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to neurological rights

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 367

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, Berbeco of Winooski, Burt of Cabot, Carris-
Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Logan of
Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Page of Newport City, and White of
Waitsfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Vermont Olympics Task Force

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 368

By Reps. LaLonde of South Burlington, Harrison of Chittenden, Arsenault of Williston, and Black of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting possession of firearms in government buildings

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 369

By Reps. Masland of Thetford and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to parental rights and responsibilities

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 370

By Rep. Greer of Bennington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to cryptocurrency and protecting the public welfare

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 371

By Reps. Greer of Bennington, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, and Sibia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of dynamic pricing by retail establishments

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 372

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to application of neonicotinoid pesticides to nursery starts and herbaceous plants

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 373

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, and Satcowitz of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to pilot projects expanding democratic practices in State and local government

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 374

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the Commissioner of Labor's authority to recommend a subminimum wage for individuals with a disability

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 375

By Reps. Dodge of Essex and Stone of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Office of New Americans Study Committee

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 376

By Reps. Nugent of South Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Headrick of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Ode of Burlington, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Treatment and Recovery Fund and the labeling and taxation of alcoholic beverages

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 377

By Reps. Rachelson of Burlington and Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the local media advertising tax credit

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 378

By Reps. Bartley of Fairfax, Canfield of Fair Haven, Bosch of Clarendon, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Krasnow of South Burlington, Marcotte of Coventry, Micklus of Milton, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to tax increment financing for housing infrastructure

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 379

By Reps. Maguire of Rutland City and Burditt of West Rutland,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to second look sentencing

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 380

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a felony penalty for a violation of conditions of release and to staff the pretrial supervision program

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 381

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Rachelson of Burlington, and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the manufacture and transfer of gas-operated semiautomatic firearms

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 382

By Rep. Christie of Hartford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to data collection in the criminal justice system

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 383

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Christie of Hartford, and LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a voluntary license to purchase firearms

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 384

By Rep. Christie of Hartford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to minimum reimbursement rates for labor related to automobile insurance claims

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 385

By Reps. Graning of Jericho, Arsenault of Williston, Bluemle of Burlington, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Burke of Brattleboro, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Duke of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, LaLonde of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Minier of South Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, Sibilis of Dover, Sweeney of Shelburne, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to remedies and protections for victims of coerced debt

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 386

By Rep. Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing an Agricultural Land Transfer Assistance Program

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 387

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of a property right for an individual's personal characteristics

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 388

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the protection of an individual's digital replica

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 389

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to restricting the use of artificial intelligence to affect rental housing pricing and availability

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 390

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to restrictions on digital advertising brokers

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 391

By Rep. Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the disclosure of transactions involving personally identifiable information

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 392

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in State buildings and on State land

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 393

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bosch of Clarendon, Coffin of Cavendish, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, Powers of Waterford, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the prohibition of requiring face masks in schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 394

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to renewable energy generation

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 395

By Rep. Greer of Bennington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Municipal Law Enforcement Assistance Program

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 396

By Reps. Logan of Burlington, Bartholomew of Hartland, Labor of Morgan, North of Ferrisburgh, Satcowitz of Randolph, and Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Mollie Beattie Distinguished Service Award

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 397

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City, Galfetti of Barre Town, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Brown of Richmond, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Canfield of Fair Haven, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Cooper of Pownal, Cordes of Bristol, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Eastes of Guilford, Feltus of Lyndon, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Hunter of Manchester, Kimbell of Woodstock, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne, LaMont of Morristown, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McFaun of Barre Town, McGill of Bridport, Mihaly of Calais, Morris of Springfield, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Noyes of Wolcott, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Torre of Moretown, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Winter of Ludlow, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 398

By Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Graning of Jericho, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 399

By Reps. Tomlinson of Winooski, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to tenant rights

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 400

By Reps. Galfetti of Barre Town and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to housing appeals

To the Committee on Environment.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**H. 96**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 30**

Offered by All Members of the House

Offered by All Members of the Senate

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative, House Republican Leader, and Milton Town Manager Donald H. Turner Jr.

Whereas, Don Turner graduated from Milton High School and Champlain College and served his hometown and the State of Vermont as an exemplary public official, and

Whereas, at 16 years of age, he volunteered for the Milton Fire and Rescue Department, beginning a three-decade-plus firefighting career, and for many years, he served in the dual roles of fire chief and town forest fire warden, and his other civic roles included service on the Board of Civil Authority and,

more recently, as Milton's respected town manager, a position that benefited from his wealth of prior municipal experience, and

Whereas, in early 2006, Governor Jim Douglas appointed Don Turner to represent the Town of Milton in the General Assembly, and the voters of his House district reaffirmed their support of his legislative tenure at six subsequent elections, and

Whereas, prior to the 2011 legislative session, the House Republican Caucus elected Don Turner as its leader for the first of four consecutive terms, and he ardently advocated on its behalf while also promoting an amicable legislative process, and

Whereas, aside from his public sector duties, Don Turner was a successful realtor, helped oversee his family's construction business and bowling alley, and was an avid fan of Milton High School's girls' soccer team, and

Whereas, Don Turner briefly, but bravely, battled against glioblastoma prior to his death on November 30, 2024, at 60 years of age, and he is survived by his loving wife of 40 years, Gail; his children; grandchildren; and parents, and the citizens of Milton will miss his friendship and leadership, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses its sincere condolences to the family of former Representative, House Republican Leader, and Milton Town Manager Donald H. Turner Jr., *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the members of Don Turner's family, the Milton Town Clerk, and the Milton Fire Department.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 14, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the following remarks by **Rep. Morgan, M. of Milton** were ordered printed in the Journal:

"Madam Speaker:

We just heard a resolution about the life accomplishments of Don Turner, Jr. Anyone that knew Don would easily agree that he did a lot of extraordinary things in his 60 years with us. If you were ever to have asked Don if he considered himself to be extraordinary, he would emphatically have said NO! Don was an extremely humble man and would have said he was just an ordinary guy "getting stuff done." Getting stuff done was Don's motto for the

Town of Milton staff that worked with him in his role as Town Manager. In fact, the words “getting stuff done” are emblazoned on the wall inside the new Milton Public Works facility. The Milton Select Board aptly named the new facility after Don last fall as the Donald Turner Jr. Public Works facility. His role as Milton Town Manager is but one hat that Don wore in his career of service to his beloved Town of Milton and the State of Vermont. At an early age, Don was drawn to service as a rescue and fire department member. Most noteworthy in this arena was his ascension to the role of Fire Chief where he was literally responsible for ushering in and mentoring many, many young people and new members to serve in these noble organizations. He was recognized many times over with many accolades for his efforts.

In the mid-2000’s, Don was called into State service with an appointment by Governor Jim Douglas to fill behind a Milton house member that had to leave for full-time Guard employment. Don served as a member for almost a decade and then for several terms as the House Minority Leader. He ultimately mentored the current Minority Leader, the member from Poultney. While serving in the Legislature, he was selected as Milton’s Town Manager and served both roles until 2018. Don was the epitome of “give the hard work to the busy man – he’ll get it done!”

While serving in his Town Manger role, it was not uncommon on a snowy Saturday morning to see Don in a town pickup with a plow, moving snow from some of the buildings in order to get the road crew out on the roads quicker for the public safety of keeping our roads safe. And all of this time, Don continued to work in real estate and co-managed the family development and real estate ventures with his dad, Don Sr., and mom, Nancy. It was not a mistake that he was assigned the moniker of “Mr. Milton” by many a townspeople.

When the day was done, though, what mattered most to Don was his family. His parents, his siblings, but most of all his nuclear family headed by whom he’d defer to as the real leader of the family – his beloved wife, Gail, whom he’d met at Champlain College, decades ago. Later came his three wonderful girls and now grandchildren. I know for a fact, and I’m sure much to Gail’s chagrin at times, that the family felt Don was pulled from them many a time with one of his multiple hat roles, but he always found balance and made family time a priority.

Madam Speaker, Don Turner, Jr. was not a diamond in the rough, he was a gemstone and a gemstone to countless people. At his remembrance of life ceremony in early December of last year, there were in excess of a thousand people who attended to pay tribute and respect to a life of service and dedication to an endless list of people in Milton and in Vermont. Again, an

ordinary man just “getting stuff done.” On a side note, generationally, Don was my second cousin. And he is a first cousin once removed from Rep. Leland Morgan and Rep. Brenda Steady - I'm sure he's smiling on the legacy continuing.

Madam Speaker, with us today in the gallery behind me are Don's mother and father, Don, Sr. and Nancy Turner. Don's wife, Gail. His daughters Emily and husband Ben, Hillary and husband Dana, Erin and partner Marie Johns, and Don's sister Lisa Lapete. But most importantly the apple of Gail and Don's eyes, their precious grandchildren, Lydia, Thea, and Thatcher. On behalf of the five members from Milton, I'd ask that we give them a warm welcome to the State House.”

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bills Committed to
Other Committee**

Rep. Wood of Waterbury moved that the Committee on Human Services be relieved of the following House bills:

H. 227

An act relating to establishing a residential peer respite facility in southern Vermont

H. 270

An act relating to confidentiality for peer support counseling among emergency service providers

H. 323

An act relating to mental health programming funded by the Mental Health Innovation Special Fund

And that the bills be committed to the Committee on Health Care, which was agreed to.

**Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration; Senate Proposal of
Amendment Not Concurred in; Committee of Conference Requested and
Appointed; Rules Suspended, Messaged to the Senate Forthwith**

H. 141

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.105 is amended to read:

Sec. B.105 Agency of digital services - communications and information technology

Personal services	82,994,362	82,994,362
Operating expenses	<u>62,547,212</u>	<u>61,761,212</u>
Total	145,541,574	144,755,574
Source of funds		
General fund	209,808	209,808
Special funds	511,723	511,723
Internal service funds	<u>144,820,043</u>	<u>144,034,043</u>
Total	145,541,574	144,755,574

Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.145 is amended to read:

Sec. B.145 Total general government

Source of funds		
General fund	117,405,610	117,405,610
Transportation fund	4,292,149	4,292,149
Special funds	31,882,209	31,882,209
Federal funds	1,467,374	1,467,374
Internal service funds	<u>214,635,950</u>	<u>213,849,950</u>
Interdepartmental transfers	7,053,789	7,053,789
Enterprise funds	4,298	4,298
Pension trust funds	4,800,305	4,800,305
Private purpose trust funds	<u>1,329,205</u>	<u>1,329,205</u>
Total	382,870,889	382,084,889

Sec. 3. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.200 is amended to read:

Sec. B.200 Attorney general

Personal services	14,435,517	14,485,517
Operating expenses	2,015,028	2,015,028
Grants	<u>20,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
Total	16,470,545	16,520,545
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>7,391,661</u>	<u>7,441,661</u>
Special funds	2,355,424	2,355,424
Tobacco fund	422,000	422,000
Federal funds	1,743,215	1,743,215
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,558,245</u>	<u>4,558,245</u>

Total	~~16,470,545~~	16,520,545

Sec. 4. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.204 is amended to read:

Sec. B.204 Judiciary

Personal services	~~58,439,095~~	58,827,799
Operating expenses	~~12,479,384~~	14,640,960
Grants	<u>121,030</u>	<u>121,030</u>
Total	~~71,039,509~~	73,589,789
Source of funds		
General fund	~~63,414,698~~	65,964,978
Special funds	4,503,401	4,503,401
Federal funds	953,928	953,928
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,167,482</u>	<u>2,167,482</u>
Total	~~71,039,509~~	73,589,789

Sec. 5. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.205 is amended to read:

Sec. B.205 State's attorneys

Personal services	~~17,309,679~~	17,548,979
Operating expenses	<u>2,034,016</u>	<u>2,202,516</u>
Total	~~19,343,695~~	19,751,495
Source of funds		
General fund	~~18,734,634~~	19,142,434
Federal funds	31,000	31,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>578,061</u>	<u>578,061</u>
Total	~~19,343,695~~	19,751,495

Sec. 6. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.206.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.206.1 Crime Victims Advocates

Personal services	3,016,156	3,016,156
Operating expenses	<u>104,396</u>	<u>142,396</u>
Total	~~3,120,552~~	3,158,552
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>3,120,552</u>	<u>3,158,552</u>
Total	~~3,120,552~~	3,158,552

Sec. 7. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.208 is amended to read:

Sec. B.208 Public safety - administration

Personal services	~~4,620,756~~	5,397,783
Operating expenses	<u>6,022,923</u>	<u>6,022,923</u>
Total	~~10,643,679~~	11,420,706

Source of funds

General fund	6,179,193	8,092,770
Special funds	4,105	4,105
Federal funds	396,362	396,362
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,064,019</u>	<u>2,927,469</u>
Total	<u>10,643,679</u>	11,420,706

Sec. 8. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.210 is amended to read:

Sec. B.210 Public safety - criminal justice services

Personal services	5,387,100	4,705,897
Operating expenses	<u>2,152,467</u>	<u>2,152,467</u>
Total	<u>7,539,567</u>	6,858,364

Source of funds

General fund	1,829,099	2,172,295
Special funds	4,975,847	3,951,448
Federal funds	<u>734,621</u>	<u>734,621</u>
Total	<u>7,539,567</u>	6,858,364

Sec. 9. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.236 is amended to read:

Sec. B.236 Human rights commission

Personal services	927,697	1,014,559
Operating expenses	<u>115,103</u>	<u>125,378</u>
Total	<u>1,042,800</u>	1,139,937

Source of funds

General fund	953,800	1,050,937
Federal funds	<u>89,000</u>	<u>89,000</u>
Total	<u>1,042,800</u>	1,139,937

Sec. 10. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.241 is amended to read:

Sec. B.241 Total protection to persons and property

Source of funds

General fund	228,238,448	233,638,438
Transportation fund	20,250,000	20,250,000
Special funds	<u>119,824,272</u>	118,799,873
Tobacco fund	672,579	672,579
Federal funds	162,959,452	162,959,452
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>16,031,869</u>	14,895,319
Enterprise funds	<u>15,070,107</u>	<u>15,070,107</u>
Total	<u>563,046,727</u>	566,285,768

Sec. 11. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.300 is amended to read:

Sec. B.300 Human services - agency of human services - secretary's office

Personal services	16,219,746	18,219,746
Operating expenses	7,220,486	6,062,286
Grants	3,795,202	3,795,202
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234
Source of funds		
General fund	12,913,202	11,923,905
Special funds	135,517	135,517
Federal funds	13,565,080	11,606,177
Global Commitment fund	0	4,300,000
Interdepartmental transfers	621,635	111,635
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234

Sec. 12. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.301 is amended to read:

Sec. B.301 Secretary's office - global commitment

Grants	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988
Total	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988
Source of funds		
General fund	668,380,623	716,109,638
Special funds	32,047,905	32,047,905
Tobacco fund	21,049,373	21,049,373
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
Federal funds	~~1,285,494,243~~	1,363,223,270
Interdepartmental transfers	4,487,210	4,124,245
Total	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988

Sec. 13. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.305 is amended to read:

Sec. B.305 AHS - administrative fund

Personal services	330,000	330,000
Operating expenses	~~13,170,000~~	16,870,000
Total	~~13,500,000~~	17,200,000
Source of funds		
Interdepartmental transfers	~~13,500,000~~	17,200,000
Total	~~13,500,000~~	17,200,000

Sec. 14. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.306 is amended to read:

Sec. B.306 Department of Vermont health access - administration

Personal services	134,929,148	136,693,560
Operating expenses	44,171,193	39,250,661

Grants	<u>3,112,301</u>	<u>3,112,301</u>
Total	<u>182,212,642</u>	<u>179,056,522</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>39,872,315</u>	<u>42,023,781</u>
Special funds	<u>4,733,015</u>	<u>4,733,015</u>
Federal funds	<u>128,790,580</u>	<u>124,836,223</u>
Global Commitment fund	<u>4,308,574</u>	<u>4,308,574</u>
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,508,158</u>	<u>3,154,929</u>
Total	<u>182,212,642</u>	<u>179,056,522</u>

Sec. 15. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.307 is amended to read:

Sec. B.307 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program –
global commitment

Personal services	<u>547,983</u>	<u>547,983</u>
Grants	<u>899,550,794</u>	<u>964,407,046</u>
Total	<u>900,098,777</u>	<u>964,955,029</u>
Source of funds		
Global Commitment fund	<u>900,098,777</u>	<u>964,955,029</u>
Total	<u>900,098,777</u>	<u>964,955,029</u>

Sec. 16. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.309 is amended to read:

Sec. B.309 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program –
state only

Grants	<u>63,033,948</u>	<u>67,780,595</u>
Total	<u>63,033,948</u>	<u>67,780,595</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>62,151,546</u>	<u>62,308,757</u>
Global Commitment fund	<u>882,402</u>	<u>5,471,838</u>
Total	<u>63,033,948</u>	<u>67,780,595</u>

Sec. 17. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.310 is amended to read:

Sec. B.310 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid non-waiver
matched

Grants	<u>34,994,888</u>	<u>38,232,431</u>
Total	<u>34,994,888</u>	<u>38,232,431</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>12,511,405</u>	<u>13,459,034</u>
Federal funds	<u>22,483,483</u>	<u>24,773,397</u>
Total	<u>34,994,888</u>	<u>38,232,431</u>

Sec. 18. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.311 is amended to read:

Sec. B.311 Health - administration and support

Personal services	8,373,168	8,373,168
Operating expenses	<u>7,519,722</u>	8,166,662
Grants	<u>7,985,727</u>	<u>7,985,727</u>
Total	<u>23,878,617</u>	24,525,557
Source of funds		
General fund	3,189,843	3,513,313
Special funds	2,308,186	2,308,186
Federal funds	11,040,433	11,363,903
Global Commitment fund	7,173,924	7,173,924
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>166,231</u>	<u>166,231</u>
Total	<u>23,878,617</u>	24,525,557

Sec. 19. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.312 is amended to read:

Sec. B.312 Health - public health

Personal services	67,812,371	67,812,371
Operating expenses	11,025,497	11,025,497
Grants	<u>46,766,832</u>	<u>46,866,832</u>
Total	<u>125,604,700</u>	125,704,700
Source of funds		
General fund	12,908,892	13,008,892
Special funds	24,906,804	24,906,804
Tobacco fund	1,088,918	1,088,918
Federal funds	64,038,301	64,038,301
Global Commitment fund	17,036,150	17,036,150
Interdepartmental transfers	5,600,635	5,600,635
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	<u>125,604,700</u>	125,704,700

Sec. 20. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.313 is amended to read:

Sec. B.313 Health - substance use programs

Personal services	6,570,967	6,570,967
Operating expenses	511,500	511,500
Grants	<u>58,215,510</u>	<u>59,240,635</u>
Total	<u>65,297,977</u>	66,323,102
Source of funds		
General fund	6,672,061	7,697,186
Special funds	2,413,678	2,413,678
Tobacco fund	949,917	949,917
Federal funds	15,456,754	15,456,754

Global Commitment fund	<u>39,805,567</u>	<u>39,805,567</u>
Total	<u>65,297,977</u>	<u>66,323,102</u>

Sec. 21. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.314 is amended to read:

Sec. B.314 Mental health - mental health

Personal services	50,191,086	50,191,086
Operating expenses	<u>5,517,999</u>	<u>5,709,973</u>
Grants	<u>270,625,138</u>	<u>272,536,080</u>
Total	<u>326,334,223</u>	<u>328,437,139</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	25,555,311	26,279,270
Special funds	1,718,092	1,718,092
Federal funds	11,436,913	12,661,803
Global Commitment fund	287,609,767	287,763,834
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,140</u>	<u>14,140</u>
Total	<u>326,334,223</u>	<u>328,437,139</u>

Sec. 22. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.316 is amended to read:

Sec. B.316 Department for children and families - administration & support services

Personal services	46,644,080	44,844,080
Operating expenses	<u>17,560,755</u>	<u>19,402,705</u>
Grants	<u>5,627,175</u>	<u>5,627,175</u>
Total	<u>69,832,010</u>	<u>69,873,960</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	39,722,724	40,113,958
Special funds	2,781,912	2,781,912
Federal funds	24,448,223	24,098,939
Global Commitment fund	2,417,024	2,417,024
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>462,127</u>	<u>462,127</u>
Total	<u>69,832,010</u>	<u>69,873,960</u>

Sec. 23. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.317 is amended to read:

Sec. B.317 Department for children and families - family services

Personal services	45,197,694	45,286,553
Operating expenses	5,315,309	5,315,309
Grants	<u>98,251,027</u>	<u>97,732,465</u>
Total	<u>148,764,030</u>	<u>148,334,327</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	58,838,741	59,984,059
Special funds	729,587	729,587

Federal funds	34,666,196	36,180,206
Global Commitment fund	54,514,506	51,425,475
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>15,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Total	~~148,764,030~~	148,334,327

Sec. 24. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.318 is amended to read:

Sec. B.318 Department for children and families - child development

Personal services	5,908,038	5,908,038
Operating expenses	813,321	813,321
Grants	<u>223,329,336</u>	<u>211,815,836</u>
Total	~~230,050,695~~	218,537,195

Source of funds

General fund	76,723,518	51,443,165
Special funds	96,312,000	109,512,000
Federal funds	43,511,414	42,902,383
Global Commitment fund	<u>13,503,763</u>	<u>14,679,647</u>
Total	~~230,050,695~~	218,537,195

Sec. 25. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.319 is amended to read:

Sec. B.319 Department for children and families - office of child support

Personal services	13,157,660	13,061,794
Operating expenses	<u>3,759,992</u>	<u>3,759,992</u>
Total	~~16,917,652~~	16,821,786

Source of funds

General fund	5,200,064	5,163,429
Special funds	455,719	455,719
Federal funds	10,874,269	10,815,038
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>387,600</u>	<u>387,600</u>
Total	~~16,917,652~~	16,821,786

Sec. 26. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.320 is amended to read:

Sec. B.320 Department for children and families - aid to aged, blind and disabled

Personal services	2,252,206	2,481,741
Grants	<u>10,717,444</u>	<u>10,369,155</u>
Total	~~12,969,650~~	12,850,896

Source of funds

General fund	7,376,133	7,368,843
Global Commitment fund	<u>5,593,517</u>	<u>5,482,053</u>
Total	~~12,969,650~~	12,850,896

Sec. 27. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.321 is amended to read:

Sec. B.321 Department for children and families - general assistance

Personal services	15,000	15,000
Grants	<u>11,054,252</u>	<u>10,702,625</u>
Total	<u>11,069,252</u>	<u>10,717,625</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	10,811,345	10,486,987
Federal funds	11,320	11,070
Global Commitment fund	<u>246,587</u>	<u>219,568</u>
Total	<u>11,069,252</u>	<u>10,717,625</u>

Sec. 28. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.322 is amended to read:

Sec. B.322 Department for children and families - 3SquaresVT

Grants	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Source of funds		
Federal funds	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>

Sec. 29. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.323 is amended to read:

Sec. B.323 Department for children and families - reach up

Operating expenses	23,821	23,821
Grants	<u>37,230,488</u>	<u>36,730,493</u>
Total	<u>37,254,309</u>	<u>36,754,314</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	24,733,042	24,233,047
Special funds	5,970,229	5,970,229
Federal funds	2,806,330	2,806,330
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,744,708</u>	<u>3,744,708</u>
Total	<u>37,254,309</u>	<u>36,754,314</u>

Sec. 30. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.325 is amended to read:

Sec. B.325 Department for children and families - office of economic opportunity

Personal services	817,029	1,042,639
Operating expenses	100,407	100,407
Grants	<u>35,466,283</u>	<u>35,812,536</u>
Total	<u>36,383,719</u>	<u>36,955,582</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	28,178,010	28,687,068

Special funds	83,135	83,135
Federal funds	4,935,273	4,998,078
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,187,301</u>	<u>3,187,301</u>
Total	36,383,719	36,955,582

Sec. 31. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.329 is amended to read:

Sec. B.329 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - administration & support

Personal services	45,217,977	46,217,977
Operating expenses	<u>6,472,558</u>	<u>6,714,680</u>
Total	51,690,535	52,932,657
Source of funds		
General fund	22,916,281	24,037,342
Special funds	1,390,457	1,390,457
Federal funds	26,063,097	26,184,158
Global Commitment fund	35,000	35,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,285,700</u>	<u>1,285,700</u>
Total	51,690,535	52,932,657

Sec. 32. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.330 is amended to read:

Sec. B.330 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - advocacy and independent living grants

Grants	<u>24,571,060</u>	<u>24,781,798</u>
Total	24,571,060	24,781,798
Source of funds		
General fund	8,392,303	8,504,605
Federal funds	7,321,114	7,321,114
Global Commitment fund	<u>8,857,643</u>	<u>8,956,079</u>
Total	24,571,060	24,781,798

Sec. 33. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.332 is amended to read:

Sec. B.332 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - vocational rehabilitation

Grants	<u>10,179,845</u>	<u>9,179,845</u>
Total	10,179,845	9,179,845
Source of funds		
General fund	1,371,845	371,845
Federal funds	7,558,000	7,558,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,250,000</u>	<u>1,250,000</u>
Total	10,179,845	9,179,845

Sec. 34. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.333 is amended to read:

Sec. B.333 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - developmental services

Grants	<u>329,299,344</u>	<u>331,262,271</u>
Total	329,299,344	331,262,271
Source of funds		
General fund	132,732	132,732
Special funds	15,463	15,463
Federal funds	403,573	403,573
Global Commitment fund	328,697,576	330,660,503
Interdepartmental transfers	50,000	50,000
Total	329,299,344	331,262,271

Sec. 35. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - TBI home and community based waiver

Grants	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520
Source of funds		
Global Commitment fund	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520

Sec. 36. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334.1 Disabilities, aging and independent living - Long Term Care

Grants	<u>293,584,545</u>	<u>347,376,122</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122
Source of funds		
General fund	498,579	498,579
Federal funds	2,450,000	2,450,000
Global Commitment fund	<u>290,635,966</u>	<u>344,427,543</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122

Sec. 37. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.338 is amended to read:

Sec. B.338 Corrections - correctional services

Personal services	147,472,104	148,472,104
Operating expenses	<u>24,914,205</u>	<u>25,249,795</u>
Total	172,386,309	173,721,899
Source of funds		
General fund	162,807,888	163,643,478
Special funds	935,963	935,963

ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	499,888	999,888
Global Commitment fund	2,746,255	2,746,255
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>396,315</u>	<u>396,315</u>
Total	~~172,386,309~~	173,721,899

Sec. 38. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.342 is amended to read:

Sec. B.342 Vermont veterans' home - care and support services

Personal services	17,631,222	17,595,290
Operating expenses	5,013,462	13,247,462
Grants	<u>0</u>	<u>1,583,157</u>
Total	22,644,684	32,425,909

Source of funds

General fund	4,320,687	11,224,018
Special funds	10,051,903	12,450,095
Federal funds	<u>8,272,094</u>	<u>8,751,796</u>
Total	22,644,684	32,425,909

Sec. 39. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.347 is amended to read:

Sec. B.347 Total human services

Source of funds

General fund	1,328,118,806	1,364,156,647
Special funds	202,800,452	218,398,644
Tobacco fund	23,088,208	23,088,208
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	~~1,803,398,922~~	1,882,012,745
Global Commitment fund	~~1,980,839,553~~	2,108,560,133
Internal service funds	490,853	490,853
Interdepartmental transfers	32,893,535	34,367,341
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	5,404,708,886	5,664,153,128

Sec. 40. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.501 is amended to read:

Sec. B.501 Education - education services

Personal services	28,237,700	28,312,700
Operating expenses	1,134,912	1,134,912
Grants	<u>322,345,763</u>	<u>322,345,763</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375

Source of funds

General fund	6,387,955	6,462,955

Special funds	3,033,144	3,033,144
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Federal funds	340,584,414	340,584,414
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>962,474</u>	<u>962,474</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375

Sec. 41. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.503 is amended to read:

Sec. B.503 Education - state-placed students

Grants	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	20,000,000	19,000,000
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	20,000,000	19,000,000

Sec. 42. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504 Education - adult education and literacy

Grants	<u>4,694,183</u>	<u>4,997,820</u>
Total	4,694,183	4,997,820
Source of funds		
General fund	3,778,133	4,081,770
Federal funds	<u>916,050</u>	<u>916,050</u>
Total	4,694,183	4,997,820

Sec. 43. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504.1 Education - Flexible Pathways

Grants	<u>11,361,755</u>	<u>11,564,179</u>
Total	11,361,755	11,564,179
Source of funds		
General fund	921,500	921,500
Education fund	<u>10,440,255</u>	<u>10,642,679</u>
Total	11,361,755	11,564,179

Sec. 44. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.505 is amended to read:

Sec. B.505 Education - adjusted education payment

Grants	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	1,893,267,394	1,882,267,394
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	1,893,267,394	1,882,267,394

Sec. 45. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.508 is amended to read:

Sec. B.508 Education - nutrition

Grants	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>
Total	20,400,000	17,500,000
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>
Total	20,400,000	17,500,000

Sec. 46. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.516 is amended to read:

Sec. B.516 Total general education

Source of funds		
General fund	228,890,519	229,269,156
Special funds	23,651,687	23,651,687
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Education fund	<u>2,323,283,242</u>	<u>2,308,585,666</u>
Federal funds	354,654,849	354,654,849
Global Commitment fund	260,000	260,000
Interdepartmental transfers	1,467,771	1,467,771
Pension trust funds	<u>3,572,780</u>	<u>3,572,780</u>
Total	2,936,531,236	2,922,212,297

Sec. 47. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.704 is amended to read:

Sec. B.704 Forests, parks and recreation - forestry

Personal services	7,880,566	7,913,766
Operating expenses	1,005,046	1,005,046
Grants	<u>1,712,423</u>	<u>1,713,923</u>
Total	10,598,035	10,632,735
Source of funds		
General fund	6,299,512	6,334,212
Special funds	547,215	547,215
Federal funds	3,394,931	3,394,931
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>356,377</u>	<u>356,377</u>
Total	10,598,035	10,632,735

Sec. 48. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.710 is amended to read:

Sec. B.710 Environmental conservation - air and waste management

Personal services	27,995,328	27,995,328
Operating expenses	10,788,954	10,816,954
Grants	<u>4,943,000</u>	<u>4,943,000</u>
Total	43,727,282	43,755,282

Source of funds

General fund	<u>199,372</u>	227,372
Special funds	24,643,580	24,643,580
Federal funds	18,800,064	18,800,064
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>84,266</u>	<u>84,266</u>
Total	<u>43,727,282</u>	43,755,282

Sec. 49. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.711 is amended to read:

Sec. B.711 Environmental conservation - office of water programs

Personal services	50,153,806	50,153,806
Operating expenses	<u>8,362,915</u>	<u>8,370,915</u>
Grants	<u>92,365,140</u>	<u>92,365,140</u>
Total	<u>150,881,861</u>	150,889,861

Source of funds

General fund	<u>11,887,629</u>	11,895,629
Special funds	30,967,150	30,967,150
Federal funds	107,154,542	107,154,542
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>872,540</u>	<u>872,540</u>
Total	<u>150,881,861</u>	150,889,861

Sec. 50. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.714 is amended to read:

Sec. B.714 Total natural resources

Source of funds

General fund	<u>42,792,800</u>	42,863,500
Special funds	81,275,829	81,275,829
Fish and wildlife fund	10,418,331	10,418,331
Federal funds	152,068,301	152,068,301
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,131,324</u>	<u>14,131,324</u>
Total	<u>300,686,585</u>	300,757,285

Sec. 51. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100 is amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2025 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

* * *

(d) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(8) \$835,073 General Fund for the Bridges to Health Program; and

(9) ~~\$400,000~~ \$550,000 General Fund for the Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey; and

(10) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity.

(e) Department for Children and Families. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$16,500,000~~ \$18,340,304 General Fund for the General Assistance Emergency Housing program;

(2) \$1,034,065 General Fund to extend 10 Economic Services Division limited service positions, including associated operating costs, in support of the General Assistance Emergency Housing program; and

(3) \$332,000 General Fund for a 2-1-1 service line contract to operate 24 hours seven days per week;

(4) \$340,000 General Fund and \$660,000 federal funds for the Office of Child Support mainframe transition planning. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 703, unless otherwise reverted by a future act of the General Assembly, these appropriations shall carry forward until fully expended; and

(5) \$1,800,000 General Fund shall be added to the appropriation made in Sec. B.1102(b)(4) of this act for the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System.

* * *

(n) Agency of Human Services Secretary's Office. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$3,913,200~~ \$5,586,324 General Fund and ~~\$5,366,383~~ \$7,713,259 federal funds to be used for Global Commitment match for the Medicaid Global Payment Program. To the extent that at a future date the Global Payment Program ceases to operate as a program or changes methodology to a retrospective payment program, any resulting one-time General Fund spending authority remaining at that time shall be reverted. If the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b has not been replenished in accordance with subdivision (b)(21) of Sec. B.1102 of this act, the remaining unallocated General Fund balance shall be reserved in the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b up to the amount appropriated in this subdivision.

(o) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$9,279,583~~ \$13,299,583 Global Commitment for the Medicaid Global Payment Program;

(2) \$150,000 General Fund to conduct a technical analysis of Vermont's health insurance markets; and

(3) \$100,000 General Fund to implement the expansion of Medicare Savings Programs eligibility;

(4) \$10,000,000 General Fund for Provider Stabilization Grants; and

(5) \$11,000,000 General Fund for an alternative payment model reconciliation payment to Brattleboro Retreat. All or a portion of these funds may also be used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match. If funds are used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match, the commensurate amount of Global Commitment Fund spending authority may be requested during the Global Commitment Transfer process pursuant to Sec. E.301.1 of this act.

* * *

(v) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

~~(1) \$200,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities that were impacted by the August and December 2023 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and DR-4762-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of the August and December 2023 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on Federal Emergency Management Agency related projects~~

\$1,800,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4810-VT and DR-4744-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of 2023 and 2024 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on FEMA-related projects.

(A) The funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) for local economic damage grants shall be distributed as follows:

(i) \$75,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has at least \$5,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(ii) \$50,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$5,000,000 and at least \$2,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iii) \$30,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$2,000,000 and at least \$1,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iv) \$20,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$1,000,000 and at least \$250,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(v) \$10,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$250,000 and at least \$100,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(B) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) have not been granted on or before June 30, 2025, they shall revert to the General Fund and be transferred to the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

(C) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) are insufficient to distribute grants to all eligible municipalities in their full amount, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511, utilize excess receipt authority to expend funds from the PILOT Special Fund for this purpose.

(w) Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$8,600,000 General Fund to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of: affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services; and

(2) \$2,800,000 General Fund to complete pilot projects identified pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 186.

Sec. 52. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.100 is amended to read:

Sec. D.100 ALLOCATIONS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

(a) This act contains the following amounts allocated to special funds that receive revenue from the property transfer tax. These allocations shall not exceed available revenues.

(1) The sum of \$575,662 is allocated from the Current Use Administration Special Fund to the Department of Taxes for administration of the Use Tax Reimbursement Program. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), amounts in excess of \$575,662 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Current Use Administration Special Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(2) Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, amounts in excess of ~~\$22,106,740~~ \$28,238,050 from the property transfer tax and surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a deposited into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(A) The dedication of \$2,500,000 in revenue from the property transfer tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9610(d) for the debt payments on the affordable housing bond pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 314 shall be offset by the reduction of \$1,500,000 in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and \$1,000,000 from the surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a. The fiscal year 2025 appropriation of ~~\$22,106,740~~ \$28,238,050 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board reflects the \$1,500,000 reduction. The affordable housing bond and related property transfer tax and surcharge provisions are repealed after the life of the bond on July 1, 2039. Once the bond is retired, the \$1,500,000 reduction in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board shall be restored.

(3) Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), amounts in excess of ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund. The ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 shall be allocated as follows:

(A) ~~\$6,404,540~~ \$7,300,358 for disbursement to regional planning commissions in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b);

(B) ~~\$931,773~~ \$1,187,721 for disbursement to municipalities in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b); and

(C) ~~\$436,060~~ \$564,034 to the Agency of Digital Services for the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

Sec. 53. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.101 is amended to read:

Sec. D.101 FUND TRANSFERS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following amounts are transferred from the funds indicated:

(1) From the General Fund to the:

(A) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100):
\$73,212,880 \$78,235,088.34.

* * *

(J) Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (#21555): ~~\$830,000~~
\$6,500,000.

(K) Education Fund (#20205): \$25,000,000.

(L) Medical Insurance Fund (#55100): \$18,500,000.

(M) Correctional Industries Fund (#59100): \$3,135,443.

(N) Act 250 Permit Fund (#21260): \$900,000.

(O) State Liability Self-Insurance Fund (#56200): \$3,000,000.

(P) Emergency Personnel Survivor's Benefit Fund (#21884):
\$220,000.

(2) From the Transportation Fund to the:

(A) ~~Vermont Recreational Trails Fund (#21455): \$370,000.~~

(~~B~~) Downtown Transportation and Related Capital Improvements
Fund (#21575): \$523,966.

(~~C~~)(B) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100):
\$316,745.

(~~D~~)(C) Notwithstanding 19 V.S.A. § 13(c), the Transportation Fund
transfer to the Central Garage fund in fiscal year 2025 shall be \$0.

* * *

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year
2025:

(1) The following amounts shall be transferred to the General Fund
from the funds indicated:

(A) Cannabis Regulation Fund (#21998): ~~\$12,000,000~~
\$15,417,084.32.

(B) AHS Central Office Earned Federal Receipts (#22005):
\$4,641,960.

(C) Sports Wagering Enterprise Fund (#50250): ~~\$7,000,000~~
\$6,139,162.

(D) Liquor Control Fund (#50300): ~~\$21,100,000~~ \$9,543,353.

(E) ~~Tobacco Litigation Settlement Fund (#21370): \$3,000,000.~~

~~(F)~~ Financial Institutions Supervision Fund (#21065): \$1,100,000.

~~(F)~~ Workforce Education and Training Fund (#21913):
\$2,598,921.75.

(G) Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund (#21994): the balance of the fund at the close of fiscal year 2025.

(2) The following estimated amounts, which may be all or a portion of unencumbered fund balances, shall be transferred from the following funds to the General Fund. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July meeting the final amounts transferred from each fund and certify that such transfers will not impair the agency, office, or department reliant upon each fund from meeting its statutory requirements.

(A) AG-Fees & Reimbursements-Court Order Fund (#21638):
\$2,000,000.

(B) Unclaimed Property Fund (#62100): ~~\$6,500,000~~ \$10,995,595.

(3) ~~\$66,935,000~~ \$63,560,450.50 of the net unencumbered fund balances in the Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21075), the Captive Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21085), and the Securities Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21080) shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(c)(1) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.3 of the Rules for State Matching Funds under the Federal Public Assistance Program, in fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may provide funding from the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund that was transferred pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(J) of this section to subgrantees prior to the completion of a project. In fiscal year years 2025 and 2026, up to 70 percent of the State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project for municipalities that were impacted by the August and December 2023 and 2024 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT may be advanced at the request of a municipality.

(2) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.1 of the Rules for State Matching Funds Under the Federal Public Assistance Program, the Secretary of Administration shall increase the standard State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project to the highest percentage possible given available funding for municipalities in counties that were impacted by the August and December 2023 and 2024 flooding events and are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster

declarations DR-4744-VT and, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT.

Sec. 54. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.102 is amended to read:

Sec. D.102 REVERSIONS

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the General Fund from the accounts indicated:

* * *

3150892104 MH – Case Management Serv	<u>\$350,000.00</u>	<u>\$350,199.34</u>

* * *

<u>1100892208 AOA – VT Housing Finance Agency</u>	<u>\$3,000,000.00</u>
<u>1100892403 AOA – Health Equity Community Grants</u>	<u>\$500,000.00</u>
<u>1120020000 Tuition Assistance Program</u>	<u>\$133,877.86</u>
<u>1120892401 DHR – New Position in DHR Ops</u>	<u>\$477,769.00</u>
<u>1120892402 DHR – New Position in VTHR Ops</u>	<u>\$40,726.07</u>
<u>1140010000 Tax Operation Costs</u>	<u>\$1,267,062.22</u>
<u>1140060000 Reappraisal and Listing Payments</u>	<u>\$35,270.75</u>
<u>1140070000 Use Tax Reimbursement Program</u>	<u>\$37,864.25</u>
<u>1140330000 Renter Rebates</u>	<u>\$2,186,940.33</u>
<u>1140892403 Tax – Child Care Contr Positions</u>	<u>\$3,591,823.02</u>
<u>1260892201 TRE – Bond Redemption</u>	<u>\$6,000,000.00</u>
<u>1260980000 Debt Service</u>	<u>\$235,445.15</u>
<u>1266892401 VPIC – Pension System Assets</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
<u>2100892201 AG – Racial Disparities</u>	<u>\$48,465.00</u>
<u>2130400000 SIUS Parent Account</u>	<u>\$395,749.64</u>
<u>2150010000 Mil Admin/TAGO</u>	<u>\$142,789.80</u>
<u>2150050000 Mil Vet Affairs Office</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>2160892201 C CVS – VT Forensic Nursing</u>	<u>\$246.43</u>
<u>2160892304 C CVS – Kurn Hattin Survivor</u>	<u>\$250.00</u>
<u>2200010000 Administration Division</u>	<u>\$167,222.00</u>
<u>3310000000 Commission on Women</u>	<u>\$25,390.43</u>

<u>3330892401 GMCB – VHCURES Database Implemen</u>	<u>\$545,782.90</u>
<u>3400892111 Supp New Americans Refugee</u>	<u>\$23,431.00</u>
<u>3400892301 AHSCO – Refugee Resettlement</u>	<u>\$1,293.00</u>
<u>3420892405 HD – Regional Emergency Med</u>	<u>\$8,295.01</u>
<u>3440050000 DCFS – AABD</u>	<u>\$35,310.73</u>
<u>3440892110 DCF – Grants to Reachup</u>	<u>\$5.10</u>
<u>3440892203 DCF – Parent Child Ctrs Cap Imp</u>	<u>\$20,708.22</u>
<u>3440892214 DCF – Child Care Provider Workfor</u>	<u>\$294.79</u>
<u>4100500000 VT Department of Labor</u>	<u>\$8,000,000.00</u>
<u>5100070000 Education Services</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>5100892101 AOE – VSC Committee Per Diem</u>	<u>\$16,295.33</u>
<u>5100892102 AOA – Advisory Group Per Diem</u>	<u>\$9,018.00</u>
<u>5100892103 AOE – ESESAG Per Diems</u>	<u>\$8,960.00</u>
<u>5100892201 AOE – Comm Pub Sch Emp Hlth Ben</u>	<u>\$29,050.00</u>
<u>5100892202 AOE – Task Force Equit Inclusive</u>	<u>\$6,150.00</u>
<u>5100892302 AOE – Ethnic&Social Equity Per D</u>	<u>\$14,386.24</u>
<u>6100010000 Administration Management and Planning</u>	<u>\$402,052.99</u>
<u>6100040000 Property Tax Assessment Approp</u>	<u>\$11,692.11</u>
<u>6140880005 152/00 State Asst Munic Poll Cont</u>	<u>\$126.26</u>
<u>7100892301 Everyone Eats</u>	<u>\$144,565.43</u>
<u>7120892304 DED – Relocated and Remote Worker</u>	<u>\$127,314.33</u>
<u>8100002100 Department of Motor Vehicles</u>	<u>\$2,482.81</u>

* * *

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the Education Fund from the accounts indicated:

<u>5100010000 Administration</u>	<u>\$301,041.03</u>
<u>5100050000 State-Placed Students</u>	<u>\$13,687,528.41</u>
<u>5100090000 Education Grant</u>	<u>\$359,570.31</u>
<u>5100110000 Small School Grant</u>	<u>\$593,700.00</u>

<u>5100200000 Education – Technical Education</u>	<u>\$1,802,347.44</u>
<u>5100210000 Education – Flexible Pathways</u>	<u>\$1,312,334.72</u>
<u>5100892405 AOE – Universal School Meals</u>	<u>\$6,201,479.69</u>

Sec. 55. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.103 is amended to read:

Sec. D.103 RESERVES

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following reserve transactions shall be implemented for the funds provided:

(1) General Fund.

(A) Pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 308, an estimated amount of ~~\$15,168,663~~ \$15,168,660.85 shall be added to the General Fund Budget Stabilization Reserve.

(B) \$5,480,000 shall be added to the 27/53 reserve in fiscal year 2025. This action is the fiscal year 2025 contribution to the reserve for the 53rd week of Medicaid as required by 32 V.S.A. § 308e and the 27th payroll reserve as required by 32 V.S.A. § 308e.

(C) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308b, \$3,913,200 shall be unreserved from the Human Services Caseload Reserve established within the General Fund in 32 V.S.A. § 308b.

* * *

Sec. 56. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.100 is amended to read:

Sec. E.100 POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of ~~43~~ 47 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2025 for the following:

(1) Permanent classified positions:

* * *

(H) Office of the Attorney General:

(i) one Court Diversion Assistant Director.

* * *

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

* * *

(G) Human Rights Commission:

(i) one Intake Specialist; and

(ii) one Staff Attorney Investigator.

(H) Office of the Attorney General:

(i) one Assistant Attorney General.

* * *

(d) The conversion of eight limited service positions to exempt permanent status is authorized in fiscal year 2025 as follows:

(1) Office of the Defender General:

(A) one Administrative Services Tech;

(B) two DG IT Specialist II's;

(C) one ODG Legal Assistant I;

(D) two Staff Attorney I's;

(E) one Financial Specialist III; and

(F) one Admin Secretary.

* * *

Sec. 57 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 56, is further amended to read:

Sec. E.100 EXECUTIVE BRANCH POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of 75 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2024 for the following:

* * *

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

* * *

(F) Office of the State Treasurer:

(i) one Director – ~~VT-Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;

and

(ii) one Communications and Outreach Manager – ~~VT-Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;

* * *

Sec. 58. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.301 is amended to read:

Sec. E.301 SECRETARY'S OFFICE; GLOBAL COMMITMENT

* * *

(b) In addition to the State funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, a total estimated sum of ~~\$24,301,185~~ \$28,307,335 is anticipated to be certified as State matching funds under Global Commitment as follows:

(1) ~~\$21,295,850~~ \$25,302,000 certified State match available from local education agencies for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment. This amount, combined with ~~\$29,204,150~~ \$34,698,000 of federal funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, equals a total estimated expenditure of ~~\$50,500,000~~ \$60,000,000. An amount equal to the amount of the federal matching funds for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment shall be transferred from the Global Commitment Fund to the Medicaid Reimbursement Special Fund created in 16 V.S.A. § 2959a.

(2) \$3,005,335 certified State match available from local designated mental health and developmental services agencies for eligible mental health services provided under Global Commitment.

(c) Up to ~~\$4,487,210~~ \$3,614,245 is transferred from the Agency of Human Services Federal Receipts Holding Account to the Interdepartmental Transfer Fund consistent with the amount appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act.

Sec. 59. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. G.109 is amended to read:

Sec. G.109 PAY ACT APPROPRIATIONS; FISCAL YEARS 2025 AND 2026

(a) Executive Branch. The first and second years of the two-year agreements between the State of Vermont and the Vermont State Employees' Association for the Defender General, Non-Management, Supervisory, and Corrections bargaining units, and, for the purpose of appropriation, the State's Attorneys' offices bargaining unit, for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; the collective bargaining agreement with the Vermont Troopers' Association for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; and salary increases for employees in the Executive Branch not covered by the bargaining agreements shall be funded as follows:

(1) Fiscal year 2025.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control ~~Board~~ Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

(2) Fiscal year 2026.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control ~~Board~~ Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

Sec. 60. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

Sec. 7. TELEPHONE TAX; REPEAL; TRANSITION

(a) 32 V.S.A. § 8521 (telephone personal property tax) is repealed on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. The final monthly installment payment of the telephone personal property tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8521 levied on the net book value of the taxpayer's personal property as of December 31, ~~2024~~ 2025 shall be due on or before July 25, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(b) 32 V.S.A. § 8522 (alternative telephone gross revenues tax) is repealed on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027. The final quarterly payment of the alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due on or before January 25, ~~2026~~ 2027.

(c) Any taxpayer who paid the alternative tax imposed by 32 V.S.A. § 8522 prior to the repeal of the tax on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027 shall become subject to the income tax imposed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 151 beginning with the taxpayer's first income tax year starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. No alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due for any period included in the taxpayer's income tax filing for tax years starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(d) In fiscal year ~~2025~~ 2026, the Division of Property Valuation and Review of the Department of Taxes and all communications service providers with taxable communications property in Vermont shall be subject to the inventory and valuation provisions prescribed in 32 V.S.A. § 4452, as applicable.

Sec. 61. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that:

* * *

(3) Secs. 8–12 (communications property tax) shall take effect on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026 and shall apply to grand lists lodged on or after April 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

Sec. 62. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 166, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION

Notwithstanding 7 V.S.A. § 845(c), in fiscal year 2025:

(1) \$500,000.00 is transferred from the Cannabis Regulation Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 845 to the Cannabis Business Development Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987; and

(2) \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the Cannabis Business ~~19~~ Development Fund to the ~~Agency of Commerce and Community Development~~ Department of Economic Development to fund technical assistance and provide loans and grants pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987.

Sec. 63. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 78 is amended to read:

Sec. 78. ~~TRANSFERS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX~~

~~Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), or any other provision of law to the contrary, amounts in excess of \$32,954,775.00 from the property transfer tax shall be transferred into the General Fund. Of this amount:~~

~~(1) \$6,106,335.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.~~

~~(2) \$1,279,740.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 64. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 96 is amended to read:

Sec. 96. APPROPRIATION; RENT ARREARS ASSISTANCE FUND

The sum of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the ~~Vermont State Housing Authority~~ Department of Housing and Community Development in fiscal year 2025 for the Rent Arrears Assistance Fund established by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 45.

Sec. 65. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 182, Sec. 3, as amended by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 75, 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.119, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 106, is further amended to read:

Sec. 3. MANUFACTURED HOME IMPROVEMENT AND
REPAIR PROGRAM

(a) ~~Amounts~~ Of the amounts available from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery funds, \$4,000,000 is appropriated to the Department of Housing and Community Development for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program and shall be used for one or more of the following purposes:

* * *

Sec. 66. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 113b is amended to read:

Sec. 113b. APPROPRIATION; NATURAL RESOURCES LAND USE
REVIEW BOARD

The sum of ~~\$1,300,000.00~~ \$400,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Natural Resources Land Use Review Board in fiscal year 2025.

Sec. 67. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 24a is amended to read:

Sec. 24a. COMPENSATION FOR OVERPAYMENT

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, ~~the sum of \$29,224.00~~ a \$29,224 credit shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of applied to the Canaan Town School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Canaan Town School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. ~~The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Canaan.~~

(b) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$5,924.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Bloomfield in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Bloomfield for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Bloomfield.~~

(c) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,575.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Brunswick in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Brunswick for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Brunswick.~~

~~(d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$6,145.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of East Haven in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of East Haven for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of East Haven.~~

~~(e) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,046.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Granby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Granby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Granby.~~

~~(f) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$10,034.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Guildhall in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Guildhall for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Guildhall.~~

~~(g) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$20,536.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Kirby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Kirby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Kirby.~~

~~(h) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,402.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Lemington in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Lemington for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Lemington.~~

~~(i) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$11,464.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Maidstone in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Maidstone for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating~~

~~average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Maidstone.~~

~~(j) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$4,349.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Norton in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Norton for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Norton.~~

~~(k) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,657.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Victory in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Victory for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Victory.~~

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a \$68,132 credit shall be applied to the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership.

Sec. 68. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. B.1100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 40 and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. C.101, is further amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2024 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

(a) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$2,300,000 General Fund to create, implement, and oversee a comprehensive statewide language access plan;

(2) \$15,000,000 General Fund to be used to offset the cost of denied claims for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) federal reimbursement related to presidentially declared disasters in fiscal year 2024 or 2025, or to fund unanticipated statewide costs related to recovery efforts from declared disasters or administering programs created by funds from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery Fund, including the costs of related limited-service positions, and contracting for programs and services.

(3) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity. These funds shall not be released until the recommendation and report required by Sec. E.100.1 of this act, regarding the permanent administrative location for the Office of Health Equity, is provided to the committees of jurisdiction listed in Sec. E.100.1 of this act and the positions in the Office of Health Equity created by this act are filled.

* * *

(l) Agency of Human Services Central Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(2) \$8,834,000 General Fund and \$11,483,302 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program. Funds shall be used to expand the substances covered by the program, include mental health and pediatric screenings, and make strategic investments with community partners; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(m) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$366,066 General Fund and \$372,048 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

(2) \$15,583,352 Global Commitment Fund #20405 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose; and

* * *

(n) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$4,595,448 Global Commitment Fund #20405 to the Division of Substance Use Programs for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(x) Judiciary. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1)(A) \$4,680,000 General Fund for the Judiciary network replacement project.

(B) Judiciary shall update the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee on the status of this project on or before December 1, 2023.

(2) \$300,000 General Fund for the Essex County Courthouse renovation planning. Of this amount, \$50,000 may be used to construct bathrooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act in the Essex Meeting House.

* * *

(ee) Joint Fiscal Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$250,000 for per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Task Force on Economic Development Incentives and for consulting services approved by the Task Force~~ consulting services related to legislative needs identified in the 2025–2026 biennium, including analysis of legislative staff compensation and organizational structure and implementation of adjustments in accordance with policies adopted by the Joint Legislative Management Committee.

* * *

Sec. 69. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1102, as added by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 47, is amended to read:

Sec. B.1102 FISCAL YEAR 2023 ONE-TIME TECHNOLOGY
MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2023, funds are appropriated from the Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951) for new and ongoing initiatives as follows:

(1) \$40,010,000 to the Agency of Digital Services to be used as follows:

(A) \$11,800,000 for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system upgrade of Human Capital Management and core statewide financial accounting system and integration with the Department of Labor and Agency of Transportation financial systems;

* * *

Sec. 70. 3 V.S.A. § 3306 is amended to read:

§ 3306. TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND

* * *

(b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

- (1) any amounts transferred ~~or appropriated~~ to it by the General Assembly; and
- (2) any interest earned by the Fund.

* * *

Sec. 71. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; REPEAL

(a) 10 V.S.A. § 543 (Workforce Education and Training Fund) is repealed.

Sec. 72. 18 V.S.A. § 9502 is amended to read:

§ 9502. TOBACCO TRUST FUND

(a)(1) The Tobacco Trust Fund is established in the Office of the State Treasurer for the purposes of creating a self-sustaining, perpetual fund for tobacco cessation and prevention that is not dependent upon tobacco sales volume.

(2) The Trust Fund shall ~~comprise~~ be composed of:

- (A) ~~appropriations~~ transfers made by the General Assembly; and
- (B) ~~transfers from the Litigation Settlement Fund pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section; and~~
- (C) contributions from any other source.

(3) The State Treasurer shall not disburse monies from the Trust Fund, except upon appropriation by the General Assembly. In any fiscal year, total appropriations from the Trust Fund shall not exceed seven percent of the fair market value of the Fund at the end of the prior fiscal year.

(4) The Trust Fund shall be administered by the State Treasurer. The Treasurer may invest monies in the Fund in accordance with the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 434. All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned shall remain in the Fund. The Treasurer's annual financial report to the Governor and the General Assembly shall contain an accounting of receipts, disbursements, and earnings of the Fund.

~~(b) Unless otherwise authorized by the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2000, and on June 30 of each subsequent fiscal year, any unencumbered balance in the Litigation Settlement Fund shall be transferred to the Trust Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 73. 30 V.S.A. chapter 86 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 86. UNDERGROUND UTILITY DAMAGE PREVENTION
SYSTEM

* * *

§ 7006. MARKING OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITIES

A company notified in accordance with section 7005 of this title shall, within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, of the receipt of the notice, mark the approximate location of its underground utility facilities in the area of the proposed excavation activities; provided, however, if the company advises the person that the proposed excavation area is of such length or size that the company cannot reasonably mark all of the underground utility facilities within 48 72 hours, the person shall notify the company of the specific locations in which the excavation activities will first occur and the company shall mark facilities in those locations within 48 72 hours and the remaining facilities within a reasonable time thereafter. A company and an excavator may by agreement fix a later time for the company's marking of the facilities, provided the marking is made prior to excavation activities. For the purposes of this chapter, the approximate location of underground facilities shall be marked with stakes, paint, or other physical means as designated by the Commission.

§ 7006a. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITY
MARKINGS

After a company has marked its underground facilities in accordance with section 7006 of this title, the excavator shall be responsible for maintenance of the designated markings. In the event said markings are obliterated, destroyed, or removed, the person engaged in excavation activities shall notify the System referred to in section 7002 of this title that remarking is needed. The System shall then notify all member companies whose facilities may be affected. The company shall within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, following receipt of the notice, remark the location of its underground utility facilities.

* * *

Sec. 74. 32 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Loan” means a loan that is interest free or below market value.

(2) “State agency” means an Executive Branch agency, department, commission, office, or board.

* * *

Sec. 75. 32 V.S.A. § 706 is amended to read:

§ 706. TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS

Notwithstanding any authority granted elsewhere, all transfers of appropriations shall be made pursuant to this section upon the initiative of the Governor or upon the request of a secretary or commissioner.

(1) With the approval of the Governor, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may transfer balances of appropriations not to exceed ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$100,000.00 made under any appropriation act for the support of the government from one component of an agency, department, or other unit of State government to any component of the same agency, department, or unit.

(2) Except as specified in ~~subdivisions~~ subdivision (1) ~~and (4)~~ of this section, the transfer of balances of appropriations may be made only with the approval of the Emergency Board.

(3) For the specific purpose of balancing and closing out fund accounts at the end of a fiscal year, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may adjust a balance within an account of an agency or department in an amount not to exceed ~~\$100.00~~ \$200.00.

* * *

Sec. 76. 32 V.S.A. § 902 is amended to read:

§ 902. AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW MONEY

* * *

(b) The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of and expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing of such notes as the same fall due without further order or authority from the ~~General Fund or from the Transportation or other applicable funds or from the proceeds of bonds or notes~~ governmental debt service funds established in section 951a of this chapter. The authority hereby granted is in addition to and not in limitation of any other authority.

Such notes shall be sold at public or private sale with or without published notice, as the State Treasurer may determine to be in the best interests of the State.

Sec. 77. 32 V.S.A. § 951a is amended to read:

§ 951a. DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

(a) Three governmental debt service funds are hereby established:

* * *

(b) Financial resources in each fund shall consist of ~~appropriations by the General Assembly to fulfill debt service obligations~~, the transfer of funding sources by the General Assembly to fulfill future debt service obligations, bond proceeds raised to fund a permanent reserve required by a trust agreement entered into to secure bonds, transfers of appropriations effected pursuant to section 706 of this title, investment income earned on balances held in trust agreement accounts as required by a trust agreement, and such other amounts as directed by the General Assembly or that are specifically authorized by provisions of this title. Each debt service fund shall account for the accumulation of resources and the fulfillment of debt service obligations within the current fiscal year and the accumulation of resources for debt service obligations maturing in future fiscal years.

* * *

Sec. 78. 32 V.S.A. § 954 is amended to read:

§ 954. PROCEEDS

(a) The proceeds arising from the sale of bonds, inclusive of any premiums, shall be applied to the purposes for which they were authorized, and the purposes shall may be considered to include ~~the expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing the bonds and any notes issued under section 955 of this title, and underwriters' fees and~~ amounts for reserves, but no purchasers of the bonds shall be in any way bound to see to the proper application of the proceeds. The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of, investment return on, and maturity value of the bonds and notes as the same fall due or accrue without further order or authority. The State Treasurer, with the approval of the Governor, may establish sinking funds, reserve funds, or other special funds of the State as the State Treasurer may deem for the best interests of the State. To the extent not otherwise provided, the amount necessary each year to fulfill the maturing principal and interest of, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on all the bonds then outstanding shall be included in and made a part of the annual appropriation bill for the expense of State government, and the principal and

interest on, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on the bonds as may come due before appropriations for their fulfillment have been made shall be fulfilled from the applicable debt service fund.

(b) ~~The State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of bond issuance or issuances to the entities to which funds are appropriated by a capital construction act and for which bonding is required as the source of funds. If estimated receipts are insufficient, the State Treasurer shall allocate additional costs to the entities. Any remaining receipts shall not be expended, but carried forward to be available for future capital construction acts. If the source of funds appropriated by a capital construction act is other than by issuance of bonds, the State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of ongoing debt management services to the entities to which those funds are appropriated shall be appropriated annually from the funds from which transfers are made to fund debt service costs.~~

* * *

Sec. 79. VERMONT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FUND; REPEAL

(a) 33 V.S.A. chapter 78 (Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund) is repealed.

Sec. 80 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 38 is amended to read:

Sec. 38. RENTAL HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

(a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Housing Finance Agency shall design and implement a Rental Housing Revolving Loan Program and shall create and administer a revolving loan fund to provide subsidized loans for rental housing developments that serve middle-income households.

(b) Loans; eligibility; criteria.

* * *

(7) The Agency shall use one or more legal mechanisms to ensure that:

(A) a subsidized unit remains affordable to a household earning the applicable percent of area median income for the longer of:

(i) seven years; or

(ii) full repayment of the loan plus three years; and

(B) during the affordability period determined pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7), the annual increase in rent for a subsidized unit does not exceed three percent or an amount otherwise authorized by the Agency.

* * *

Sec. 81. 32 V.S.A. § 308b is amended to read:

§ 308b. HUMAN SERVICES CASELOAD RESERVE

(a) There is created within the General Fund a Human Services Caseload Reserve. Expenditures from the Reserve shall be subject to an appropriation by the General Assembly or approval by the Emergency Board. Expenditures from the Reserve shall be limited to Agency of Human Services caseload-related needs primarily in the Departments for Children and Families, of Health, of Mental Health, of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, of Vermont Health Access, and settlement costs associated with managing the Global Commitment waiver.

(b) The Secretary of Administration may transfer to the Human Services Caseload Reserve any General Fund ~~carry-forward~~ carryforward directly attributable to Agency of Human Services caseload reductions and the effective management of related federal receipts, with the exclusion of the Department of Corrections.

(c) The Human Services Caseload Reserve shall contain two ~~sub-accounts~~ subaccounts:

(1) A ~~sub-account~~ subaccount for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses. Each fiscal year ~~beginning with fiscal year 2020~~, the Department of Finance and Management shall adjust the amount reserved for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses to equal the amount specified in the ~~Comprehensive~~ Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year occurring two years prior for the estimated amount of incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses associated with the current Medicaid Global Commitment waiver.

* * *

Sec. 82. CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION SPECIAL FUND;
UNALLOCATED AND UNRESERVED BALANCE

(a) In fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration shall unreserve and transfer funds from the Human Services Caseload Reserve to the Child Care Contribution Special Fund established in 32 V.S.A. § 10554 as necessary to maintain a balance that appropriately supports the State's statutory obligations under the Child Care Financial Assistance Program established in 33 V.S.A. §§ 3512 and 3513.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that any unreserved and unallocated balance in the Child Care Contribution Special Fund shall remain in the Fund to support the future establishment of a reserve for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

Sec. 83. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; FACILITY WORK
PROGRAMS; STRATEGIC PLAN

(a) Findings and intent.

(1) The General Assembly finds that a significant budget deficit has developed within previously existing programs despite a wage structure that pays incarcerated individuals in Vermont at rates ranging from \$0.25 to \$1.35 per hour, significantly below the federal minimum wage.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly that all Department of Corrections facility work programs operate in a manner that is fiscally sustainable to the extent possible within current statutory limitations and effective in preparing offenders for meaningful employment upon release.

(b) Strategic plan. On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Corrections shall, in consultation with the Department of Labor, submit a strategic plan with proposed benchmarks for improvement to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary. The strategic plan shall include:

(1) A business plan to improve program efficiency and self-sustainability to ensure all facility work programs, including Vermont Correctional Industries, vocational training programs, and other paid facility duties, operate without recurring deficits or to clearly identify funding sources to address the deficits.

(2) A comprehensive evaluation of the skills provided through facility work programs to determine if those skills are transferable to employment opportunities post-incarceration. The evaluation shall include consideration of expanding technical training and certification opportunities that carry recognized value in the labor market.

(3) An analysis of facility work programs to determine if each program serves a sufficient portion of the incarcerated population to justify its administration. The analysis shall also consider whether participants gain meaningful and valuable work experiences.

(4) A review of wages paid to facility work program participants, the implications of wage structures on program outcomes, and the appropriate use of funds in relation to program objectives.

(c) In fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the Department of Corrections shall submit timely reports to the to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary, or the Joint Fiscal Committee and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee when the General Assembly is not in session, on the development of facility work program deficits. The Department shall include in these reports any financial or operational actions taken to address deficits, increase oversight, and prevent future deficits.

Sec. 84. MEDICAID PROVIDERS WITH STABILIZATION NEEDS;
GRANT ELIGIBILITY

(a) All Vermont Medicaid participating providers with demonstrated stabilization needs and a plan to achieve sustainability shall be eligible to apply for funds appropriated pursuant to 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), including substance use residential treatment facilities, federally qualified health centers, residential mental health providers, and other providers of health care and human services.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall submit a report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations. The report shall include:

(1) A detailed account of grants distributed pursuant to the appropriation made in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), as added by this act. This shall include the dollar amount and recipient of each grant.

(2) A description of each grant recipient's financial status prior to receipt of the grant, a summary of the impact of the grant for each recipient, and a summary of a revised long-term sustainability plan for each grant recipient.

(3) An analysis of grant outcomes and any recommendations for enhancing the financial stability of Vermont Medicaid providers.

Sec. 84a. ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM AND HIGH SCHOOL
COMPLETION PROGRAM TRANSITIONAL STUDENTS

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 945 and any other provision of law to the contrary, a high school may award a high school diploma to any student who meets the following criteria:

(1) Prior to July 1, 2024, the student was participating in the High School Completion Program as the program existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

(2) The student has met the requirements of the student's individual graduation plan and would have been eligible to receive a diploma pursuant to the High School Completion Program as it existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

(b) This section is repealed on July 1, 2025.

Sec. 85. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;
DISCRETIONARY EXEMPTIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2025, the Department for Children and Families shall fully utilize the State's allocation of discretionary exemptions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to the extent permitted by federal regulation for the purpose of proactively extending benefits to individuals who would otherwise experience a disruption of benefits.

Sec. 86. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 19, Secs. 5 and 6 are amended to read:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Sec. 4 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

~~(b) Sec. 5 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.~~

~~(c) All other sections shall take effect 30 calendar days after passage.~~

Sec. 87. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 53, as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.102 is further amended to read:

Sec. 53. FISCAL YEAR 2022 UNALLOCATED RESERVE

* * *

(b) After meeting the requirements of subsection (a) of this section, but prior to satisfying the requirements of 32 V.S.A. § 308c, the remaining unreserved and undesignated funds at the close of fiscal year 2022 shall be allocated to the extent available as follows:

* * *

(7) \$9,600,000 is appropriated to the Judiciary, of which \$3,880,000 is for the reopening of the courts ~~and \$5,720,000~~, \$4,920,000 is to replace HVAC in county court houses, ~~and \$800,000 is to upgrade the network wiring and security systems in county court houses.~~

* * *

Sec. 88. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 15b, as added by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, is amended to read:

Sec. 15b. SERGEANT AT ARMS

(a) The sum of ~~\$100,000.00~~ \$100,000 is appropriated in FY fiscal year 2025 to the Sergeant at Arms for the following projects:

(1) the replacement of State House cafeteria furnishings; and

(2) the purchase and installation at the State House of an X-ray machine designed to screen baggage.

Sec. 89. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.321 is amended to read:

Sec. E.321 GENERAL ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY HOUSING

* * *

(b)(1) General Assistance Emergency Housing shall be provided in a community-based shelter whenever possible. If there is inadequate community-based shelter space available within the Agency of Human Services district in which the household presents itself, the household shall be provided emergency housing in a hotel or motel within the district, if available, until adequate community-based shelter space becomes available in the district. The utilization of hotel and motel rooms pursuant to this subdivision shall be capped at 1,100 rooms per night between September 15, 2024 through November 30, 2024 ~~and between April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.~~

* * *

(3) The Department shall provide emergency winter housing to households meeting the eligibility criteria in subsection (a) of this section between December 1, 2024 and ~~March 31,~~ June 30, 2025. Emergency housing in a hotel or motel provided pursuant to this subdivision shall not count toward the maximum days of eligibility per 12-month period provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

* * *

Sec. 90. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 82, Sec. 1, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 108, Sec. 3, is further amended to read:

Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE
EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE
TO FLOODING

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments

owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for reimbursement under this section, prior to November 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, a municipality must have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

(2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

(A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on the property;

(B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more;

(C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

(D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

(b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, the municipality incurred unanticipated interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

* * *

Sec. 91. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.106 is amended to read:

Sec. E.106 CORONAVIRUS STATE FISCAL RECOVERY FUND
APPROPRIATIONS; REVERSION AND ESTABLISHMENT
OF NEW SPENDING AUTHORITY

* * *

(b) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall revert all unobligated American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund spending authority prior to December 31, 2024. The total amount of American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

spending authority reverted in accordance with this subsection shall equal the amount of new spending authority established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511 for the following purposes in the following order:

* * *

(3) \$30,000,000 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of: affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units; including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home and community based services.

Sec. 92. CARRYFORWARD AUTHORITY

(a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law and subject to the approval of the Secretary of Administration, General Fund, Transportation Fund, Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund, Education Fund, Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951), Clean Water Fund (21932), and Agricultural Water Quality Fund (21933) appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Executive Branch shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, General Fund appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Legislative and Judicial Branches shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

Sec. 93. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This act shall take effect on passage, except that, notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214:

(1) Sec. 67 shall take effect retroactively on July 1, 2024; and

(2) Sec. 90 shall take effect retroactively on November 15, 2024.

And by renumbering all of the sections of the bill to be numerically correct (including internal references) and adjusting all of the totals to be arithmetically correct.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Scheu of Middlebury** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury
Rep. Bluemle of Burlington
Rep. Squirrell of Underhill

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House action on the bill was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee Appointment

Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4772, the Speaker appointed the following member to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee:

Rep. Maguire of Rutland City

Message from the Senate No. 22

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 31. An act relating to claim edit standards and prior authorization requirements.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

Pursuant to the request of the House for a Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on House bill entitled:

H. 141. An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments.

The President announced the appointment as members of such Committee on the part of the Senate:

Senator Perchlik
Senator Lyons
Senator Brock

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-six minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, February 27, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Brian Cina of Burlington.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 401

By Reps. Cooper of Pownal, Bartley of Fairfax, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Burt of Cabot, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Duke of Burlington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Hunter of Manchester, Keyser of Rutland City, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, Sibia of Dover, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Wells of Brownington, and White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 402

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Municipal Labor Relations Act

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 403

By Rep. Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fair labor standards and housing standards for agricultural workers

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 404

By Reps. Greer of Bennington, Corcoran of Bennington, and Morrissey of Bennington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to authority over the highways of the Village of Old Bennington

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 405

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to competency to stand trial

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 406

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to naming State buildings and facilities after individuals

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 407

By Reps. Nelson of Derby, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Hubbardton, Charlton of Chester, Cooper of Pownal, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Feltus of Lyndon, Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Hooper of Randolph, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Lipsky of Stowe, Maguire of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Parsons of Newbury, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Sibilia of Dover, Southworth of Walden,

Steady of Milton, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Walker of Swanton, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protection from nuisance suits for agricultural activities

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 408

By Rep. Surprenant of Barnard,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State purchasing of local food

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 409

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the procedures for bail revocation

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 410

By Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the calculation of recidivism and other related criminology measures

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 411

By Reps. McCoy of Poultney, Burditt of West Rutland, Goslant of Northfield, Harvey of Castleton, Malay of Pittsford, and Oliver of Sheldon,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to public safety

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 412

By Reps. McCoy of Poultney, Bartley of Fairfax, Charlton of Chester, and Dolgin of St. Johnsbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to land use and housing development

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 413

By Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to use of illuminating lights and visibility of taillights

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 414

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott, Bishop of Colchester, and Eastes of Guilford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Commission on Aging

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 415

By Reps. Walker of Swanton, Bartley of Fairfax, Branagan of Georgia, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Oliver of Sheldon, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Franklin County Field Days

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 416

By Reps. Headrick of Burlington and Gregoire of Fairfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of kratom products

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 417

By Reps. Cole of Hartford, Priestley of Bradford, Bishop of Colchester, Burt of Cabot, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Eastes of Guilford, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McGill of Bridport, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrow of Weston, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Pouech of Hinesburg, Surprenant of Barnard, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting certain artificial dyes in foods and beverages served or sold at school

To the Committee on Education.

H. 418

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Black of Essex, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Cole of Hartford, Dodge of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Lalley of Shelburne, McGill of Bridport, Pouech of Hinesburg, Stone of Burlington, Torre of Moretown, Waters Evans of Charlotte, and White of Waitsfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to an excise tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 419

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the City of Barre tax increment financing district

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 420

By Reps. Boutin of Barre City, Bosch of Clarendon, Casey of Montpelier, Galfetti of Barre Town, and Micklus of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to tax increment financing for flood-impacted communities

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 421

By Rep. Masland of Thetford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the authority to create a regional council of governments

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 422

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Branagan of Georgia, Holcombe of Norwich, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to testing of groundwater samples from contaminated sites at the State Agricultural and Environmental Laboratory

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 423

By Rep. Cina of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to implementing the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 424

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the donation to the State of managed forestland enrolled in current use

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 425

By Reps. Morris of Springfield, Casey of Montpelier, Emmons of Springfield, Logan of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regional management of the disposition of septage, sludge, and biosolids

To the Committee on Environment.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**H. 57**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to survivor benefits for law enforcement officers

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 339**

Rep. Boyden of Cambridge spoke for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to removing the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and twenty-three minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, February 28, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Will Greer of Bennington.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 426

By Reps. Burke of Brattleboro, Lalley of Shelburne, Pouech of Hinesburg, Tomlinson of Winooski, Bartholomew of Hartland, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Holcombe of Norwich, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morris of Springfield, Morrow of Weston, Nelson of Derby, Nugent of South Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sheldon of Middlebury, and White of Waitsfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to transportation initiatives to improve equity and infrastructure, increase resiliency, and reduce emissions

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 427

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to medical malpractice actions

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 428

By Reps. Cina of Burlington and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to training requirements for guardians

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 429

By Reps. Burrows of West Windsor, Berbeco of Winooski, Branagan of Georgia, Burke of Brattleboro, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Headrick of Burlington, McFaun of Barre Town, and Mrowicki of Putney,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 430

By Reps. Galfetti of Barre Town and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to allowing health insurance premiums to vary based on age and tobacco usage

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 431

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding access to catastrophic health plans

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 432

By Reps. Burke of Brattleboro, Cina of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Lalley of Shelburne, Masland of Thetford, Morgan, L. of Milton, and Ode of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance coverage for prosthetic and orthotic devices

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 433

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, McFaun of Barre Town, Christie of Hartford, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Duke of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Randolph, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, Morris of Springfield, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Sheldon of Middlebury, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Torre of Moretown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to incremental implementation of Green Mountain Care

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 434

By Reps. Greer of Bennington, Coffin of Cavendish, Galfetti of Barre Town, Higley of Lowell, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Morgan, L. of Milton, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring covenants on conservation lands funded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 435

By Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing penalties for keeping or maintaining a common nuisance

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 436

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing reentry facilities for persons under the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 437

By Rep. Burrows of West Windsor,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a study committee to examine universal design standards for residential buildings

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 438

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exempting sales of building materials and supplies from sales and use tax for priority housing projects

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 439

By Rep. Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Whole Home Repairs Program

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 440

By Reps. LaMont of Morristown, Berbeco of Winooski, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to providing protections against no-cause eviction

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 441

By Rep. Christie of Hartford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending the prohibitions against harassment in schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 442

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the expedited issuance of professional licenses for practicing, qualified out-of-state applicants

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 443

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Waszazak of Barre City, and Holcombe of Norwich,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a tax on vacant properties

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 444

By Rep. Marcotte of Coventry,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to unemployment compensation and workers' compensation

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 445

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Christie of Hartford, Cole of Hartford, LaMont of Morristown, and Logan of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Land Access and Opportunity Revolving Fund

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 446

By Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring municipal corporations to set equalized water and sewer rates throughout the service area

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 447

By Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to rabies vaccination certificate requirements for domestic pet or wolf-hybrid licensure

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 448

By Reps. Morris of Springfield, Cina of Burlington, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Greer of Bennington, Hooper of Randolph, Krasnow of South Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, and Oliver of Sheldon,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 449

By Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to setting the date of biennial party caucuses

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 450

By Reps. Emmons of Springfield and Morris of Springfield,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the appointment of interested parties to a recount committee

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 451

By Rep. Burrows of West Windsor,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to promoting racial and economic justice

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 452

By Rep. Cina of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to decriminalization of psilocybin-containing mushrooms and the establishment of the Psilocybin Therapeutic Consultation Program

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 453

By Rep. Lalley of Shelburne,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending stormwater management to facilitate high-density development

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 454

By Reps. Toof of St. Albans Town, McCoy of Poultney, Taylor of Milton, Dobrovich of Williamstown, and Quimby of Lyndon,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems

To the Committee on Education.

H. 455

By Rep. Christie of Hartford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State observance of Juneteenth

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 48

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative Curt McCormack of Burlington

Whereas, Curt McCormack was a passionate environmental advocate who worked diligently to reduce sources of air pollution and encourage Vermonters' transportation choices in a direction eschewing cars and airplanes, and

Whereas, a licensed electrician by profession, Curt McCormack's desire to serve his fellow citizens in the legislative arena, and contribute an enduring beneficial impact on both environmental and transportation policy, twice sparked him to stand for a seat in the General Assembly, and

Whereas, in 1982, he won election to the House of Representatives as a member from Rutland City, and during this first legislative foray, which extended to late 1995, he chaired the House committee with environmental jurisdiction and was a national pioneer in leading a State effort to limit the use of chlorofluorocarbons, and

Whereas, he departed from the General Assembly to serve as the Vermont Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator at the Department of Transportation, a role that enabled him to implement facilities for human-powered transportation, and

Whereas, in 2012, having relocated to Burlington, Curt McCormack won election from the city's downtown-Old North End district, starting a new five-term legislative tenure that featured his service as the unusually carless House Committee on Transportation Chair; coincided with the extension to Burlington of the Ethan Allen Express Amtrak rail service, which he was instrumental in establishing years earlier; and included his election as a University of Vermont trustee, and

Whereas, he was a Peace Corps volunteer, who established a recycling facility in Joal, Senegal; a cyclist, who bicycled extensively in North America and Europe; a painter; and a music fan, whose diverse melodic pleasures ranged from Bob Dylan to opera, and

Whereas, Curt McCormack died of cancer on September 16, 2024 at 72 years of age, and his survivors include his partner, Lisa Scofield, and his children, grandchildren, and siblings, including former Senator Richard McCormack, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its sincere condolences to the family of former Representative Curt McCormack of Burlington, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the members of Curt McCormack's family.

At the direction of the Speaker, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Emmons of Springfield**, the following remarks by **Rep. Burke of Brattleboro** were ordered printed in the Journal:

"Madam Speaker:

We just heard the reading of the resolution honoring former member Curt McCormack. The outlines of his life and service are impressive. Let me fill in some of the space between the lines.

Many members here remember Curt fondly. He was a kind and gentle soul, a rare individual, a committed environmentalist who lived his values rather than talked about them.

As we heard in the resolution, Curt did not own a car. This made headlines when he was appointed Chair of House Transportation. At one point in his tenure as Chair, Curt traveled around the State by bicycle, train, and public transit to visit each member of the committee, staying at our homes.

He went from Burlington to Fairfax, to Swanton, to St. Johnsbury, to Concord, to White River, to Brattleboro, Bennington, Clarendon, Poultney, and back to Burlington. All on his bike, bus, and Amtrak train. It was a lovely gesture, one that honored each member of our committee, and also set an example for sustainable transportation options.

The rest of the McCormack family has made an equally impressive contribution to our State. Curt's daughter Blythe was a legislative page, his former wife Virginia served in the House, and brother Dick just retired after 36 years in the Vermont Senate.

A number of family members are here with us today. Curt's beloved companion and partner Lisa Scofield, brother and former Senator Dick McCormack, daughter Blythe McCormack, son James McCormack, daughter-in-law Amanda McCormack, former wife and mother of their children, Virginia McCormack, grandchildren Mason and Leah McCormack, and nephews Aaron and Noah McCormack.

Today also happens to be Curt's birthday, and I just found out that it is his grandson Mason's birthday as well.

Curt had a joyous spirit. He was a fabulous role model, friend to many, and my dear friend.

Please join me in welcoming the McCormack family."

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 339

House bill, entitled

An act relating to removing the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Message from the Senate No. 23

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 3. An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust.

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

The Senate has considered the report of the Committee of Conference upon the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon House bill of the following title:

H. 141. An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments.

And has accepted and adopted the same on its part.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 41. House concurrent resolution congratulating Keeler's Bay Variety Store of South Hero on the 50th anniversary of the Horne family's ownership.

H.C.R. 42. House concurrent resolution honoring Oxbow Union High School CoPrincipal and Gather author Kenneth M. Cadow of Norwich.

H.C.R. 43. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Thetford Academy Panthers Division II boys' championship indoor track and field team.

H.C.R. 44. House concurrent resolution recognizing July 2025 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont and designating July 18, 2025 as Vermont Park and Recreation Professionals Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 45. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets Division I boys' indoor track and field team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship.

H.C.R. 46. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Essex High School Hornets girls' volleyball program on winning a fourth consecutive State championship.

H.C.R. 47. House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Senior Nutrition Program Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 48. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative Curt McCormack of Burlington.

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and fifty-three minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 4.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 41

House concurrent resolution congratulating Keeler's Bay Variety Store of South Hero on the 50th anniversary of the Horne family's ownership

H.C.R. 42

House concurrent resolution honoring Oxbow Union High School CoPrincipal and Gather author Kenneth M. Cadow of Norwich

H.C.R. 43

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Thetford Academy Panthers Division II boys' championship indoor track and field team

H.C.R. 44

House concurrent resolution recognizing July 2025 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont and designating July 18, 2025 as Vermont Park and Recreation Professionals Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 45

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets Division I boys' indoor track and field team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship

H.C.R. 46

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Essex High School Hornets girls' volleyball program on winning a fourth consecutive State championship

H.C.R. 47

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Senior Nutrition Program Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 48

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative Curt McCormack of Burlington

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Christopher Morrow of Weston.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Molly Despathy of Danville led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 5th day of March, 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 31 An act relating to claim edit standards and prior authorization requirements

Message from the Senate No. 24

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolutions of the following titles:

J.R.S. 16. Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of seven Superior Court Judges and one Magistrate.

J.R.S. 17. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 14, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 456

By Reps. Cina of Burlington, Christie of Hartford, and Cole of Hartford,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a State-funded and community-based continuum of care for justice-involved individuals

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 457

By Rep. Dolgin of St. Johnsbury,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to justifiable homicide

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 458

By the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Agency of Digital Services

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 459

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Casey of Montpelier,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Parental and Family Leave Act

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 460

By Reps. Bartholomew of Hartland, Burke of Brattleboro, Chapin of East Montpelier, Dodge of Essex, Lalley of Shelburne, Masland of Thetford, Morris of Springfield, Pouech of Hinesburg, Satcowitz of Randolph, and Torre of Moretown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the development and construction of a bicycle path that runs adjacent U.S. Route 5

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 461

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding employee access to unpaid leave

To the Committee on General and Housing.

Senate Bill Referred

S. 3

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 137

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bills Referred to Committee on Appropriations

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, carrying appropriations, under House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 218

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

H. 219

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a family support pilot program for incarcerated parents and guardians

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 35**

Offered by Representatives Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burt of Cabot, Charlton of Chester, Cooper of Pownal, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Masland of Thetford, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, and Sweeney of Shelburne

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the March 13, 1775 Westminster Massacre

Whereas, for two centuries Vermonters have considered the Westminster Massacre, which occurred on March 13, 1775, to constitute the first bloodshed of the American Revolution, and

Whereas, in 1774, the Continental Congress adopted the Articles of Association, enacting a trade embargo against Great Britain, and New York was the only province that did not ratify the Articles, and

Whereas, the Cumberland County, NY towns, comprising all of current Vermont east of the Green Mountains from Tunbridge to the Massachusetts border, voted to uphold the Articles, and

Whereas, in 1775, local Whigs (supporters of American liberty) were experiencing excessive lawsuits, resulting in their Tory neighbors acquiring the Whigs' property through bankruptcy proceedings, and

Whereas, 40 Whigs met with Chief Judge Thomas Chandler at his home to request that the court be closed, but Judge Chandler said he had a murder case to try and after the trial he would discuss it with them, and subsequently, the Whigs learned that the court officials planned to arrive early and deny them entry, and

Whereas, on March 13, 1775, 100 Whigs, armed only with staves, occupied the courthouse before Sheriff William Paterson and his posse's arrival, and the sheriff read them the Riot Act but they defied him, and

Whereas, Judge Chandler promised the protesters they could remain in the courthouse overnight unmolested, but Sheriff Paterson returned with his posse and ordered his men to fire point-blank, which wounded several Whigs,

including William French of Brattleboro (who died overnight and whose gravesite has been maintained with State financial support) and Daniel Houghton of Dummerston (who died several days later), and the Sheriff's posse retook control of the courthouse, and

Whereas, on March 14, 1775, 400 armed local militia, including many from New Hampshire, filled the street and recaptured the courthouse, imprisoning all the New York officials and permanently terminating New York government in Cumberland County—but refraining from any further violence—nearly two years before Vermont independence was declared in Westminster on January 15, 1777, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 250th anniversary of the March 13, 1775 Westminster Massacre, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Westminster Historical Society.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 96

Rep. Cordes of Bristol, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 9434 is amended to read:

§ 9434. CERTIFICATE OF NEED; GENERAL RULES

(a) A health care facility other than a hospital shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a “new health care project” ~~includes~~ means any of the following:

(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a health care facility, for which the capital cost exceeds ~~\$1,500,000.00~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(2) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.

(3) The offering of any home health service, or the transfer or conveyance of more than a 50 percent ownership interest in a health care facility other than a hospital or nursing home.

(4) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ \$5,000,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board's determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(5) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds ~~\$500,000.00~~ \$3,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the health care facility within the previous three fiscal years.

(6) The construction, development, purchase, lease, or other establishment or expansion of an ambulatory surgical center for which the cost exceeds \$10,000,000.00.

(b) A hospital shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a "new health care project" ~~includes~~ means any of the following:

(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a hospital, for which the capital cost exceeds ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(2) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of ~~\$1,500,000.00~~ \$5,000,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health

care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board's determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(3) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ \$3,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the hospital within the previous three fiscal years.

(4) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.

(5) The offering of any home health service.

(c) In the case of a project that requires a certificate of need under this section, expenditures for which are anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00, the applicant first shall secure a conceptual development phase certificate of need, in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter, that permits the applicant to make expenditures for architectural services, engineering design services, or any other planning services, as defined by the Board, needed in connection with the project. Upon completion of the conceptual development phase of the project, and before offering or further developing the project, the applicant shall secure a final certificate of need in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter. Applicants shall not be subject to sanctions for failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection if such failure is solely the result of good faith reliance on verified project cost estimates issued by qualified persons, which cost estimates would have led a reasonable person to conclude the project was not anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00 and therefore not subject to this subsection. The provisions of this subsection notwithstanding, expenditures may be made in preparation for obtaining a conceptual development phase certificate of need, which expenditures shall not exceed ~~\$1,500,000.00 for non-hospitals or \$3,000,000.00 for hospitals~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(d) If the Board determines that a person required to obtain a certificate of need under this subchapter has separated a single project into components in order to avoid cost thresholds or other requirements under this subchapter, the person shall be required to submit an application for a certificate of need for the entire project, and the Board may proceed under section 9445 of this title.

The Board's determination under this subsection shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(e) The Board may periodically adjust the monetary jurisdictional thresholds contained in this section. In doing so, the Board shall reflect the same categories of health care facilities, services, and programs recognized in this section. Any adjustment by the Board shall not exceed an amount calculated using the cumulative Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9435 is amended to read:

§ 9435. EXCLUSIONS

* * *

(f)(1) Excluded from this subchapter are routine replacements of:

(A) medical equipment that is fully depreciated; and

(B) nonmedical equipment and fixtures, including furnaces, boilers, refrigeration units, kitchen equipment, heating and cooling units, and similar items, regardless of their remaining useful life.

(2) These The replacements described in subdivision (1) of this subsection and purchased by a hospital shall be included in the hospital's budget and may be reviewed in the budget process set forth in subchapter 7 of this chapter.

* * *

(i) Excluded from this subchapter are emergency and nonemergency ground ambulance services, affiliated agencies, and equipment and supplies used by emergency medical personnel, as those terms are defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025 and shall apply to all new health care projects initiated on or after that date. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on July 1, 2025 for which one or more persons have been granted interested party status, the jurisdictional thresholds and exclusions in place at the time the application was filed shall continue to apply until a final decision is made on the application. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on July 1, 2025 for which no person has been granted interested party status, the applicant may withdraw the application in accordance with Board rules.

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and thirty-six minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Marjorie Ryerson, poet and former Representative, Randolph.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 462

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington concerning just cause eviction

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 463

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 464

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and the duties of the Division of Emergency Management

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 465

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and financial assistance for municipalities

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 466

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and the creation of a voluntary buy-out program

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 467

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and the duties of the Agency of Transportation

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 468

By Reps. Galfetti of Barre Town and Waszazak of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and assistance programs for flood resilient infrastructure improvements

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 469

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and the duties of the Agency of Natural Resources

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 470

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to flood response and flood alert systems for municipalities

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 471

By Reps. Waszazak of Barre City and Galfetti of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of State-owned property in the Town of Waterbury

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

H. 472

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**H. 67**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to legislative operations and government accountability

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Joint Senate Resolution Placed on Calendar**J.R.S. 16**

By Senator Collamore,

J.R.S. 16 Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of seven Superior Court Judges and one Magistrate.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to vote on the retention of seven Superior Court Judges and one Magistrate. In case the vote to retain said Judges and Magistrate shall not be made on that day, the two Houses shall meet in Joint Assembly at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed until the above is completed.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 17**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 17. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 14, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, March 14, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 44**

Offered by Representatives Krasnow of South Burlington, Burkhardt of South Burlington, LaLonde of South Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, and Nugent of South Burlington

House concurrent resolution recognizing July 2025 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont and designating July 18, 2025 as Vermont Park and Recreation Professionals Day in Vermont

Whereas, Vermont's park and recreation programs are an integral part of our State and local communities, and

Whereas, their presence in a community promotes an active lifestyle, offers environmental protection, and serves as an economic resource, and

Whereas, park and recreation programs support the effectiveness of therapeutic recreational services for persons with disabilities, and

Whereas, in 1985, the National Recreation and Park Association established July as Park and Recreation Month, and, in 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted H.R. 288, a resolution “Recognizing the importance of park and recreation facilities and expressing support for the designation of the month of July as ‘National Park and Recreation Month,’”
now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes July 2025 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont and designates July 18, 2025 as Vermont Park and Recreation Professionals Day, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 47

Offered by Representative Noyes of Wolcott

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Senior Nutrition Program Month in Vermont

Whereas, approximately 28 percent of Vermont’s population is 60 years of age or older, and according to the Vermont Foodbank, the threat of hunger confronts 12 percent of older Vermonters, and

Whereas, on March 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed Public Law 92-258, an amendment to the Older Americans Act of 1965, that established the national Senior Nutrition Program for older Americans, and

Whereas, the impetus for the national Senior Nutrition Program was the recognition that persons in this age group may not eat adequately due to a lack of finances, an inability to prepare nourishing meals, limited mobility, and feelings of loneliness, and

Whereas, in Vermont, the national Senior Nutrition Program is administered through the State Unit on Aging at the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living and the area agencies on aging, and

Whereas, Meals on Wheels is a key element of the national Senior Nutrition Program through its provision of nutritious meals, safety checks, and friendly visits to those at risk of hunger and isolation, and

Whereas, in 2024, 42 Meals on Wheels providers delivered 986,662 nutritious home-delivered meals to thousands of older Vermonters, greatly improving their daily physical and emotional lives, and

Whereas, Meals on Wheels is an important component of Age Strong VT, a 10-year program designed to make Vermont “a great place for all ages and stages of life,” and

Whereas, each March, the federal Administration for Community Living celebrates the establishment of the national Senior Nutrition Program, and the theme for 2025 is “A Place at the Table,” “[recognizing] the importance of local nutrition programs and the meals being served across the country,” *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes March 2025 as National Senior Nutrition Program Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living and the Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 420

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro moved that the Committee on Ways and Means be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to tax increment financing for flood-impacted communities

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, which was agreed to.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 342

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington moved that the Committee on Judiciary be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, which was agreed to.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 96

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 50

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield, for the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to identifying State real property suitable for conversion into affordable housing

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 29 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read:

§ 165. SPACE ALLOCATION, INVENTORY, AND USE; LEASING

PROPERTY; COMMISSIONER'S PREAPPROVAL REQUIRED

* * *

(e) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall maintain an inventory of all State-owned buildings and land and shall biannually compile and update the information received under subsection (g) of this section, which shall be considered once available in making spacing allocations and designating uses under subsection (c) of this section.

* * *

(g) The head of each agency shall prepare and forward to the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services ~~when requested by the Commissioner~~ annually in a format prescribed by the Commissioner an inventory of: square footage available for use; square footage in actual use; square footage not in use; square footage used for storage; square footage that is unfinished; cost per square foot for rent; cost per square foot for operation and maintenance; and the source of funds for rent, operation, and maintenance,

including the act and section numbers of a legislative directive if applicable. The head of each agency shall additionally indicate in its inventory in a format prescribed by the Commissioner whether any building is vacant and whether any land is unnecessary for State purposes.

* * *

(j) On or before January 15 of each new legislative biennium, the Commissioner shall submit to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions the inventory maintained under subsection (e) of this section.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to identifying underutilized State buildings and land”

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Report of Committee of Conference Adopted; Bill Ordered Delivered to Governor Forthwith

H. 141

The Speaker placed before the House the following Committee of Conference report:

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Committee of Conference to which were referred the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon House Bill entitled:

H.141. An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments.

Respectfully reports that it has met and considered the same and recommends that the Senate recede from its proposal of amendment and that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.105 is amended to read:

Sec. B.105 Agency of digital services - communications and information technology

Personal services	82,994,362	82,994,362
Operating expenses	<u>62,547,212</u>	<u>61,761,212</u>
Total	145,541,574	144,755,574

Source of funds

General fund	209,808	209,808
Special funds	511,723	511,723
Internal service funds	<u>144,820,043</u>	<u>144,034,043</u>
Total	<u>145,541,574</u>	<u>144,755,574</u>

Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.145 is amended to read:

Sec. B.145 Total general government

Source of funds

General fund	117,405,610	117,405,610
Transportation fund	4,292,149	4,292,149
Special funds	31,882,209	31,882,209
Federal funds	1,467,374	1,467,374
Internal service funds	<u>214,635,950</u>	<u>213,849,950</u>
Interdepartmental transfers	7,053,789	7,053,789
Enterprise funds	4,298	4,298
Pension trust funds	4,800,305	4,800,305
Private purpose trust funds	<u>1,329,205</u>	<u>1,329,205</u>
Total	<u>382,870,889</u>	<u>382,084,889</u>

Sec. 3. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.200 is amended to read:

Sec. B.200 Attorney general

Personal services	14,435,517	14,463,317
Operating expenses	2,015,028	2,015,028
Grants	<u>20,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
Total	<u>16,470,545</u>	<u>16,498,345</u>

Source of funds

General fund	<u>7,391,661</u>	7,419,461
Special funds	2,355,424	2,355,424
Tobacco fund	422,000	422,000
Federal funds	1,743,215	1,743,215
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,558,245</u>	<u>4,558,245</u>
Total	<u>16,470,545</u>	<u>16,498,345</u>

Sec. 4. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.204 is amended to read:

Sec. B.204 Judiciary

Personal services	58,439,095	58,827,799
Operating expenses	12,479,384	14,640,960
Grants	<u>121,030</u>	<u>121,030</u>
Total	<u>71,039,509</u>	<u>73,589,789</u>

Source of funds		
General fund	63,414,698	65,964,978
Special funds	4,503,401	4,503,401
Federal funds	953,928	953,928
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,167,482</u>	<u>2,167,482</u>
Total	71,039,509	73,589,789

Sec. 5. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.205 is amended to read:

Sec. B.205 State's attorneys

Personal services	17,309,679	17,548,979
Operating expenses	<u>2,034,016</u>	<u>2,202,516</u>
Total	19,343,695	19,751,495

Source of funds		
General fund	18,734,634	19,142,434
Federal funds	31,000	31,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>578,061</u>	<u>578,061</u>
Total	19,343,695	19,751,495

Sec. 6. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.206.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.206.1 Crime Victims Advocates

Personal services	3,016,156	3,016,156
Operating expenses	<u>104,396</u>	<u>142,396</u>
Total	3,120,552	3,158,552

Source of funds		
General fund	<u>3,120,552</u>	<u>3,158,552</u>
Total	3,120,552	3,158,552

Sec. 7. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.208 is amended to read:

Sec. B.208 Public safety - administration

Personal services	4,620,756	5,397,783
Operating expenses	<u>6,022,923</u>	<u>6,022,923</u>
Total	10,643,679	11,420,706

Source of funds		
General fund	6,179,193	8,092,770
Special funds	4,105	4,105
Federal funds	396,362	396,362
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,064,019</u>	<u>2,927,469</u>
Total	10,643,679	11,420,706

Sec. 8. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.210 is amended to read:

Sec. B.210 Public safety - criminal justice services

Personal services	5,387,100	4,705,897
Operating expenses	<u>2,152,467</u>	<u>2,152,467</u>
Total	7,539,567	6,858,364
Source of funds		
General fund	1,829,099	2,172,295
Special funds	4,975,847	3,951,448
Federal funds	<u>734,621</u>	<u>734,621</u>
Total	7,539,567	6,858,364

Sec. 9. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.236 is amended to read:

Sec. B.236 Human rights commission

Personal services	927,697	992,259
Operating expenses	<u>115,103</u>	<u>125,378</u>
Total	1,042,800	1,117,637
Source of funds		
General fund	953,800	1,028,637
Federal funds	<u>89,000</u>	<u>89,000</u>
Total	1,042,800	1,117,637

Sec. 10. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.241 is amended to read:

Sec. B.241 Total protection to persons and property

Source of funds		
General fund	228,238,448	233,593,938
Transportation fund	20,250,000	20,250,000
Special funds	119,824,272	118,799,873
Tobacco fund	672,579	672,579
Federal funds	162,959,452	162,959,452
Interdepartmental transfers	16,031,869	14,895,319
Enterprise funds	<u>15,070,107</u>	<u>15,070,107</u>
Total	563,046,727	566,241,268

Sec. 11. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.300 is amended to read:

Sec. B.300 Human services - agency of human services - secretary's office

Personal services	16,219,746	18,219,746
Operating expenses	7,220,486	6,062,286
Grants	<u>3,795,202</u>	<u>3,795,202</u>
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234

Source of funds		
General fund	12,913,202	11,923,905
Special funds	135,517	135,517
Federal funds	13,565,080	11,606,177
Global Commitment fund	0	4,300,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>621,635</u>	<u>111,635</u>
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234

Sec. 12. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.301 is amended to read:

Sec. B.301 Secretary's office - global commitment

Grants	<u>2,039,512,911</u>	2,164,607,988
Total	2,039,512,911	2,164,607,988
Source of funds		
General fund	668,380,623	716,109,638
Special funds	32,047,905	32,047,905
Tobacco fund	21,049,373	21,049,373
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
Federal funds	1,285,494,243	1,363,223,270
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,487,210</u>	<u>4,124,245</u>
Total	2,039,512,911	2,164,607,988

Sec. 13. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.305 is amended to read:

Sec. B.305 AHS - administrative fund

Personal services	330,000	330,000
Operating expenses	<u>13,170,000</u>	<u>16,870,000</u>
Total	13,500,000	17,200,000
Source of funds		
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>13,500,000</u>	<u>17,200,000</u>
Total	13,500,000	17,200,000

Sec. 14. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.306 is amended to read:

Sec. B.306 Department of Vermont health access - administration

Personal services	134,929,148	136,693,560
Operating expenses	44,171,193	39,250,661
Grants	<u>3,112,301</u>	<u>3,112,301</u>
Total	182,212,642	179,056,522
Source of funds		
General fund	39,872,315	42,023,781
Special funds	4,733,015	4,733,015
Federal funds	128,790,580	124,836,223
Global Commitment fund	4,308,574	4,308,574

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,508,158</u>	<u>3,154,929</u>
Total	182,212,642	179,056,522
Sec. 15. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.307 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.307 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program – global commitment		
Personal services	547,983	547,983
Grants	<u>899,550,794</u>	<u>964,407,046</u>
Total	900,098,777	964,955,029
Source of funds		
Global Commitment fund	<u>900,098,777</u>	<u>964,955,029</u>
Total	900,098,777	964,955,029
Sec. 16. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.309 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.309 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program – state only		
Grants	<u>63,033,948</u>	<u>67,780,595</u>
Total	63,033,948	67,780,595
Source of funds		
General fund	62,151,546	62,308,757
Global Commitment fund	<u>882,402</u>	<u>5,471,838</u>
Total	63,033,948	67,780,595
Sec. 17. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.310 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.310 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid non-waiver matched		
Grants	<u>34,994,888</u>	<u>38,232,431</u>
Total	34,994,888	38,232,431
Source of funds		
General fund	12,511,405	13,459,034
Federal funds	<u>22,483,483</u>	<u>24,773,397</u>
Total	34,994,888	38,232,431
Sec. 18. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.311 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.311 Health - administration and support		
Personal services	8,373,168	8,373,168
Operating expenses	7,519,722	8,166,662
Grants	<u>7,985,727</u>	<u>7,985,727</u>
Total	23,878,617	24,525,557
Source of funds		
General fund	3,189,843	3,513,313
Special funds	2,308,186	2,308,186

Federal funds	11,040,433	11,363,903
Global Commitment fund	7,173,924	7,173,924
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>166,231</u>	<u>166,231</u>
Total	23,878,617	24,525,557

Sec. 19. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.312 is amended to read:

Sec. B.312 Health - public health

Personal services	67,812,371	67,812,371
Operating expenses	11,025,497	11,025,497
Grants	<u>46,766,832</u>	<u>46,866,832</u>
Total	125,604,700	125,704,700

Source of funds

General fund	<u>12,908,892</u>	13,008,892
Special funds	24,906,804	24,906,804
Tobacco fund	1,088,918	1,088,918
Federal funds	64,038,301	64,038,301
Global Commitment fund	17,036,150	17,036,150
Interdepartmental transfers	5,600,635	5,600,635
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	125,604,700	125,704,700

Sec. 20. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.313 is amended to read:

Sec. B.313 Health - substance use programs

Personal services	6,570,967	6,570,967
Operating expenses	511,500	511,500
Grants	<u>58,215,510</u>	<u>59,240,635</u>
Total	65,297,977	66,323,102

Source of funds

General fund	<u>6,672,061</u>	7,697,186
Special funds	2,413,678	2,413,678
Tobacco fund	949,917	949,917
Federal funds	15,456,754	15,456,754
Global Commitment fund	<u>39,805,567</u>	<u>39,805,567</u>
Total	65,297,977	66,323,102

Sec. 21. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.314 is amended to read:

Sec. B.314 Mental health - mental health

Personal services	50,191,086	50,191,086
Operating expenses	<u>5,517,999</u>	5,709,973
Grants	<u>270,625,138</u>	<u>272,536,080</u>
Total	326,334,223	328,437,139

Source of funds

General fund	25,555,311	26,279,270
Special funds	1,718,092	1,718,092
Federal funds	11,436,913	12,661,803
Global Commitment fund	287,609,767	287,763,834
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,140</u>	<u>14,140</u>
Total	326,334,223	328,437,139

Sec. 22. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.316 is amended to read:

Sec. B.316 Department for children and families - administration & support services

Personal services	46,644,080	44,844,080
Operating expenses	17,560,755	19,402,705
Grants	<u>5,627,175</u>	<u>5,627,175</u>
Total	69,832,010	69,873,960

Source of funds

General fund	39,722,724	40,113,958
Special funds	2,781,912	2,781,912
Federal funds	24,448,223	24,098,939
Global Commitment fund	2,417,024	2,417,024
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>462,127</u>	<u>462,127</u>
Total	69,832,010	69,873,960

Sec. 23. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.317 is amended to read:

Sec. B.317 Department for children and families - family services

Personal services	45,197,694	45,286,553
Operating expenses	5,315,309	5,315,309
Grants	<u>98,251,027</u>	<u>97,732,465</u>
Total	148,764,030	148,334,327

Source of funds

General fund	58,838,741	59,984,059
Special funds	729,587	729,587
Federal funds	34,666,196	36,180,206
Global Commitment fund	54,514,506	51,425,475
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>15,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
Total	148,764,030	148,334,327

Sec. 24. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.318 is amended to read:

Sec. B.318 Department for children and families - child development

Personal services	5,908,038	5,908,038
Operating expenses	813,321	813,321

Grants	<u>223,329,336</u>	<u>211,815,836</u>
Total	<u>230,050,695</u>	<u>218,537,195</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	76,723,518	51,443,165
Special funds	96,312,000	109,512,000
Federal funds	43,511,414	42,902,383
Global Commitment fund	<u>13,503,763</u>	<u>14,679,647</u>
Total	<u>230,050,695</u>	<u>218,537,195</u>

Sec. 25. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.319 is amended to read:

Sec. B.319 Department for children and families - office of child support

Personal services	13,157,660	13,061,794
Operating expenses	<u>3,759,992</u>	<u>3,759,992</u>
Total	<u>16,917,652</u>	<u>16,821,786</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	5,200,064	5,163,429
Special funds	455,719	455,719
Federal funds	10,874,269	10,815,038
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>387,600</u>	<u>387,600</u>
Total	<u>16,917,652</u>	<u>16,821,786</u>

Sec. 26. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.320 is amended to read:

Sec. B.320 Department for children and families - aid to aged, blind and disabled

Personal services	2,252,206	2,481,741
Grants	<u>10,717,444</u>	<u>10,369,155</u>
Total	<u>12,969,650</u>	<u>12,850,896</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	7,376,133	7,368,843
Global Commitment fund	<u>5,593,517</u>	<u>5,482,053</u>
Total	<u>12,969,650</u>	<u>12,850,896</u>

Sec. 27. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.321 is amended to read:

Sec. B.321 Department for children and families - general assistance

Personal services	15,000	15,000
Grants	<u>11,054,252</u>	<u>10,702,625</u>
Total	<u>11,069,252</u>	<u>10,717,625</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	10,811,345	10,486,987
Federal funds	11,320	11,070
Global Commitment fund	<u>246,587</u>	<u>219,568</u>

Total	11,069,252	10,717,625

Sec. 28. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.322 is amended to read:

Sec. B.322 Department for children and families - 3SquaresVT

Grants	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	44,377,812	45,677,812

Source of funds

Federal funds	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	44,377,812	45,677,812

Sec. 29. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.323 is amended to read:

Sec. B.323 Department for children and families - reach up

Operating expenses	23,821	23,821
Grants	<u>37,230,488</u>	<u>36,730,493</u>
Total	37,254,309	36,754,314

Source of funds

General fund	24,733,042	24,233,047
Special funds	5,970,229	5,970,229
Federal funds	2,806,330	2,806,330
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,744,708</u>	<u>3,744,708</u>
Total	37,254,309	36,754,314

Sec. 30. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.325 is amended to read:

Sec. B.325 Department for children and families - office of economic opportunity

Personal services	817,029	1,042,639
Operating expenses	100,407	100,407
Grants	<u>35,466,283</u>	<u>35,812,536</u>
Total	36,383,719	36,955,582

Source of funds

General fund	28,178,010	28,687,068
Special funds	83,135	83,135
Federal funds	4,935,273	4,998,078
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,187,301</u>	<u>3,187,301</u>
Total	36,383,719	36,955,582

Sec. 31. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.329 is amended to read:

Sec. B.329 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - administration & support

Personal services	45,217,977	46,217,977
Operating expenses	<u>6,472,558</u>	<u>6,714,680</u>

Total	51,690,535	52,932,657
Source of funds		
General fund	22,916,281	24,037,342
Special funds	1,390,457	1,390,457
Federal funds	26,063,097	26,184,158
Global Commitment fund	35,000	35,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,285,700</u>	<u>1,285,700</u>
Total	51,690,535	52,932,657

Sec. 32. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.330 is amended to read:

Sec. B.330 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - advocacy and independent living grants

Grants	<u>24,571,060</u>	<u>24,781,798</u>
Total	24,571,060	24,781,798
Source of funds		
General fund	8,392,303	8,504,605
Federal funds	7,321,114	7,321,114
Global Commitment fund	<u>8,857,643</u>	<u>8,956,079</u>
Total	24,571,060	24,781,798

Sec. 33. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.332 is amended to read:

Sec. B.332 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - vocational rehabilitation

Grants	<u>10,179,845</u>	<u>9,179,845</u>
Total	10,179,845	9,179,845
Source of funds		
General fund	1,371,845	371,845
Federal funds	7,558,000	7,558,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,250,000</u>	<u>1,250,000</u>
Total	10,179,845	9,179,845

Sec. 34. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.333 is amended to read:

Sec. B.333 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - developmental services

Grants	<u>329,299,344</u>	<u>331,262,271</u>
Total	329,299,344	331,262,271
Source of funds		
General fund	132,732	132,732
Special funds	15,463	15,463
Federal funds	403,573	403,573
Global Commitment fund	<u>328,697,576</u>	<u>330,660,503</u>

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
Total	329,299,344	331,262,271

Sec. 35. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - TBI home and community based waiver

Grants	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520
Source of funds		
Global Commitment fund	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520

Sec. 36. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334.1 Disabilities, aging and independent living - Long Term Care

Grants	<u>293,584,545</u>	<u>347,376,122</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122
Source of funds		
General fund	498,579	498,579
Federal funds	2,450,000	2,450,000
Global Commitment fund	<u>290,635,966</u>	<u>344,427,543</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122

Sec. 37. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.338 is amended to read:

Sec. B.338 Corrections - correctional services

Personal services	147,472,104	148,472,104
Operating expenses	<u>24,914,205</u>	<u>25,249,795</u>
Total	172,386,309	173,721,899
Source of funds		
General fund	162,807,888	163,643,478
Special funds	935,963	935,963
ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	499,888	999,888
Global Commitment fund	2,746,255	2,746,255
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>396,315</u>	<u>396,315</u>
Total	172,386,309	173,721,899

Sec. 38. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.342 is amended to read:

Sec. B.342 Vermont veterans' home - care and support services

Personal services	17,631,222	17,595,290
Operating expenses	5,013,462	13,247,462
Grants	<u>0</u>	<u>1,583,157</u>

Total	22,644,684	32,425,909
Source of funds		
General fund	4,320,687	11,224,018
Special funds	10,051,903	12,450,095
Federal funds	<u>8,272,094</u>	<u>8,751,796</u>
Total	22,644,684	32,425,909

Sec. 39. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.347 is amended to read:

Sec. B.347 Total human services

Source of funds		
General fund	1,328,118,806	1,364,156,647
Special funds	202,800,452	218,398,644
Tobacco fund	23,088,208	23,088,208
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	~~1,803,398,922~~	1,882,012,745
Global Commitment fund	~~1,980,839,553~~	2,108,560,133
Internal service funds	490,853	490,853
Interdepartmental transfers	32,893,535	34,367,341
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	5,404,708,886	5,664,153,128

Sec. 40. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.501 is amended to read:

Sec. B.501 Education - education services

Personal services	28,237,700	28,312,700
Operating expenses	1,134,912	1,134,912
Grants	<u>322,345,763</u>	<u>322,345,763</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375
Source of funds		
General fund	6,387,955	6,462,955
Special funds	3,033,144	3,033,144
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Federal funds	340,584,414	340,584,414
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>962,474</u>	<u>962,474</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375

Sec. 41. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.503 is amended to read:

Sec. B.503 Education - state-placed students

Grants	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	20,000,000	19,000,000

Source of funds

Education fund	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>

Sec. 42. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504 Education - adult education and literacy

Grants	<u>4,694,183</u>	<u>4,997,820</u>
Total	<u>4,694,183</u>	<u>4,997,820</u>

Source of funds

General fund	3,778,133	4,081,770
Federal funds	<u>916,050</u>	<u>916,050</u>
Total	<u>4,694,183</u>	<u>4,997,820</u>

Sec. 43. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504.1 Education - Flexible Pathways

Grants	<u>11,361,755</u>	<u>11,564,179</u>
Total	<u>11,361,755</u>	<u>11,564,179</u>

Source of funds

General fund	921,500	921,500
Education fund	<u>10,440,255</u>	<u>10,642,679</u>
Total	<u>11,361,755</u>	<u>11,564,179</u>

Sec. 44. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.505 is amended to read:

Sec. B.505 Education - adjusted education payment

Grants	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>

Source of funds

Education fund	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>

Sec. 45. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.508 is amended to read:

Sec. B.508 Education - nutrition

Grants	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>
Total	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>

Source of funds

Education fund	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>
Total	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>

Sec. 46. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.516 is amended to read:

Sec. B.516 Total general education

Source of funds

General fund	~~228,890,519~~	229,269,156
Special funds	23,651,687	23,651,687
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Education fund	~~2,323,283,242~~	2,308,585,666
Federal funds	354,654,849	354,654,849
Global Commitment fund	260,000	260,000
Interdepartmental transfers	1,467,771	1,467,771
Pension trust funds	<u>3,572,780</u>	<u>3,572,780</u>
Total	~~2,936,531,236~~	2,922,212,297

Sec. 47. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.704 is amended to read:

Sec. B.704 Forests, parks and recreation - forestry

Personal services	~~7,880,566~~	7,913,766
Operating expenses	1,005,046	1,005,046
Grants	<u>1,712,423</u>	<u>1,713,923</u>
Total	~~10,598,035~~	10,632,735

Source of funds

General fund	~~6,299,512~~	6,334,212
Special funds	547,215	547,215
Federal funds	3,394,931	3,394,931
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>356,377</u>	<u>356,377</u>
Total	~~10,598,035~~	10,632,735

Sec. 48. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.710 is amended to read:

Sec. B.710 Environmental conservation - air and waste management

Personal services	27,995,328	27,995,328
Operating expenses	~~10,788,954~~	10,816,954
Grants	<u>4,943,000</u>	<u>4,943,000</u>
Total	~~43,727,282~~	43,755,282

Source of funds

General fund	~~199,372~~	227,372
Special funds	24,643,580	24,643,580
Federal funds	18,800,064	18,800,064
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>84,266</u>	<u>84,266</u>
Total	~~43,727,282~~	43,755,282

Sec. 49. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.711 is amended to read:

Sec. B.711 Environmental conservation - office of water programs

Personal services	50,153,806	50,153,806
Operating expenses	~~8,362,915~~	8,370,915
Grants	<u>92,365,140</u>	<u>92,365,140</u>
Total	~~150,881,861~~	150,889,861
Source of funds		
General fund	11,887,629	11,895,629
Special funds	30,967,150	30,967,150
Federal funds	107,154,542	107,154,542
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>872,540</u>	<u>872,540</u>
Total	~~150,881,861~~	150,889,861

Sec. 50. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.714 is amended to read:

Sec. B.714 Total natural resources

Source of funds		
General fund	42,792,800	42,863,500
Special funds	81,275,829	81,275,829
Fish and wildlife fund	10,418,331	10,418,331
Federal funds	152,068,301	152,068,301
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,131,324</u>	<u>14,131,324</u>
Total	~~300,686,585~~	300,757,285

Sec. 51. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100 is amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2025 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

* * *

(d) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(8) \$835,073 General Fund for the Bridges to Health Program; and

(9) ~~\$400,000~~ \$550,000 General Fund for the Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey; and

(10) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity.

(e) Department for Children and Families. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$16,500,000~~ \$18,340,304 General Fund for the General Assistance Emergency Housing program;

(2) \$1,034,065 General Fund to extend 10 Economic Services Division limited service positions, including associated operating costs, in support of the General Assistance Emergency Housing program; and

(3) \$332,000 General Fund for a 2-1-1 service line contract to operate 24 hours seven days per week;

(4) \$340,000 General Fund and \$660,000 federal funds for the Office of Child Support mainframe transition planning. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 703, unless otherwise reverted by a future act of the General Assembly, these appropriations shall carry forward until fully expended; and

(5) \$1,800,000 General Fund shall be added to the appropriation made in Sec. B.1102(b)(4) of this act for the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System.

* * *

(n) Agency of Human Services Secretary's Office. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$3,913,200~~ \$5,586,324 General Fund and ~~\$5,366,383~~ \$7,713,259 federal funds to be used for Global Commitment match for the Medicaid Global Payment Program. To the extent that at a future date the Global Payment Program ceases to operate as a program or changes methodology to a retrospective payment program, any resulting one-time General Fund spending authority remaining at that time shall be reverted. If the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b has not been replenished in accordance with subdivision (b)(21) of Sec. B.1102 of this act, the remaining unallocated General Fund balance shall be reserved in the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b up to the amount appropriated in this subdivision.

(o) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$9,279,583~~ \$13,299,583 Global Commitment for the Medicaid Global Payment Program;

(2) \$150,000 General Fund to conduct a technical analysis of Vermont's health insurance markets; and

(3) \$100,000 General Fund to implement the expansion of Medicare Savings Programs eligibility;

(4) \$10,000,000 General Fund for Provider Stabilization Grants; and

(5) \$11,000,000 General Fund for an alternative payment model reconciliation payment to Brattleboro Retreat. All or a portion of these funds may also be used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match. If funds are used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match, the commensurate amount of Global Commitment Fund spending authority may be requested during the Global Commitment Transfer process pursuant to Sec. E.301.1 of this act.

* * *

(v) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

~~(1) \$200,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities that were impacted by the August and December 2023 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and DR-4762-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of the August and December 2023 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on Federal Emergency Management Agency-related projects~~

\$1,800,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4810-VT and DR-4744-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of 2023 and 2024 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on FEMA-related projects.

(A) The funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) for local economic damage grants shall be distributed as follows:

(i) \$75,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has at least \$5,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(ii) \$50,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$5,000,000 and at least \$2,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iii) \$30,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$2,000,000 and at least \$1,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iv) \$20,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$1,000,000 and at least \$250,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(v) \$10,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$250,000 and at least \$100,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(B) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) have not been granted on or before June 30, 2025, they shall revert to the General Fund and be transferred to the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

(C) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) are insufficient to distribute grants to all eligible municipalities in their full amount, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511, utilize excess receipt authority to expend funds from the PILOT Special Fund for this purpose.

(w) Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$8,600,000 General Fund to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of: affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services; and

(2) \$2,800,000 General Fund to complete pilot projects identified pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 186.

Sec. 52. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.100 is amended to read:

Sec. D.100 ALLOCATIONS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

(a) This act contains the following amounts allocated to special funds that receive revenue from the property transfer tax. These allocations shall not exceed available revenues.

(1) The sum of \$575,662 is allocated from the Current Use Administration Special Fund to the Department of Taxes for administration of the Use Tax Reimbursement Program. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), amounts in excess of \$575,662 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Current Use Administration Special Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(2) Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, amounts in excess of ~~\$22,106,740~~ \$28,238,050 from the property transfer tax and surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a deposited into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(A) The dedication of \$2,500,000 in revenue from the property transfer tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9610(d) for the debt payments on the affordable housing bond pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 314 shall be offset by the reduction of \$1,500,000 in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and \$1,000,000 from the surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a. The fiscal year 2025 appropriation of ~~\$22,106,740~~ \$28,238,050 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board reflects the \$1,500,000 reduction. The affordable housing bond and related property transfer tax and surcharge provisions are repealed after the life of the bond on July 1, 2039. Once the bond is retired, the \$1,500,000 reduction in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board shall be restored.

(3) Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), amounts in excess of ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund. The ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 shall be allocated as follows:

(A) ~~\$6,404,540~~ \$7,300,358 for disbursement to regional planning commissions in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b);

(B) ~~\$931,773~~ \$1,187,721 for disbursement to municipalities in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b); and

(C) ~~\$436,060~~ \$564,034 to the Agency of Digital Services for the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

Sec. 53. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.101 is amended to read:

Sec. D.101 FUND TRANSFERS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following amounts are transferred from the funds indicated:

(1) From the General Fund to the:

(A) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100): ~~\$73,212,880~~ \$78,235,088.34.

* * *

(J) Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (#21555): ~~\$830,000~~ \$6,500,000.

(K) Education Fund (#20205): \$25,000,000.

(L) Medical Insurance Fund (#55100): \$18,500,000.

(M) Correctional Industries Fund (#59100): \$3,135,443.

(N) Act 250 Permit Fund (#21260): \$900,000.

(O) State Liability Self-Insurance Fund (#56200): \$3,000,000.

(P) Emergency Personnel Survivor's Benefit Fund (#21884):
\$220,000.

(Q) Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves Fund
(#21953): \$133,700,000.

(2) From the Transportation Fund to the:

(A) Vermont Recreational Trails Fund (#21455): \$370,000.

(B) Downtown Transportation and Related Capital Improvements
Fund (#21575): \$523,966.

(C) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100):
\$316,745.

(D) Notwithstanding 19 V.S.A. § 13(c), the Transportation Fund
transfer to the Central Garage fund in fiscal year 2025 shall be \$0.

* * *

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year
2025:

(1) The following amounts shall be transferred to the General Fund
from the funds indicated:

(A) Cannabis Regulation Fund (#21998): \$12,000,000
\$15,417,084.32.

(B) AHS Central Office Earned Federal Receipts (#22005):
\$4,641,960.

(C) Sports Wagering Enterprise Fund (#50250): \$7,000,000
\$6,139,162.

(D) Liquor Control Fund (#50300): \$21,100,000 \$9,543,353.

(E) Tobacco Litigation Settlement Fund (#21370): \$3,000,000.

(F) Financial Institutions Supervision Fund (#21065): \$1,100,000.

(F) Workforce Education and Training Fund (#21913):
\$2,598,921.75.

(G) Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund (#21994): the balance of the fund at the close of fiscal year 2025.

(2) The following estimated amounts, which may be all or a portion of unencumbered fund balances, shall be transferred from the following funds to the General Fund. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July meeting the final amounts transferred from each fund and certify that such transfers will not impair the agency, office, or department reliant upon each fund from meeting its statutory requirements.

(A) AG-Fees & Reimbursements-Court Order Fund (#21638): \$2,000,000.

(B) Unclaimed Property Fund (#62100): ~~\$6,500,000~~ \$10,995,595.

(3) ~~\$66,935,000~~ \$63,560,450.50 of the net unencumbered fund balances in the Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21075), the Captive Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21085), and the Securities Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21080) shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(c)(1) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.3 of the Rules for State Matching Funds under the Federal Public Assistance Program, in fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may provide funding from the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund that was transferred pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(J) of this section to subgrantees prior to the completion of a project. In fiscal year years 2025 and 2026, up to 70 percent of the State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project for municipalities that were impacted by the August and December 2023 and 2024 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT may be advanced at the request of a municipality.

(2) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.1 of the Rules for State Matching Funds Under the Federal Public Assistance Program, the Secretary of Administration shall increase the standard State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project to the highest percentage possible given available funding for municipalities in counties that were impacted by the August and December 2023 and 2024 flooding events and are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT.

Sec. 54. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.102 is amended to read:

Sec. D.102 REVERSIONS

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the General Fund from the accounts indicated:

* * *

3150892104 MH – Case Management Serv	~~\$350,000.00~~	<u>\$350,199.34</u>

* * *

<u>1100892208 AOA – VT Housing Finance Agency</u>	<u>\$3,000,000.00</u>
<u>1100892403 AOA – Health Equity Community Grants</u>	<u>\$500,000.00</u>
<u>1120020000 Tuition Assistance Program</u>	<u>\$133,877.86</u>
<u>1120892401 DHR – New Position in DHR Ops</u>	<u>\$477,769.00</u>
<u>1120892402 DHR – New Position in VTHR Ops</u>	<u>\$40,726.07</u>
<u>1140010000 Tax Operation Costs</u>	<u>\$1,267,062.22</u>
<u>1140060000 Reappraisal and Listing Payments</u>	<u>\$35,270.75</u>
<u>1140070000 Use Tax Reimbursement Program</u>	<u>\$37,864.25</u>
<u>1140330000 Renter Rebates</u>	<u>\$2,186,940.33</u>
<u>1140892403 Tax – Child Care Contr Positions</u>	<u>\$3,591,823.02</u>
<u>1260892201 TRE – Bond Redemption</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
<u>1260980000 Debt Service</u>	<u>\$235,445.15</u>
<u>1266892401 VPIC – Pension System Assets</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
<u>2100892201 AG – Racial Disparities</u>	<u>\$48,465.00</u>
<u>2130400000 SIUS Parent Account</u>	<u>\$395,749.64</u>
<u>2150010000 Mil Admin/TAGO</u>	<u>\$142,789.80</u>
<u>2150050000 Mil Vet Affairs Office</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>2160892201 C CVS – VT Forensic Nursing</u>	<u>\$246.43</u>
<u>2160892304 C CVS – Kurn Hattin Survivor</u>	<u>\$250.00</u>
<u>2200010000 Administration Division</u>	<u>\$167,222.00</u>
<u>3310000000 Commission on Women</u>	<u>\$25,390.43</u>
<u>3330892401 G M C B – V H C U R E S Database Implemen</u>	<u>\$545,782.90</u>

<u>3400892111 Supp New Americans Refugee</u>	<u>\$23,431.00</u>
<u>3400892301 AHSCO – Refugee Resettlement</u>	<u>\$1,293.00</u>
<u>3420892405 HD – Regional Emergency Med</u>	<u>\$8,295.01</u>
<u>3440050000 DCFS – AABD</u>	<u>\$35,310.73</u>
<u>3440892110 DCF – Grants to Reachup</u>	<u>\$5.10</u>
<u>3440892203 DCF – Parent Child Ctrs Cap Imp</u>	<u>\$20,708.22</u>
<u>3440892214 DCF – Child Care Provider Workfor</u>	<u>\$294.79</u>
<u>4100500000 VT Department of Labor</u>	<u>\$8,000,000.00</u>
<u>5100070000 Education Services</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>5100892101 AOE – VSC Committee Per Diem</u>	<u>\$16,295.33</u>
<u>5100892102 AOA – Advisory Group Per Diem</u>	<u>\$9,018.00</u>
<u>5100892103 AOE – ESESAG Per Diems</u>	<u>\$8,960.00</u>
<u>5100892201 AOE – Comm Pub Sch Emp Hlth Ben</u>	<u>\$29,050.00</u>
<u>5100892202 AOE – Task Force Equit Inclusive</u>	<u>\$6,150.00</u>
<u>5100892302 AOE – Ethnic&Social Equity Per D</u>	<u>\$14,386.24</u>
<u>6100010000 Administration Management and Planning</u>	<u>\$402,052.99</u>
<u>6100040000 Property Tax Assessment Approp</u>	<u>\$11,692.11</u>
<u>6140880005 152/00 State Asst Munic Poll Cont</u>	<u>\$126.26</u>
<u>7100892301 Everyone Eats</u>	<u>\$144,565.43</u>
<u>7120892304 DED – Relocated and Remote Worker</u>	<u>\$127,314.33</u>
<u>8100002100 Department of Motor Vehicles</u>	<u>\$2,482.81</u>

* * *

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the Education Fund from the accounts indicated:

<u>5100010000 Administration</u>	<u>\$301,041.03</u>
<u>5100050000 State-Placed Students</u>	<u>\$13,687,528.41</u>
<u>5100090000 Education Grant</u>	<u>\$359,570.31</u>
<u>5100110000 Small School Grant</u>	<u>\$593,700.00</u>
<u>5100200000 Education – Technical Education</u>	<u>\$1,802,347.44</u>

5100210000 Education – Flexible Pathways \$1,312,334.72

5100892405 AOE – Universal School Meals \$6,201,479.69

Sec. 55. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.103 is amended to read:

Sec. D.103 RESERVES

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following reserve transactions shall be implemented for the funds provided:

(1) General Fund.

(A) Pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 308, an estimated amount of ~~\$15,168,663~~ \$15,168,660.85 shall be added to the General Fund Budget Stabilization Reserve.

(B) \$5,480,000 shall be added to the 27/53 reserve in fiscal year 2025. This action is the fiscal year 2025 contribution to the reserve for the 53rd week of Medicaid as required by 32 V.S.A. § 308e and the 27th payroll reserve as required by 32 V.S.A. § 308e.

(C) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308b, \$3,913,200 shall be unreserved from the Human Services Caseload Reserve established within the General Fund in 32 V.S.A. § 308b.

* * *

Sec. 56. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.100 is amended to read:

Sec. E.100 POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of ~~43~~ 47 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2025 for the following:

(1) Permanent classified positions:

* * *

(H) Office of the Attorney General:

(i) one Court Diversion Assistant Director.

* * *

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

* * *

(G) Human Rights Commission:

(i) one Intake Specialist; and

(ii) one Staff Attorney Investigator.

(H) Office of the Attorney General:(i) one Assistant Attorney General.

* * *

(d) The conversion of eight limited service positions to exempt permanent status is authorized in fiscal year 2025 as follows:

(1) Office of the Defender General:(A) one Administrative Services Tech;(B) two DG IT Specialist II's;(C) one ODG Legal Assistant I;(D) two Staff Attorney I's;(E) one Financial Specialist III; and(F) one Admin Secretary.

* * *

Sec. 57 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 56, is further amended to read:

Sec. E.100 EXECUTIVE BRANCH POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of 75 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2024 for the following:

* * *

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

* * *

(F) Office of the State Treasurer:

(i) one Director – ~~VT-Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;
and

(ii) one Communications and Outreach Manager – ~~VT-Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;

* * *

Sec. 58. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.301 is amended to read:

Sec. E.301 SECRETARY'S OFFICE; GLOBAL COMMITMENT

* * *

(b) In addition to the State funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, a total estimated sum of ~~\$24,301,185~~ \$28,307,335 is anticipated to be certified as State matching funds under Global Commitment as follows:

(1) ~~\$21,295,850~~ \$25,302,000 certified State match available from local education agencies for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment. This amount, combined with ~~\$29,204,150~~ \$34,698,000 of federal funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, equals a total estimated expenditure of ~~\$50,500,000~~ \$60,000,000. An amount equal to the amount of the federal matching funds for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment shall be transferred from the Global Commitment Fund to the Medicaid Reimbursement Special Fund created in 16 V.S.A. § 2959a.

(2) \$3,005,335 certified State match available from local designated mental health and developmental services agencies for eligible mental health services provided under Global Commitment.

(c) Up to ~~\$4,487,210~~ \$3,614,245 is transferred from the Agency of Human Services Federal Receipts Holding Account to the Interdepartmental Transfer Fund consistent with the amount appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act.

Sec. 59. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. G.109 is amended to read:

Sec. G.109 PAY ACT APPROPRIATIONS; FISCAL YEARS 2025 AND 2026

(a) Executive Branch. The first and second years of the two-year agreements between the State of Vermont and the Vermont State Employees' Association for the Defender General, Non-Management, Supervisory, and Corrections bargaining units, and, for the purpose of appropriation, the State's Attorneys' offices bargaining unit, for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; the collective bargaining agreement with the Vermont Troopers' Association for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; and salary increases for employees in the Executive Branch not covered by the bargaining agreements shall be funded as follows:

(1) Fiscal year 2025.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control ~~Board~~ Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

(2) Fiscal year 2026.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control Board Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

Sec. 60. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

Sec. 7. TELEPHONE TAX; REPEAL; TRANSITION

(a) 32 V.S.A. § 8521 (telephone personal property tax) is repealed on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. The final monthly installment payment of the telephone personal property tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8521 levied on the net book value of the taxpayer's personal property as of December 31, ~~2024~~ 2025 shall be due on or before July 25, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(b) 32 V.S.A. § 8522 (alternative telephone gross revenues tax) is repealed on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027. The final quarterly payment of the alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due on or before January 25, ~~2026~~ 2027.

(c) Any taxpayer who paid the alternative tax imposed by 32 V.S.A. § 8522 prior to the repeal of the tax on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027 shall become subject to the income tax imposed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 151 beginning with the taxpayer's first income tax year starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. No alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due for any period included in the taxpayer's income tax filing for tax years starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(d) In fiscal year ~~2025~~ 2026, the Division of Property Valuation and Review of the Department of Taxes and all communications service providers with taxable communications property in Vermont shall be subject to the inventory and valuation provisions prescribed in 32 V.S.A. § 4452, as applicable.

Sec. 61. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that:

* * *

(3) Secs. 8–12 (communications property tax) shall take effect on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026 and shall apply to grand lists lodged on or after April 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

Sec. 62. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 166, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION

Notwithstanding 7 V.S.A. § 845(c), in fiscal year 2025:

(1) ~~\$500,000.00~~ is transferred from the Cannabis Regulation Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 845 to the Cannabis Business Development Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987; and

(2) \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the Cannabis Business ~~19~~ Development Fund to the ~~Agency of Commerce and Community Development~~ Department of Economic Development to fund technical assistance and provide loans and grants pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987.

Sec. 63. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 78 is amended to read:

Sec. 78. ~~TRANSFERS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX~~

~~Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), or any other provision of law to the contrary, amounts in excess of \$32,954,775.00 from the property transfer tax shall be transferred into the General Fund. Of this amount:~~

~~(1) \$6,106,335.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.~~

~~(2) \$1,279,740.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 64. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 96 is amended to read:

Sec. 96. APPROPRIATION; RENT ARREARS ASSISTANCE FUND

The sum of ~~\$2,500,000.00~~ is appropriated from the General Fund to the ~~Vermont State Housing Authority~~ Department of Housing and Community Development in fiscal year 2025 for the Rent Arrears Assistance Fund established by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 45.

Sec. 65. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 182, Sec. 3, as amended by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 75, 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.119, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 106, is further amended to read:

Sec. 3. MANUFACTURED HOME IMPROVEMENT AND
REPAIR PROGRAM

(a) ~~Amounts~~ Of the amounts available from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery funds, \$4,000,000 is appropriated to the Department of Housing and Community Development for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program and shall be used for one or more of the following purposes:

* * *

Sec. 66. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 113b is amended to read:

Sec. 113b. APPROPRIATION; ~~NATURAL RESOURCES~~ LAND USE
REVIEW BOARD

The sum of ~~\$1,300,000.00~~ \$400,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the ~~Natural Resources~~ Land Use Review Board in fiscal year 2025.

Sec. 67. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 24a is amended to read:

Sec. 24a. COMPENSATION FOR OVERPAYMENT

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, ~~the sum of \$29,224.00 a \$29,224 credit shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of~~ applied to the Canaan Town School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Canaan Town School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Canaan.

(b) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$5,924.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Bloomfield in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Bloomfield for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Bloomfield.~~

(c) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,575.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Brunswick in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Brunswick for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Brunswick.~~

~~(d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$6,145.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of East Haven in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of East Haven for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of East Haven.~~

~~(e) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,046.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Granby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Granby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Granby.~~

~~(f) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$10,034.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Guildhall in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Guildhall for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Guildhall.~~

~~(g) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$20,536.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Kirby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Kirby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Kirby.~~

~~(h) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,402.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Lemington in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Lemington for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Lemington.~~

~~(i) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$11,464.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Maidstone in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Maidstone for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating~~

~~average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Maidstone.~~

~~(j) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$4,349.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Norton in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Norton for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Norton.~~

~~(k) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,657.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Victory in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Victory for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Victory.~~

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a \$68,132 credit shall be applied to the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership.

Sec. 68. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. B.1100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 40 and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. C.101, is further amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2024 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

(a) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$2,300,000 General Fund to create, implement, and oversee a comprehensive statewide language access plan;

(2) \$15,000,000 General Fund to be used to offset the cost of denied claims for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) federal reimbursement related to presidentially declared disasters in fiscal year 2024 or 2025, or to fund unanticipated statewide costs related to recovery efforts from declared disasters or administering programs created by funds from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery Fund, including the costs of related limited-service positions, and contracting for programs and services.

(3) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity. These funds shall not be released until the recommendation and report required by Sec. E.100.1 of this act, regarding the permanent administrative location for the Office of Health Equity, is provided to the committees of jurisdiction listed in Sec. E.100.1 of this act and the positions in the Office of Health Equity created by this act are filled.

* * *

(l) Agency of Human Services Central Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(2) \$8,834,000 General Fund and \$11,483,302 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program. Funds shall be used to expand the substances covered by the program, include mental health and pediatric screenings, and make strategic investments with community partners; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(m) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$366,066 General Fund and \$372,048 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

(2) \$15,583,352 Global Commitment Fund #20405 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose; and

* * *

(n) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$4,595,448 Global Commitment Fund #20405 to the Division of Substance Use Programs for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(x) Judiciary. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1)(A) \$4,680,000 General Fund for the Judiciary network replacement project.

(B) Judiciary shall update the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee on the status of this project on or before December 1, 2023.

(2) \$300,000 General Fund for the Essex County Courthouse renovation planning. Of this amount, \$50,000 may be used to construct bathrooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act in the Essex Meeting House.

* * *

(ee) Joint Fiscal Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$250,000 for per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Task Force on Economic Development Incentives and for consulting services approved by the Task Force~~ consulting services related to legislative needs identified in the 2025-2026 biennium, including analysis of legislative staff compensation and organizational structure and implementation of adjustments in accordance with policies adopted by the Joint Legislative Management Committee.

* * *

Sec. 69. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1102, as added by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 47, is amended to read:

Sec. B.1102 FISCAL YEAR 2023 ONE-TIME TECHNOLOGY
MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2023, funds are appropriated from the Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951) for new and ongoing initiatives as follows:

(1) \$40,010,000 to the Agency of Digital Services to be used as follows:

(A) \$11,800,000 for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system upgrade of Human Capital Management and core statewide financial accounting system and integration with the Department of Labor and Agency of Transportation financial systems;

* * *

Sec. 70. 3 V.S.A. § 3306 is amended to read:

§ 3306. TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND

* * *

(b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

- (1) any amounts transferred ~~or appropriated~~ to it by the General Assembly; and
- (2) any interest earned by the Fund.

* * *

Sec. 71. WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND; REPEAL

(a) 10 V.S.A. § 543 (Workforce Education and Training Fund) is repealed.

Sec. 72. 18 V.S.A. § 9502 is amended to read:

§ 9502. TOBACCO TRUST FUND

(a)(1) The Tobacco Trust Fund is established in the Office of the State Treasurer for the purposes of creating a self-sustaining, perpetual fund for tobacco cessation and prevention that is not dependent upon tobacco sales volume.

(2) The Trust Fund shall ~~comprise~~ be composed of:

- (A) ~~appropriations~~ transfers made by the General Assembly; and
- (B) ~~transfers from the Litigation Settlement Fund pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section; and~~
- (C) contributions from any other source.

(3) The State Treasurer shall not disburse monies from the Trust Fund, except upon appropriation by the General Assembly. In any fiscal year, total appropriations from the Trust Fund shall not exceed seven percent of the fair market value of the Fund at the end of the prior fiscal year.

(4) The Trust Fund shall be administered by the State Treasurer. The Treasurer may invest monies in the Fund in accordance with the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 434. All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned shall remain in the Fund. The Treasurer's annual financial report to the Governor and the General Assembly shall contain an accounting of receipts, disbursements, and earnings of the Fund.

(b) ~~Unless otherwise authorized by the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2000, and on June 30 of each subsequent fiscal year, any unencumbered balance in the Litigation Settlement Fund shall be transferred to the Trust Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 73. 30 V.S.A. chapter 86 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 86. UNDERGROUND UTILITY DAMAGE PREVENTION
SYSTEM

* * *

§ 7006. MARKING OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITIES

A company notified in accordance with section 7005 of this title shall, within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, of the receipt of the notice, mark the approximate location of its underground utility facilities in the area of the proposed excavation activities; provided, however, if the company advises the person that the proposed excavation area is of such length or size that the company cannot reasonably mark all of the underground utility facilities within 48 72 hours, the person shall notify the company of the specific locations in which the excavation activities will first occur and the company shall mark facilities in those locations within 48 72 hours and the remaining facilities within a reasonable time thereafter. A company and an excavator may by agreement fix a later time for the company's marking of the facilities, provided the marking is made prior to excavation activities. For the purposes of this chapter, the approximate location of underground facilities shall be marked with stakes, paint, or other physical means as designated by the Commission.

§ 7006a. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITY
MARKINGS

After a company has marked its underground facilities in accordance with section 7006 of this title, the excavator shall be responsible for maintenance of the designated markings. In the event said markings are obliterated, destroyed, or removed, the person engaged in excavation activities shall notify the System referred to in section 7002 of this title that remarking is needed. The System shall then notify all member companies whose facilities may be affected. The company shall within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, following receipt of the notice, remark the location of its underground utility facilities.

* * *

Sec. 74. 32 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Loan" means a loan that is interest free or below market value.

(2) "State agency" means an Executive Branch agency, department, commission, office, or board.

* * *

Sec. 75. 32 V.S.A. § 706 is amended to read:

§ 706. TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS

Notwithstanding any authority granted elsewhere, all transfers of appropriations shall be made pursuant to this section upon the initiative of the Governor or upon the request of a secretary or commissioner.

(1) With the approval of the Governor, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may transfer balances of appropriations not to exceed ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$100,000 made under any appropriation act for the support of the government from one component of an agency, department, or other unit of State government to any component of the same agency, department, or unit.

(2) Except as specified in ~~subdivisions~~ subdivision (1) ~~and (4)~~ of this section, the transfer of balances of appropriations may be made only with the approval of the Emergency Board.

(3) For the specific purpose of balancing and closing out fund accounts at the end of a fiscal year, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may adjust a balance within an account of an agency or department in an amount not to exceed ~~\$100.00~~ \$200.

* * *

Sec. 76. 32 V.S.A. § 902 is amended to read:

§ 902. AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW MONEY

* * *

(b) The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of and expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing of such notes as the same fall due without further order or authority from the ~~General Fund or from the Transportation or other applicable funds or from the proceeds of bonds or notes~~ governmental debt service funds established in section 951a of this chapter. The authority hereby granted is in addition to and not in limitation of any other authority. Such notes shall be sold at public or private sale with or without published notice, as the State Treasurer may determine to be in the best interests of the State.

Sec. 77. 32 V.S.A. § 951a is amended to read:

§ 951a. DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

(a) Three governmental debt service funds are hereby established:

* * *

(b) Financial resources in each fund shall consist of ~~appropriations by the General Assembly to fulfill debt service obligations~~, the transfer of funding sources by the General Assembly to fulfill future debt service obligations, bond proceeds raised to fund a permanent reserve required by a trust agreement entered into to secure bonds, transfers of appropriations effected pursuant to section 706 of this title, investment income earned on balances held in trust agreement accounts as required by a trust agreement, and such other amounts as directed by the General Assembly or that are specifically authorized by provisions of this title. Each debt service fund shall account for the accumulation of resources and the fulfillment of debt service obligations within the current fiscal year and the accumulation of resources for debt service obligations maturing in future fiscal years.

* * *

Sec. 78. 32 V.S.A. § 954 is amended to read:

§ 954. PROCEEDS

(a) The proceeds arising from the sale of bonds, inclusive of any premiums, shall be applied to the purposes for which they were authorized, and the purposes shall may be considered to include ~~the expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing the bonds and any notes issued under section 955 of this title, and underwriters' fees and~~ amounts for reserves, but no purchasers of the bonds shall be in any way bound to see to the proper application of the proceeds. The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of, investment return on, and maturity value of the bonds and notes as the same fall due or accrue without further order or authority. The State Treasurer, with the approval of the Governor, may establish sinking funds, reserve funds, or other special funds of the State as the State Treasurer may deem for the best interests of the State. To the extent not otherwise provided, the amount necessary each year to fulfill the maturing principal and interest of, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on all the bonds then outstanding shall be included in and made a part of the annual appropriation bill for the expense of State government, and the principal and interest on, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on the bonds as may come due before appropriations for their fulfillment have been made shall be fulfilled from the applicable debt service fund.

(b) ~~The State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of bond issuance or issuances to the entities to which funds are appropriated by a capital construction act and for which bonding is required as the source of~~

~~funds. If estimated receipts are insufficient, the State Treasurer shall allocate additional costs to the entities. Any remaining receipts shall not be expended, but carried forward to be available for future capital construction acts. If the source of funds appropriated by a capital construction act is other than by issuance of bonds, the State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of ongoing debt management services to the entities to which those funds are appropriated shall be appropriated annually from the funds from which transfers are made to fund debt service costs.~~

* * *

Sec. 79. VERMONT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FUND; REPEAL

(a) 33 V.S.A. chapter 78 (Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund) is repealed.

Sec. 80. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 38 is amended to read:

Sec. 38. RENTAL HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

(a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Housing Finance Agency shall design and implement a Rental Housing Revolving Loan Program and shall create and administer a revolving loan fund to provide subsidized loans for rental housing developments that serve middle-income households.

(b) Loans; eligibility; criteria.

* * *

(7) The Agency shall use one or more legal mechanisms to ensure that:

(A) a subsidized unit remains affordable to a household earning the applicable percent of area median income for the longer of:

(i) seven years; or

(ii) full repayment of the loan plus three years; and

(B) during the affordability period determined pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7), the annual increase in rent for a subsidized unit does not exceed three percent or an amount otherwise authorized by the Agency.

* * *

Sec. 81. 32 V.S.A. § 308b is amended to read:

§ 308b. HUMAN SERVICES CASELOAD RESERVE

(a) There is created within the General Fund a Human Services Caseload Reserve. Expenditures from the Reserve shall be subject to an appropriation by the General Assembly or approval by the Emergency Board. Expenditures

from the Reserve shall be limited to Agency of Human Services caseload-related needs primarily in the Departments for Children and Families, of Health, of Mental Health, of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, of Vermont Health Access, and settlement costs associated with managing the Global Commitment waiver.

(b) The Secretary of Administration may transfer to the Human Services Caseload Reserve any General Fund ~~carry-forward~~ carryforward directly attributable to Agency of Human Services caseload reductions and the effective management of related federal receipts, with the exclusion of the Department of Corrections.

(c) The Human Services Caseload Reserve shall contain two ~~sub-accounts~~ subaccounts:

(1) A ~~sub-account~~ subaccount for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses. Each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2020, the Department of Finance and Management shall adjust the amount reserved for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses to equal the amount specified in the ~~Comprehensive~~ Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year occurring two years prior for the estimated amount of incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses associated with the current Medicaid Global Commitment waiver.

* * *

Sec. 82. CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION SPECIAL FUND; UNALLOCATED AND UNRESERVED BALANCE

(a) In fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration shall unreserve and transfer funds from the Human Services Caseload Reserve to the Child Care Contribution Special Fund established in 32 V.S.A. § 10554 as necessary to maintain a balance that appropriately supports the State's statutory obligations under the Child Care Financial Assistance Program established in 33 V.S.A. §§ 3512 and 3513.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that any unreserved and unallocated balance in the Child Care Contribution Special Fund shall remain in the Fund to support the future establishment of a reserve for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

Sec. 83. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; FACILITY WORK PROGRAMS; STRATEGIC PLAN

(a) Findings and intent.

(1) The General Assembly finds that a significant budget deficit has developed within previously existing programs despite a wage structure that

pays incarcerated individuals in Vermont at rates ranging from \$0.25 to \$1.35 per hour, significantly below the federal minimum wage.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly that all Department of Corrections facility work programs operate in a manner that is fiscally sustainable to the extent possible within current statutory limitations and effective in preparing offenders for meaningful employment upon release.

(b) Strategic plan. On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Corrections shall, in consultation with the Department of Labor, submit a strategic plan with proposed benchmarks for improvement to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary. The strategic plan shall include:

(1) A business plan to improve program efficiency and self-sustainability to ensure all facility work programs, including Vermont Correctional Industries, vocational training programs, and other paid facility duties, operate without recurring deficits or to clearly identify funding sources to address the deficits.

(2) A comprehensive evaluation of the skills provided through facility work programs to determine if those skills are transferable to employment opportunities post-incarceration. The evaluation shall include consideration of expanding technical training and certification opportunities that carry recognized value in the labor market.

(3) An analysis of facility work programs to determine if each program serves a sufficient portion of the incarcerated population to justify its administration. The analysis shall also consider whether participants gain meaningful and valuable work experiences.

(4) A review of wages paid to facility work program participants, the implications of wage structures on program outcomes, and the appropriate use of funds in relation to program objectives.

(c) In fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the Department of Corrections shall submit timely reports to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary, or the Joint Fiscal Committee and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee when the General Assembly is not in session, on the development of facility work program deficits. The Department shall include in these reports any financial or operational actions taken to address deficits, increase oversight, and prevent future deficits.

Sec. 84. MEDICAID PROVIDERS WITH STABILIZATION NEEDS;
GRANT ELIGIBILITY

(a) All Vermont Medicaid participating providers with demonstrated stabilization needs and a plan to achieve sustainability shall be eligible to apply for funds appropriated pursuant to 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), including substance use residential treatment facilities, federally qualified health centers, residential mental health providers, and other providers of health care and human services.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall submit a report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations. The report shall include:

(1) A detailed account of grants distributed pursuant to the appropriation made in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), as added by this act. This shall include the dollar amount and recipient of each grant.

(2) A description of each grant recipient's financial status prior to receipt of the grant, a summary of the impact of the grant for each recipient, and a summary of a revised long-term sustainability plan for each grant recipient.

(3) An analysis of grant outcomes and any recommendations for enhancing the financial stability of Vermont Medicaid providers.

Sec. 85. ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM AND HIGH SCHOOL
COMPLETION PROGRAM TRANSITIONAL STUDENTS

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 945 and any other provision of law to the contrary, a high school may award a high school diploma to any student who meets the following criteria:

(1) Prior to July 1, 2024, the student was participating in the High School Completion Program as the program existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

(2) The student has met the requirements of the student's individual graduation plan and would have been eligible to receive a diploma pursuant to the High School Completion Program as it existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

(b) This section is repealed on July 1, 2025.

Sec. 86. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;
DISCRETIONARY EXEMPTIONS

(a) For the remainder of federal fiscal year 2025, the Department for Children and Families shall utilize the State's allocation of discretionary exemptions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to the extent permitted by federal regulation for the purposes of:

(1) extending benefits to Program participants who would otherwise experience a disruption of benefits; and

(2) ensuring that Program participants are not accruing any time-limited benefit work requirement countable months.

Sec. 87. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 19, Secs. 5 and 6 are amended to read:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Sec. 4 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

(b) ~~Sec. 5 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.~~

(e) All other sections shall take effect 30 calendar days after passage.

Sec. 88. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 53, as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.102 is further amended to read:

Sec. 53. FISCAL YEAR 2022 UNALLOCATED RESERVE

* * *

(b) After meeting the requirements of subsection (a) of this section, but prior to satisfying the requirements of 32 V.S.A. § 308c, the remaining unreserved and undesignated funds at the close of fiscal year 2022 shall be allocated to the extent available as follows:

* * *

(7) \$9,600,000 is appropriated to the Judiciary, of which \$3,880,000 is for the reopening of the courts ~~and \$5,720,000~~, \$4,920,000 is to replace HVAC in county court houses, and \$800,000 is to upgrade the network wiring and security systems in county court houses.

* * *

Sec. 89. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 15b, as added by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, is amended to read:

Sec. 15b. SERGEANT AT ARMS

(a) The sum of ~~\$100,000.00~~ \$100,000 is appropriated in FY fiscal year 2025 to the Sergeant at Arms for the following projects:

(1) the replacement of State House cafeteria furnishings; and

(2) the purchase and installation at the State House of an X-ray machine designed to screen baggage.

Sec. 90. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.321 is amended to read:

Sec. E.321 GENERAL ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY HOUSING

* * *

(b)(1) General Assistance Emergency Housing shall be provided in a community-based shelter whenever possible. If there is inadequate community-based shelter space available within the Agency of Human Services district in which the household presents itself, the household shall be provided emergency housing in a hotel or motel within the district, if available, until adequate community-based shelter space becomes available in the district. The utilization of hotel and motel rooms pursuant to this subdivision shall be capped at 1,100 rooms per night between September 15, 2024 through November 30, 2024 ~~and between April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.~~

* * *

(3) The Department shall provide emergency winter housing to households meeting the eligibility criteria in subsection (a) of this section between December 1, 2024 and ~~March 31,~~ June 30, 2025. Emergency housing in a hotel or motel provided pursuant to this subdivision shall not count toward the maximum days of eligibility per 12-month period provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

* * *

Sec. 91. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 82, Sec. 1, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 108, Sec. 3, is further amended to read:

Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE
EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE
TO FLOODING

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments

owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for reimbursement under this section, prior to November 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, a municipality must have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

(2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

(A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on the property;

(B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more;

(C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

(D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

(b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, the municipality incurred unanticipated interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

* * *

Sec. 92. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.106 is amended to read:

Sec. E.106 CORONAVIRUS STATE FISCAL RECOVERY FUND
APPROPRIATIONS; REVERSION AND ESTABLISHMENT
OF NEW SPENDING AUTHORITY

* * *

(b) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall revert all unobligated American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund spending authority prior to December 31, 2024. The total amount of American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

spending authority reverted in accordance with this subsection shall equal the amount of new spending authority established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511 for the following purposes in the following order:

* * *

(3) \$30,000,000 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of: affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units; including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home and community based services.

Sec. 93. CARRYFORWARD AUTHORITY

(a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law and subject to the approval of the Secretary of Administration, General Fund, Transportation Fund, Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund, Education Fund, Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951), Clean Water Fund (21932), and Agricultural Water Quality Fund (21933) appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Executive Branch shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, General Fund appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Legislative and Judicial Branches shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

Sec. 94. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This act shall take effect on passage, except that, notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214:

(1) Sec. 67 shall take effect retroactively on July 1, 2024; and

(2) Sec. 91 shall take effect retroactively on November 15, 2024.

And by renumbering all of the sections of the bill to be numerically correct (including internal references) and adjusting all of the totals to be arithmetically correct.

ANDREW J. PERCHLIK

VIRGINIA V. LYONS

Committee on the part of the Senate

*ROBIN P. SCHEU**TIFFANY BLUEMLE**TREVOR J. SQUIRRELL**Committee on the part of the House*

Which was considered and adopted on the part of the House.

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the bill was ordered delivered to the Governor forthwith pursuant to Joint Rule 15.

**Second Reading; Consideration Interrupted; Amendment Offered;
Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**

H. 2

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the minimum age for delinquency proceedings

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Family Division Delinquency Jurisdiction * * *

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 5102 is amended to read:

§ 5102. DEFINITIONS AND PROVISIONS OF GENERAL APPLICATION

As used in the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters:

* * *

(2) “Child” means any of the following:

* * *

(C) an individual who has been alleged to have committed or has committed an act of delinquency after becoming ~~10~~ 12 years of age and prior to becoming 22 years of age, unless otherwise provided in chapter 52 or 52A of this title; provided, however:

~~(i) that an individual who is alleged to have committed an act before attaining 10 years of age that would be murder as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2301 if committed by an adult may be subject to delinquency proceedings; and~~

~~(ii),~~ that an individual may be considered a child for the period of time the court retains jurisdiction under section 5104 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 5103(c) is amended to read:

(c)(1) Except as otherwise provided by this title and by subdivision (2) of this subsection, jurisdiction over a child shall not be extended beyond the child's 18th birthday.

(2)(A) Jurisdiction over a child with a delinquency may be extended until six months beyond the child's:

(i) ~~19th~~ 20th birthday if the child was 16 or 17 years of age when ~~he or she~~ the child committed the offense; or

(ii) 20th ~~21st~~ birthday if the child was 18 years of age when ~~he or she~~ the child committed the offense.

* * *

* * * Raise the Age * * *

Sec. 3. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 125, Secs. 7–11 are amended to read:

Sec. 7. [Deleted.]

Sec. 8. [Deleted.]

Sec. 9. [Deleted.]

Sec. 10. [Deleted.]

Sec. 11. [Deleted.]

Sec. 4. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 125, Sec. 21 is amended to read:

Sec. 21. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

(b) ~~Secs. 7–11 shall take effect on April 1, 2025.~~ [Deleted.]

Sec. 5. 33 V.S.A. § 5201(d) is amended to read:

(d) Any proceeding concerning a child who is alleged to have committed any offense other than those specified in subsection 5204(a) of this title or subdivision (c)(2) or (3) of this section before attaining ~~19~~ 20 years of age shall originate in the Family Division of the Superior Court, provided that jurisdiction may be transferred in accordance with this chapter.

Sec. 6. 33 V.S.A. § 5203 is amended to read:

§ 5203. TRANSFER FROM OTHER COURTS

(a) If it appears to a Criminal Division of the Superior Court that the defendant was under ~~19~~ 20 years of age at the time the offense charged was alleged to have been committed and the offense charged is an offense not

specified in subsection 5204(a) or subdivision 5201(c)(2) or (3) of this title, that court shall forthwith transfer the proceeding to the Family Division of the Superior Court under the authority of this chapter, and the minor shall then be considered to be subject to this chapter as a child charged with a delinquent act.

* * *

(c) If it appears to the State's Attorney that the defendant was under ~~19~~ 20 years of age at the time the felony offense charged was alleged to have been committed and the felony charged is not an offense specified in subsection 5204(a) or subdivision 5201(c)(2) or (3) of this title, the State's Attorney shall file charges in the Family Division of the Superior Court, pursuant to section 5201 of this title. The Family Division may transfer the proceeding to the Criminal Division pursuant to section 5204 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 7. 33 V.S.A. § 5204 is amended to read:

§ 5204. TRANSFER FROM FAMILY DIVISION OF THE SUPERIOR
COURT

(a) After a petition has been filed alleging delinquency, upon motion of the State's Attorney and after hearing, the Family Division of the Superior Court may transfer jurisdiction of the proceeding to the Criminal Division of the Superior Court if the child had attained 16 years of age but not ~~19~~ 20 years of age at the time the act was alleged to have occurred and the delinquent act set forth in the petition is a felony not specified in subdivisions (1)–(11) of this subsection or if the child had attained 12 years of age but not 14 years of age at the time the act was alleged to have occurred, and if the delinquent act set forth in the petition was any of the following:

* * *

Sec. 8. 33 V.S.A. § 5103(c) is amended to read:

(c)(1) Except as otherwise provided by this title and by subdivision (2) of this subsection, jurisdiction over a child shall not be extended beyond the child's 18th birthday.

(2)(A) Jurisdiction over a child with a delinquency may be extended:

(i) until six months beyond the child's:

~~(i)(I)~~ (I) 20th birthday if the child was 16 or 17 years of age when the child committed the offense; or

~~(ii)~~(II) 21st birthday if the child was 18 years of age when the child committed the offense; or

(ii) until the child's 22nd birthday if the child was 19 years of age when the child committed the offense.

* * *

Sec. 9. 33 V.S.A. § 5206 is amended to read:

§ 5206. CITATION OF 16- TO ~~18-YEAR-OLDS~~ 19-YEAR-OLDS

(a)(1) If a child was over 16 years of age and under ~~19~~ 20 years of age at the time the offense was alleged to have been committed and the offense is not specified in subsection (b) of this section, law enforcement shall cite the child to the Family Division of the Superior Court.

* * *

Sec. 10. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRESS REPORTS

(a) On or before July 1, 2026 and December 1, 2026, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee, the Senate and House Committees on Judiciary, the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions, the Senate Committee on Institutions, the House Committee on Human Services, and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on its progress toward implementing the requirement of this act that the Raise the Age initiative take effect on July 1, 2027. The progress reports required by this section shall describe progress toward implementation of the Raise the Age initiative, as measured by qualitative and quantitative data related to the following priorities:

(1) establishing a secure residential facility;

(2) expanding capacity for nonresidential treatment programs to provide community-based services;

(3) ensuring that residential treatment programs are used appropriately and to their full potential;

(4) expanding capacity for Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) contracts;

(5) expanding capacity for the provision of services to children with developmental disabilities;

(6) establishing a stabilization program for children who are experiencing a mental health crisis;

(7) enhancing long-term treatment for children;

(8) programming to help children, particularly 18- and 19-year-olds, transition to adulthood;

(9) developing district-specific data and information on family services workforce development, including turnover, retention, and vacancy rates; times needed to fill open positions; training opportunities and needs; and instituting a positive culture for employees;

(10) installation of a comprehensive child welfare information system; and

(11) plans for and measures taken to secure funding for the goals listed in this section.

(b) The report required by this section shall provide utilization data for the Red Clover Treatment Facility, including how many youths utilize the Facility on a monthly and annual basis, the length of stay, the treatment needs of the youths who are placed at the Facility, racial and gender demographic data for youths who are placed at the Facility, and any other data deemed relevant by the Department.

(c) Failure to meet one or more of the progress report elements listed in subsection (a) of this section shall not be a basis for extending the implementation of the Raise the Age initiative beyond July 1, 2027.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATES; APPLICABILITY

(a) Secs. 1, 2, and 10 shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(b) Secs. 3 and 4 and this section shall take effect on March 31, 2025.

(c) Secs. 5–9 shall take effect on July 1, 2027.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, and read the second time.

At two o'clock and eight minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

At two o'clock and thirty-six minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Judiciary?, **Rep. Maguire of Rutland City** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Judiciary as follows:

First: By striking Secs. 5–11 and their reader assistance headings in their entirety.

Second: By inserting a new Sec. 5 and reader assistance heading to read as follows:

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Secs. 1 and 2 shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(b) Secs. 3 and 4 and this section shall take effect on March 31, 2025.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Judiciary be amended as offered by Rep. Maguire of Rutland City?, **Rep. Maguire of Rutland City** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Judiciary be amended as offered by Rep. Maguire of Rutland City?, was decided in the negative. Yeas, 55. Nays, 86.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nelson of Derby
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	North of Ferrisburgh
Burditt of West Rutland	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Burt of Cabot	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Kascenska of Burke	Pinsonault of Dorset
Casey of Hubbardton	Keyser of Rutland City	Powers of Waterford
Charlton of Chester	Labor of Morgan	Pritchard of Pawlet
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Quimby of Lyndon
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Southworth of Walden
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Maguire of Rutland City	Steady of Milton
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Sweeney of Shelburne
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Marcotte of Coventry	Tagliavia of Corinth
Donahue of Northfield	McCoy of Poultney	Taylor of Milton
Feltus of Lyndon	McFaun of Barre Town	Toof of St. Albans Town
Galfetti of Barre Town	Micklus of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, L. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
	Morgan, M. of Milton	

Those who voted in the negative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Duke of Burlington	Mihaly of Calais
Austin of Colchester	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Minier of South Burlington
Bartholomew of Hartland	Emmons of Springfield	Morris of Springfield
Berbeco of Winooski	Garofano of Essex	Morrow of Weston
Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge

Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Pezzo of Colchester
Burke of Brattleboro	Hooper of Burlington	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Houghton of Essex Junction	Priestley of Bradford
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Satcowitz of Randolph
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hunter of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	James of Manchester	Sheldon of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Christie of Hartford	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stevens of Waterbury
Cina of Burlington	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cooper of Pownal	LaMont of Morristown	Torre of Moretown
Corcoran of Bennington	Long of Newfane	Waszazak of Barre City
Critchlow of Colchester	Masland of Thetford	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dodge of Essex	McCann of Montpelier	White of Waitsfield
Dolan of Essex Junction	McGill of Bridport	White of Bethel
		Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Branagan of Georgia	Lipsky of Stowe	Rachelson of Burlington
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Wells of Brownington
Eastes of Guilford	Oliver of Sheldon	

Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Judiciary was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 21

Rep. Malay of Pittsford, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to service of writs of possession

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. § 4854 is amended to read:

§ 4854. JUDGMENT FOR PLAINTIFF; WRIT OF POSSESSION

If the court finds that the plaintiff is entitled to possession of the premises, the plaintiff shall have judgment for possession and rents due, damages, and costs, and when a written rental agreement so provides, the court may award reasonable attorney's fees. A writ of possession shall issue on the date

judgment is entered, unless the court for good cause orders a stay. The writ shall direct the any sheriff of the county in which the property or a portion thereof is located to serve the writ upon the defendant and, not earlier than 14 days after the writ is served, to put the plaintiff into possession.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 105

Rep. Goodnow of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 7 V.S.A. § 656 is amended to read:

§ 656. PERSON ~~16~~ 12 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND UNDER 21

YEARS OF AGE MISREPRESENTING AGE, PROCURING,
POSSESSING, OR CONSUMING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES;
IMPAIRED DRIVING; CIVIL VIOLATION

(a) Prohibited conduct; ~~offense~~ offenses.

(1) Prohibited conduct. A person ~~16~~ 12 years of age or older and under 21 years of age shall not:

(A) Falsely represent the person's age for the purpose of procuring or attempting to procure malt or vinous beverages, ready-to-drink spirits beverages, spirits, or fortified wines from any licensee, State liquor agency, or other person or persons.

(B) Possess malt or vinous beverages, ready-to-drink spirits beverages, spirits, or fortified wines for the purpose of consumption by the person or other minors, except in the regular performance of duties as an employee of a licensee licensed to sell alcoholic liquor.

(C) Consume malt or vinous beverages, ready-to-drink spirits beverages, spirits, or fortified wines. A violation of this subdivision may be prosecuted in a jurisdiction where the ~~minor~~ person has consumed malt or vinous beverages, ready-to-drink spirits beverages, spirits, or fortified wines or in a jurisdiction where the indicators of consumption are observed.

(D) Operate, attempt to operate, or be in actual physical control on a highway of a vehicle when the person's blood alcohol concentration is 0.02 or more.

(2) Offense Procurement, possession, or consumption penalties. A person who knowingly violates ~~subdivision any of subdivisions (1)(A)–(C)~~ of this subsection commits a civil violation and shall be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program. A person who fails to complete the program successfully commits a civil violation under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Bureau and shall be subject to the following:

(A) a civil penalty of \$300.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 30 days, for a first offense; and

(B) a civil penalty of not more than \$600.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 90 days, for a second or subsequent offense.

(3) Impaired driver penalties.

(A) A person who violates subdivision (1)(D) of this subsection (a) commits a civil violation, shall be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program, and shall serve a suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle in accordance with subdivision (B) of this subdivision (3). A person who fails to complete the Program successfully commits a civil violation under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Bureau and shall be subject to the following:

(i) For a first offense, a civil penalty of \$300.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 180 days and compliance with the requirements of 23 V.S.A. § 1209a(a)(1).

(ii) For a second or subsequent offense, a civil penalty of \$600.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license for a period of one year or until the person reaches 21 years of age, whichever is longer, and compliance with the requirements of 23 V.S.A. § 1209a(a)(2).

(iii) A person who violates subdivision (1)(D) of this subsection (a) may also be subject to recall of the person's provisional license under 23 V.S.A. § 607a.

(iv) If a law enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a person is violating subdivision (1)(D) of this subsection (a), the officer may request the person to submit to a breath test using a preliminary screening device approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety. A refusal to submit to the breath test shall be considered a violation of subdivision (1)(D) of this subsection (a). Notwithstanding any provisions to the contrary in 23 V.S.A. §§ 1202 and 1203 of this title:

(I) the results of the test shall be admissible evidence in a proceeding under this section; and

(II) there shall be no statutory right to counsel prior to the administration of the test.

(v) In a proceeding under this section, if there was at any time within two hours after operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control of a vehicle on a highway a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02 or more, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that the person's blood alcohol concentration was 0.02 or more at the time of operating, attempting to operate, or being in actual physical control.

(vi) No points shall be assessed for a violation of subdivision (1)(D) of this subsection (a).

(vii) The Alcohol and Driving Program required under this section shall be administered by the Department of Health's Division of Substance Use Programs and shall take into consideration any particular treatment needs of operators under 21 years of age.

(viii) An alleged violation of this section shall not bar prosecution for any crime, including a prosecution under 23 V.S.A. § 1201.

(ix) Suspensions imposed under this subdivision (3)(A) or any comparable statute of any other jurisdiction shall run concurrently with suspensions imposed under 23 V.S.A. §§ 1205, 1206, and 1208 or any comparable statutes of any other jurisdiction or with any suspension resulting from a conviction for a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1091 from the same incident.

(B)(i) For a first offense, a person shall serve suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 90 days and shall be automatically reinstated after the 90-day period.

(ii) For a second or subsequent offense, a person shall serve a suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period 145 days and shall be automatically reinstated after the 145-day period.

(iii) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall issue a notice of reinstatement to the person serving a suspension under this subdivision (a)(3)(B) upon successful completion of the suspension.

(iv) If a person fails to complete the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program, the person shall receive credit for any elapsed period of a suspension served pursuant to this subdivision (3)(B) against any suspension imposed pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3).

(C) During a suspension issued pursuant to subdivisions (A) or (B) of this subdivision (3), a person may operate a motor vehicle if issued an ignition interlock restricted driver's license or certificate in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1213.

(i) A person subject to penalties under subdivision (A)(i) of this subdivision (3) and who elects to operate a motor vehicle with an ignition interlock RDL or certificate shall be reinstated only if the person operates with an ignition interlock RDL or certificate for a period of 180 days, in addition to any extension of this period arising from a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1213.

(ii) A person subject to penalties under subdivision (A)(i) of this subdivision (3) and who elects to operate a motor vehicle with an ignition interlock RDL or certificate shall be reinstated only if the person operates with an ignition interlock RDL or certificate for a period of one year or until the person reaches 21 years of age, whichever is longer, in addition to any extension of this period arising from a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1213.

(b) Issuance of notice of violation. A law enforcement officer shall issue a person who violates this section a notice of violation, in a form approved by the Court Administrator. A person shall not be cited for more than one violation of subsection (a) of this section arising out of the same incident. The notice of violation shall require the person to provide the person's name and address and shall explain procedures under this section, including that:

(1) the person shall contact the Diversion Program in the county where the offense occurred within 15 days;

(2) failure to contact the Diversion Program within 15 days will result in the case being referred to the Judicial Bureau, where the person, if found liable for the violation, will be subject to a civil penalty and a suspension of the person's operator's license and may face substantially increased insurance rates;

(3) no money should be submitted to pay any penalty until after adjudication; and

(4) the person shall notify the Diversion Program if the person's address changes.

(c) Issuance of Notice of Suspension.

(1) On behalf of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, a law enforcement officer issuing a notice of violation in accordance with subsection (b) of this section shall also serve a notice of suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle in a form prescribed by the Court Administrator. The form shall include the following:

(A) the effective date of the suspension;

(B) the suspension's duration;

(C) an explanation of the consequences of the suspension;

(D) an explanation of the process to operate a motor vehicle with an ignition interlock restricted driver's license or certificate in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1213; and

(E) the projected date of reinstatement upon successful completion of the suspension.

(2) A suspension issued pursuant to subdivision (a)(3)(B) of this section shall become effective on the 11th day after the person receives notice in accordance with this subsection (c).

(3) A copy of the notice of suspension shall be sent to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

(d) Summons and complaint. When a person is issued a notice of violation under this section, the law enforcement officer shall complete a summons and complaint for the offense and send it to the Diversion Program in the county where the offense occurred. The summons and complaint shall not be filed with the Judicial Bureau at that time.

~~(d)~~(e) Registration in Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program. Within 15 days after receiving a notice of violation, the person shall contact the Diversion Program in the county where the offense occurred and register for the Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program. If the person fails to do so, the Diversion Program shall file the summons and complaint with the Judicial Bureau for adjudication under 4 V.S.A. chapter 29. The Diversion Program shall provide a copy of the summons and complaint to the law enforcement officer who issued the notice of violation and shall provide two copies to the person ~~charged with~~ subject to the violation.

~~(e)~~(f) Notice to report to Diversion. Upon receipt from a law enforcement officer of a summons and complaint completed under this section, the Diversion Program shall send the person a notice to report to the Diversion Program. The notice to report shall provide that:

(1) The person is required to complete all conditions related to the offense imposed by the Diversion Program, including substance abuse screening and, if deemed appropriate following the screening, substance abuse assessment or substance abuse counseling, or both.

(2) If the person does not satisfactorily complete the substance abuse screening, any required substance abuse assessment or substance abuse counseling, or any other condition related to the offense imposed by the Diversion Program, the case will be referred to the Judicial Bureau, where the person, if found liable for the violation, shall be assessed a civil penalty, the person's driver's license will be suspended, and the person's automobile insurance rates may increase substantially.

(3) If the person satisfactorily completes the substance abuse screening, any required substance abuse assessment or substance abuse counseling, and any other condition related to the offense imposed by the Diversion Program, no penalty shall be imposed and the person's operator's license shall not be suspended.

~~(f)~~(g) Diversion Program requirements.

(1) Upon being contacted by a person who has been issued a notice of violation, the Diversion Program shall register the person in the Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program. Pursuant to the Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program, the Diversion Program shall impose conditions on the person. The conditions imposed shall include only conditions related to the offense and in every case shall include a condition requiring satisfactory completion of substance abuse screening using an evidence-based tool and, if deemed appropriate following the screening, substance abuse assessment and substance abuse education or substance abuse counseling, or both. If the screener recommends substance abuse counseling, the person shall choose a State-certified or State-licensed substance abuse counselor or substance abuse treatment provider to provide the services.

(2) Substance abuse screening required under this subsection shall be completed within 60 days after the Diversion Program receives a summons and complaint. The person shall complete all conditions at the person's own expense.

(3) When a person has satisfactorily completed substance abuse screening, any required substance abuse education or substance abuse counseling, and any other condition related to the offense that the Diversion Program has imposed, the Diversion Program shall:

(A) Void the summons and complaint with no penalty due.

(B) Send copies of the voided summons and complaint to the Judicial Bureau and to the law enforcement officer who completed them. Before sending copies of the voided summons and complaint to the Judicial Bureau under this subdivision, the Diversion Program shall redact all language containing the person's name, address, Social Security number, and any other information that identifies the person.

(4) If a person does not satisfactorily complete substance abuse screening, any required substance abuse education or substance abuse counseling, or any other condition related to the offense imposed by the Diversion Program, the Diversion Program shall file the summons and complaint with the Judicial Bureau for adjudication under 4 V.S.A. chapter 29. The Diversion Program shall provide a copy of the summons and complaint to the law enforcement officer who issued the notice of violation and shall provide two copies to the person charged with the violation.

(5) A person aggrieved by a decision of the Diversion Program or alcohol counselor may seek review of that decision pursuant to Rule 75 of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure.

(6) Notwithstanding ~~3 V.S.A. §§ 163(a)(2)(C) and 164 (a)(2)(C)~~ any law to the contrary, the adult or juvenile diversion programs shall accept cases from the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program pursuant to this section. The confidentiality provisions of 3 V.S.A. § 163 or 164 shall become effective when a notice of violation is issued pursuant to subsection (b) of this section and shall remain in effect unless the person fails to register with or complete the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program.

~~(g) [Repealed.]~~

(h) Record of adjudications; confidentiality; public records exemption.

(1) Upon adjudicating a person in violation of this section, the Judicial Bureau shall notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, who shall maintain a record of all such adjudications that shall be separate from the registry maintained by the Department for motor vehicle driving records. The identity of a person in the registry shall be revealed only to the following:

(A) a law enforcement officer determining whether the person has previously violated this section; or

(B) an insurance company or its third-party contractor only for the purposes of recording a license suspension issued pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section.

(2) Except as provided in this subsection (h):

(A) All information related to a suspension issued pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall be held strictly confidential and not released without the participant's prior consent.

(B) Any records or information produced or acquired pursuant to a suspension issued pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall be exempt from public inspection or copying under Vermont's Public Records Act.

(i) Reporting. Annually, beginning on October 1, 2026, the Office of the Attorney General, and other entities as needed, shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary related to impaired driver violations under this section, containing the following:

(1) the number of persons referred to the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program;

(2) the ages of the persons referred to the Program;

(3) the number of persons who successfully complete the Program;

(4) the number of persons who fail the Program; and

(5) the number of persons who serve suspensions imposed by the Judicial Bureau after failing the Program.

Sec. 2. IMPAIRED DRIVING; OUTCOME MEASURES; REPORT

For the first report submitted pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 656(i), the Office of the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Vermont Statistical Analysis Center and others as needed, shall propose outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of any suspensions imposed for impaired driver violations and the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program as a whole.

Sec. 3. 23 V.S.A. § 1209a(a) is amended to read:

(a) Conditions of reinstatement. No license or privilege to operate suspended or revoked under this subchapter, ~~except a license or privilege to operate suspended under section 1216 of this title,~~ shall be reinstated except as follows:

* * *

Sec. 4. REPEALS

(a) 7 V.S.A. § 657a (person under 16 years of age misrepresenting age or procuring or possessing alcoholic beverages; delinquency) is repealed.

(b) 23 V.S.A. § 1216 (persons under 21 years of age; alcohol concentration of 0.02 or more) is repealed.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-nine minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, March 13, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Pastor Max Tardie, Bible Baptist Church, Berlin.

House Bill Introduced**H. 473**

By Rep. Austin of Colchester,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the reintroduction of catamounts to the State of Vermont

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**H. 243**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

H. 398

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar

Bill Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

H. 321

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 410

Rep. Emmons of Springfield moved that the Committee on Corrections and Institutions be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to the calculation of recidivism and other related criminology measures

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Judiciary, which was agreed to.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 2

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the minimum age for delinquency proceedings

H. 21

House bill, entitled

An act relating to service of writs of possession

H. 50

House bill, entitled

An act relating to identifying State real property suitable for conversion into affordable housing

H. 105

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 458

Rep. Campbell of St. Johnsbury spoke for the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Agency of Digital Services

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 1

Reps. Morgan, M. of Milton, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to accepting and referring complaints by the State Ethics Commission

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 1223 is amended to read:

§ 1223. PROCEDURE FOR ACCEPTING AND REFERRING
COMPLAINTS

(a) Accepting complaints.

(1) On behalf of the Commission, the Executive Director shall accept complaints from any source regarding governmental ethics in any of the three branches of State government or of the State's campaign finance law set forth in 17 V.S.A. chapter 61.

(2) Complaints shall be in writing and shall include the identity of the complainant.

(b) Preliminary review by Executive Director. The Executive Director shall conduct a preliminary review of complaints made to the Commission in order to take action as set forth in this subsection and section 1223a of this title, which shall include referring complaints to all relevant entities, including the Commission itself.

* * *

(4) Legislative and Judicial Branches; attorneys.

(A) If the complaint is in regard to conduct committed by a State Senator, the Executive Director shall refer the complaint to the Senate Ethics Panel and shall request a report back from the Panel regarding the final disposition of the complaint.

(B) If the complaint is in regard to conduct committed by a State Representative, the Executive Director shall refer the complaint to the House Ethics Panel and shall request a report back from the Panel regarding the final disposition of the complaint.

(C) If the complaint is in regard to conduct committed by a judicial officer, the Executive Director shall refer the complaint to the Judicial Conduct Board and shall request a report back from the Board regarding the final disposition of the complaint.

(D) If the complaint is in regard to an attorney employed by the State, the Executive Director shall refer the complaint to the Professional Responsibility Board and shall request a report back from the Board regarding the final disposition of the complaint.

(E) If any of the complaints described in subdivisions (A)–(D) of this subdivision (4) also allege that a crime has been committed, the Executive Director shall also refer the complaint to the Attorney General and the State's Attorney of jurisdiction.

(5) Municipal Code of Ethics. If the complaint alleges a violation of the Municipal Code of Ethics, the Executive Director shall refer the complaint to the designated ethics liaison of the appropriate municipality.

* * *

(c) Consultation on unethical conduct.

(1) If the Executive Director refers a complaint under subsection (b) of this section, the Executive Director shall signify any likely unethical conduct described in the complaint. ~~Any entity receiving a referred complaint, except those in subdivision (b)(5) of this section, shall consult with the Commission regarding the application of the State Code of Ethics to facts presented in the complaint.~~

(A) For complaints referred under subdivision (b)(4) of this section, the Executive Director shall specify the application of the State Code of Ethics to facts presented in the complaint and include a recommended action.

(B) For all other complaints referred under subsection (b) of this section, except those in subdivisions (b)(4) and (5) of this section, an entity receiving a complaint shall consult with the Commission regarding the application of the State Code of Ethics to facts presented in the complaint. The consultation shall be in writing and occur within 60 days after an the entity receives a the referred complaint and prior to the entity making a determination on the complaint, meaning either closing a complaint without further investigation or issuing findings following an investigation.

(2) Any advice the Commission provides during the consultation process shall be confidential and nonbinding on the entity.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect September 1, 2025 and shall supersede those provisions of 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 171, Sec. 9 that amended 3 V.S.A. § 1223 and that conflict with the language in this act.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 206

Rep. Olson of Starksboro, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Uniform Commercial Code

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by adding a new section to be Sec. 11a to read as follows:

Sec. 11a. INCLUSION OF OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Codification of the changes set forth in this act shall include the official comments of the Uniform Commercial Code as set forth in the final official text of the American Law Institute and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, provided that the comments shall, in addition, include appropriate references to any Vermont variations to the official text.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 238

Rep. Chapin of East Montpelier, for the Committee on Environment, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the phaseout of consumer products containing added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 12A is amended to read:

Subchapter 12A. PFAS in Consumer Products

§ 2494e. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Adult mattress” means a mattress other than a crib or toddler mattress.

(2) “Aftermarket stain and water resistant treatments” means treatments for textile and leather consumer products used in residential settings that have been treated during the manufacturing process for stain, oil, and water resistance, but excludes products marketed or sold exclusively for use at industrial facilities during the manufacture of a carpet, rug, clothing, or shoe.

(3) “Apparel” means any of the following:

(A) Clothing items intended for regular wear or formal occasions, including undergarments, shirts, pants, skirts, dresses, overalls, bodysuits, costumes, vests, dancewear, suits, saris, scarves, tops, leggings, school uniforms, leisurewear, athletic wear, sports uniforms, everyday swimwear, formal wear, onesies, bibs, reusable diapers, footwear, and everyday uniforms for workwear. Clothing items intended for regular wear or formal occasions

do not include clothing items for exclusive use by the U.S. Armed Forces, outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions, and personal protective equipment.

(B) Outdoor apparel.

(4) “Artificial turf” means a surface of synthetic fibers that is used in place of natural grass in recreational, residential, or commercial applications.

(5) “Cleaning product” means a compound intended for routine cleaning, including general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, glass cleaners, carpet cleaners, floor care products, and hand soaps. “Cleaning product” does not mean an antimicrobial pesticide.

(6) “Cookware” means durable houseware items used to prepare, dispense, or store food, foodstuffs, or beverages and that are intended for direct food contact, including pots, pans, skillets, grills, baking sheets, baking molds, trays, bowls, and cooking utensils.

(7) “Dental floss” means a string-like device made of cotton or other fibers intended to remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth to reduce tooth decay. The fibers of the device may be coated with wax for easier use.

(8) “Fluorine treated container” means a fluorinated treated plastic container.

~~(6)~~(9) “Incontinency protection product” means a disposable, absorbent hygiene product designed to absorb bodily waste for use by individuals 12 years of age and older.

~~(7)~~(10) “Intentionally added” means the addition of a chemical in a product that serves an intended function in the product—component manufacturing of a product or in the final product and results in PFAS in the final product. The addition of PFAS must be known or reasonably ascertainable by the manufacturer. PFAS shall not be considered intentionally added if the chemical is present in the product due to use of water containing PFAS and the manufacturer took no action that resulted in the PFAS being present in the water.

~~(8)~~(11) “Juvenile product” means a product designed or marketed for use by infants and children under 12 years of age:

(A) including a baby or toddler foam pillow; bassinet; bedside sleeper; booster seat; changing pad; infant bouncer; infant carrier; infant seat; infant sleep positioner; infant swing; infant travel bed; infant walker; nap cot; nursing pad; nursing pillow; pacifier; play mat; playpen; play yard; polyurethane foam mat, pad, or pillow; portable foam nap mat; portable infant

sleeper; portable hook-in chair; soft-sided portable crib; stroller; toddler mattress; and disposable, single-use diaper; and

(B) excluding a children’s electronic product, such as a personal computer, audio and video equipment, calculator, wireless phone, game console, handheld device incorporating a video screen, or any associated peripheral such as a mouse, keyboard, power supply unit, or power cord; a medical device; or an adult mattress.

(12) “Known or reasonably ascertainable” means all information in a person’s possession or control, plus all information that a reasonable person similarly situated might be expected to possess, control, or know.

~~(9)~~(13) “Manufacturer” means any person engaged in the business of making or assembling a consumer product directly or indirectly available to consumers. “Manufacturer” excludes a distributor or retailer, except when a consumer product is made or assembled outside the United States, in which case a “manufacturer” includes the importer or first domestic distributor of the consumer product.

~~(10)~~(14) “Medical device” has the same meaning given to “device” in 21 U.S.C. § 321.

~~(11)~~(15) “Outdoor apparel” means clothing items intended primarily for outdoor activities, including hiking, camping, skiing, climbing, bicycling, and fishing.

~~(12)~~(16) “Outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions” means outdoor apparel that are extreme and extended use products designed for outdoor sports experts for applications that provide protection against extended exposure to extreme rain conditions or against extended immersion in water or wet conditions, such as from snow, in order to protect the health and safety of the user and that are not marketed for general consumer use. Examples of extreme and extended use products include outerwear for offshore fishing, offshore sailing, whitewater kayaking, and mountaineering.

~~(13)~~(17) “Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances” or “PFAS” means a class of fluorinated organic chemicals containing at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

~~(14)~~(18) “Personal protective equipment” has the same meaning as in section 2494p of this title.

~~(15)~~(19) “Regulated perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances” or “regulated PFAS” means:

(A) PFAS that a manufacturer has intentionally added to a product and that have a functional or technical effect in the product, including PFAS components of intentionally added chemicals and PFAS that are intentional breakdown products of an added chemical that also have a functional or technical effect in the product; or

(B) the presence of PFAS in a product or product component at or above 100 parts per million, as measured in total organic fluorine.

~~(16)~~(20) “Rug or carpet” means a fabric marketed or intended for use as a floor covering.

~~(17)~~(21) “Ski wax” means a lubricant applied to the bottom of snow runners, including skis and snowboards, to improve their grip and glide properties.

~~(18)~~(22) “Textile” means any item made in whole or part from a natural, manmade, or synthetic fiber, yarn, or fabric, and includes leather, cotton, silk, jute, hemp, wool, viscose, nylon, or polyester. “Textile” does not include single-use paper hygiene products, including toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, or single-use absorbent hygiene products.

~~(19)~~(23) “Textile articles” means textile goods of a type customarily and ordinarily used in households and businesses, and includes apparel, accessories, handbags, backpacks, draperies, shower curtains, furnishings, upholstery, bedding, towels, napkins, and table cloths. “Textile articles” does not include:

(A) a vehicle, as defined in 1 U.S.C. § 4, or its component parts;

(B) a vessel, as defined in 1 U.S.C. § 3, or its component parts;

(C) an aircraft, as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 40102(a)(6), or its component parts;

(D) filtration media and filter products used in industrial applications, including chemical or pharmaceutical manufacturing and environmental control technologies;

(E) textile articles used for laboratory analysis and testing; and

(F) rugs or carpets.

§ 2494f. ~~AFTERMARKET STAIN AND WATER-RESISTANT~~

TREATMENTS PROHIBITION ON PFAS IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

(a) ~~A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State aftermarket stain and water-resistant~~

~~treatments for rugs or carpets to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products. A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in the State the following consumer products to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount:~~

- ~~(1) aftermarket stain and water-resistant treatments;~~
- ~~(2) artificial turf;~~
- ~~(3) cleaning products;~~
- ~~(4) cookware;~~
- ~~(5) dental floss;~~
- ~~(6) incontinency protection products;~~
- ~~(7) juvenile products;~~
- ~~(8) rugs and carpets; or~~
- ~~(9) ski wax.~~

~~(b) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in the State textiles or textile articles to which regulated PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(c) The prohibitions under subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall not apply to the sale, offer for sale, distribution for sale, or distribution for use of any of the products listed under subsections (a) and (b) of this section that have been previously used by a consumer for the intended purpose of the product.~~

~~§ 2494g. ARTIFICIAL TURF~~

~~A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State artificial turf to which:~~

- ~~(1) PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount; or~~
- ~~(2) PFAS have entered the product from the manufacturing or processing of that product, the addition of which is known or reasonably ascertainable by the manufacturer.~~

~~§ 2494h. COOKWARE~~

~~(a) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State cookware to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products.~~

~~§ 2494i. INCONTINENCY PROTECTION PRODUCT~~

~~A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State an incontinency protection product to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~§ 2494j. JUVENILE PRODUCTS~~

~~(a) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State juvenile products to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products.~~

~~§ 2494k. RUGS AND CARPETS~~

~~(a) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State a residential rug or carpet to which PFAS have been added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products.~~

~~§ 2494l. SKI WAX~~

~~(a) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State ski wax or related tuning products to which PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products.~~

~~§ 2494m. TEXTILES~~

~~(a) A manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in this State a textile or textile article to which regulated PFAS have been intentionally added in any amount.~~

~~(b) This section shall not apply to the sale or resale of used products.~~

~~§ 2494g. FLUORINE TREATED CONTAINERS~~

(a) A manufacturer shall not sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in the State a product listed under subdivisions 2494f(a)(1)–(9) of this title that does not contain intentionally added PFAS but that is sold, offered for sale, distributed for sale, or distributed for use in the State in a fluorine treated container.

(b) The prohibition under subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to the sale, offer for sale, distribution for sale, or distribution for use of a product that has been previously used by a consumer for the intended purpose of the product.

(c) Beginning on January 1, 2030, a manufacturer shall not manufacture, sell, offer for sale, distribute for sale, or distribute for use in the State a fluorine treated container or any consumer product in a fluorine treated container.

(d)(1) The Attorney General may, by rule, allow the sale, offer for sale, distribution for sale, or distribution for use in the State of a consumer product prohibited under subsection (a) of this section or of a fluorine treated container or consumer product prohibited under subsection (c) of this section upon a determination that the use of PFAS in the consumer product or in the container is a currently unavoidable use.

(2) As used in this subsection, “currently unavoidable use” means that the use of PFAS is essential for health, safety, or the functioning of society and for which an alternative is not reasonably available.

§ ~~2494n~~ 2494h. CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

(a) The Attorney General may request a certificate of compliance from a manufacturer of a consumer product regulated under this subchapter. Within 60 days after receipt of the Attorney General’s request for a certificate of compliance, the manufacturer shall:

(1) provide the Attorney General with a certificate attesting that the manufacturer’s product or products comply with the requirements of this subchapter; or

(2) notify persons who are selling a product of the manufacturer’s in this State that the sale is prohibited because the product does not comply with this subchapter and submit to the Attorney General a list of the names and addresses of those persons notified.

(b) A manufacturer required to submit a certificate of compliance pursuant to this section may rely upon a certificate of compliance provided to the manufacturer by a supplier for the purpose of determining the manufacturer’s reporting obligations. A certificate of compliance provided by a supplier in accordance with this subsection shall be used solely for the purpose of determining a manufacturer’s compliance with this section.

§ ~~2494e~~ 2494i. VIOLATIONS

(a) A violation of this subchapter is deemed to be a violation of section 2453 of this title.

(b) The Attorney General has the same authority to make rules, conduct civil investigations, enter into assurances of discontinuance, and bring civil actions, and private parties have the same rights and remedies, as provided under subchapter 1 of this chapter.

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. § 2494e(19) is amended to read:

(19) “Regulated perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances” or “regulated PFAS” means:

(A) PFAS that a manufacturer has intentionally added to a product and that have a functional or technical effect in the product, including PFAS components of intentionally added chemicals and PFAS that are intentional breakdown products of an added chemical that also have a functional or technical effect in the product; or

(B) the presence of PFAS in a product or product component at or above ~~100~~ 50 parts per million, as measured in total organic fluorine.

Sec. 3. 9 V.S.A. § 2494e(3) is amended to read:

(3) “Apparel” means any of the following:

(A) Clothing items intended for regular wear or formal occasions, including undergarments, shirts, pants, skirts, dresses, overalls, bodysuits, costumes, vests, dancewear, suits, saris, scarves, tops, leggings, school uniforms, leisurewear, athletic wear, sports uniforms, everyday swimwear, formal wear, onesies, bibs, reusable diapers, footwear, and everyday uniforms for workwear. Clothing items intended for regular wear or formal occasions do not include clothing items for exclusive use by the U.S. Armed Forces, ~~outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions~~, and personal protective equipment.

(B) Outdoor apparel.

(C) Outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions.

Sec. 4. ANR REPORT ON PFAS REGULATION

(a) As used in this section, “perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances” or “PFAS” means a class of fluorinated organic chemicals containing at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

(b) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit to the House Committees on Environment and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Health and Welfare a report regarding the regulation by other states of PFAS in consumer products. The report shall include:

(1) a summary of programs in other states that regulate PFAS in consumer products, including whether other states have implemented a regulatory program based on the definition of PFAS used in this section;

(2) if other states have implemented regulatory programs for PFAS, a summary of the effectiveness of the programs, including any obstacles or difficulties these states may have faced in implementing a program, the staffing required for a program, and the time frame under which each state implemented the program;

(3) a recommendation, based on review of regulatory programs in other states, whether Vermont should establish a regulatory program for PFAS in consumer products, including the State agency in which such a program should be located, the staffing required, and a time frame for implementation; and

(4) any other information that the Secretary determines is necessary for the purpose of informing the General Assembly whether or not to enact a regulatory program for PFAS in consumer products.

Sec. 5. REPORTS

(a)(1) On or before January 15, 2033, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall provide a recommendation to the House Committees on Human Services and on Environment and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Natural Resources and Energy on how to address PFAS in complex durable goods.

(2) As used in this subsection, “complex durable goods” means a consumer product that is a manufactured good composed of 100 or more manufactured components, with an intended useful life of five or more years, where the product is typically not consumed, destroyed, or discarded after a single use. This includes replacement parts for complex durable goods not subject to a phaseout under this chapter.

(b)(1) On or before January 15, 2033, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall provide a recommendation to the House Committees on Human Services on Environment and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Natural Resources and Energy on how to address PFAS in food.

(2) As used in this subsection, “food” has the same meaning as in 18 V.S.A. § 4051.

Sec. 6. REPEALS

(a) 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 131, Sec. 4 (prospective definition for outdoor apparel for severe wet conditions) is repealed.

(b) 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 131, Sec. 5 (prospective definition of regulated PFAS) is repealed.

Sec. 7. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 131, Sec. 13 is amended to read:

Sec. 13. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024, except that:

(1) Sec. 1 (chemicals in cosmetic and menstrual products), ~~Sec. 3 (PFAS in consumer products)~~, Sec. 6 (PFAS in firefighting agents and equipment), and Sec. 7 (chemicals of concern in food packaging) shall take effect on January 1, 2026; and

(2) Sec. 2 (9 V.S.A. § 2494b) and Sec. 5 (9 V.S.A. § 2494e(15)) shall take effect on July 1, 2027; and

(3) ~~Sec. 4 (9 V.S.A. § 2494e(3))~~ shall take effect on July 1, 2028.

Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 4 and 5 (reports to the General Assembly) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(b)(1) Sec. 1 (PFAS in consumer products) shall take effect on January 1, 2026, except that:

(A) 9 V.S.A. § 2494f(a)(3) (cleaning products) and (a)(5) (dental floss) and 9 V.S.A. § 2494g (fluorine treated containers) shall take effect on July 1, 2027; and

(B) 9 V.S.A. § 2494f(a)(4) (cookware) shall take effect July 1, 2028.

(2) Sec. 1 shall supersede those provisions of 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 131, Sec. 3 that conflict with the provisions of this act.

(c) Sec. 2 (definition of regulated PFAS) shall take effect on July 1, 2027.

(d) Sec. 3 (definition of outdoor apparel) shall take effect on July 1, 2028.

(e) Secs. 6 (repeal of Act 131 provisions) and 7 (amended Act 131 effective dates) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Environment agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence

J.R.S. 16

Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of seven Superior Court Judges and one Magistrate

Was taken up and adopted in concurrence.

Adjournment

At two o'clock and twelve minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, March 14, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Bram Kleppner of Burlington.

Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following name of the member of a past session of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Kathleen "Kathy" Hoyt of Norwich

Member of the House,
Session of 2014

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased member.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 474

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 475

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing an equitable pricing system for the milk production

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 476

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a Mechanized Logging and Trucking Training Program

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 477

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to forest management harvests on State Forest lands

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 478

By Rep. O'Brien of Tunbridge,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requiring price look-up stickers on produce be compostable

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 479

By the Committee on General and Housing,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to housing

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 31**

Offered by Representatives Graning of Jericho and Squirrell of Underhill

House concurrent resolution in memory of former University of Vermont associate professor, poet, and community leader Mary Jane Dickerson

Whereas, Mary Jane Dickerson graduated from the former Woman's College at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and earned a master's degree in English from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she met her future husband, the late A. Inskip Dickerson Jr., both destined to become University of Vermont (UVM) English professors, and

Whereas, her UVM career roles were director of freshman English, associate director of writing, and ultimately associate professor of English; and she developed a course in women's autobiography and UVM's first class in African American literature, and

Whereas, Mary Jane Dickerson was the recipient of UVM's George V. Kidder Outstanding Faculty Award; in 2007, established the Mary Jane Dickerson Scholarship Fund to support English majors; was delighted to teach as a visiting scholar in Japan and South Africa; and in 2016, was honored with induction into the distinguished society of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and

Whereas, she applied her literary expertise to teaching classes in reading and writing at local libraries; serving on the faculty of the New England Young Writers' Conference at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English; and publishing two volumes of poetry, *Water Journeys in Art and Poetry* and *Tapping the Center of Things: Poems*, and her community service consisted of serving on the boards of UVM's Fleming Museum and the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library in Jericho, on the Jericho Zoning Board of Adjustment and Board of Civil Authority, and as the Jericho Center Preservation Association Treasurer; and she was active in local Democratic politics, and

Whereas, Mary Jane Dickerson, a cherished friend to many, who took great pride in cofounding Sundog Poetry, an organization that supports Vermont poets, and whose passion for North Carolina's Sandhills endured, died on October 3, 2024 at 87 years of age, and is survived by her children and grandchildren, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its sincere condolences to the family of Mary Jane Dickerson, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the family of Mary Jane Dickerson and the Jericho Town Clerk.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 14, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 1

House bill, entitled

An act relating to accepting and referring complaints by the State Ethics Commission

H. 206

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Uniform Commercial Code

H. 238

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the phaseout of consumer products containing added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances

H. 458

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Agency of Digital Services

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 463

Rep. Hooper of Burlington spoke for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 137**

Rep. White of Bethel, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 8 V.S.A. § 23 is amended to read:

§ 23. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INVESTIGATION AND EXAMINATION
REPORTS

(a) This section shall apply to all persons licensed, authorized, or registered, or required to be licensed, authorized, or registered, ~~under this title or under 9 V.S.A. chapter 150 by the Commissioner.~~

(b) Regardless of source, all records of investigations, including information pertaining to a complaint by or for a consumer, and all records and reports of examinations by the Commissioner, whether in the possession of a supervisory agency or another person, shall be confidential and privileged, shall not be made public, and shall not be subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in any private civil action. No person who participated on behalf of the Commissioner in an investigation or examination shall be permitted or required to testify in any such civil action as to any findings, recommendations, opinions, results, or other actions relating to the investigation or examination.

(c) The Commissioner may, in ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's discretion, disclose or publish or authorize the disclosure or publication of any such record or report or any part thereof in the furtherance of legal or regulatory proceedings brought as a part of the Commissioner's official duties. The Commissioner may, in ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's discretion, disclose or publish or authorize the disclosure or publication of any such record or report or any part thereof, to civil or criminal law enforcement authorities for use in the exercise of such authority's duties, in such manner as the Commissioner may deem proper.

(d) For the purposes of this section, records of investigations and records and reports of examinations shall include joint examinations by the Commissioner and any other supervisory agency. Records of investigations and reports of examinations shall also include records of examinations and investigations conducted by:

(1) any agency with supervisory jurisdiction over the person; and

(2) any agency of any foreign government with supervisory jurisdiction over any person subject to the jurisdiction of the Department, when such records are considered confidential by such agency or foreign government and the records are in the possession of the Commissioner.

Sec. 2. 8 V.S.A. § 3303 is amended to read:

§ 3303. MUTUAL COMPANIES; DIRECTORS, CHARTER PROVISIONS
AS TO

The articles of association or bylaws of a mutual insurer shall set forth the manner in which its board of directors or other governing body shall be elected, and in which meetings of policyholders shall be called, held, and conducted, subject to such procedures as may be required by the Commissioner under ~~section 75~~ subsection 15(a) of this title.

Sec. 3. 8 V.S.A. § 4688(a) is amended to read:

(a) Filings as to competitive markets. Except with respect to filings submitted pursuant to section 4687 of this title, in a competitive market, every insurer shall file with the Commissioner all rates and supplementary rate information, and supporting information that are to be used in this State, provided that such rates and information need not be filed for specifically rated inland marine risks or such other risks that are designated by regulation of the Commissioner as not requiring a filing. Such rates, supplementary rate information, and supporting information shall be provided to the Commissioner not later than ~~15 days after~~ 30 days prior to the effective date. An insurer may adopt by reference, with or without deviation or modification, provided that said deviation or modification is readily identifiable, the rates, supplementary rate information, and supporting information filed by another insurer or an advisory or service organization with which it is affiliated; provided, however, such an adoption shall not relieve an insurer from any other requirements of this chapter.

Sec. 4. 8 V.S.A. § 4724 is amended to read:

§ 4724. UNFAIR METHODS OF COMPETITION OR UNFAIR OR
DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES DEFINED

* * *

(23) Affordable housing; unfair discrimination.

(A) An insurer that issues or delivers in this State a policy of insurance covering loss of or damage to real property containing units for

residential purposes or legal liability of an owner or renter of such real property shall not cancel, refuse to issue, refuse to renew, or increase the premium of a policy, or exclude, limit, restrict, or reduce coverage under a policy, based on the following:

(i) whether the residential building contains dwelling units that are required to be affordable to residents at a specific income level pursuant to a statute, regulation, restrictive declaration, or regulatory agreement with a local, State, or federal government entity;

(ii) whether the real property owner or tenants of such residential building or the shareholders of a cooperative housing corporation receive rental assistance provided by a local, State, or federal government entity, including the receipt of federal vouchers issued under Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, 42 U.S.C. § 1437f;

(iii) the level or source of income of the tenants of the residential building or the shareholders of a cooperative housing corporation; or

(iv) whether the residential building is owned by a limited-equity cooperative, public housing agency, or cooperative housing corporation.

(B) Nothing in this section shall prohibit an insurer from cancelling, refusing to issue, refusing to renew, or increasing the premium of an insurance policy, or excluding, limiting, restricting, or reducing coverage under a policy, due to other factors that are permitted or not prohibited by any other section of this chapter.

Sec. 5. 8 V.S.A. § 6002(a) is amended to read:

(a) Any captive insurance company, when permitted by its articles of association, charter, or other organizational document, may apply to the Commissioner for a license to ~~do any and all~~ conduct insurance business comprised in ~~subdivisions 3301(a)(1), (2), (3)(A)-(C), (E)-(Q), and (4)-(9)~~ section 3301 of this title and may grant annuity contracts as defined in section 3717 of this title and may accept or transfer risk by means of a parametric contract; provided, however, that:

(1) No pure captive insurance company may insure any risks other than those of its parent and affiliated companies or controlled unaffiliated business.

(2) No agency captive insurance company may do any insurance business in this State unless:

(A) an insurance agency or brokerage that owns or controls the agency captive insurance company remains in regulatory good standing in all states in which it is licensed;

(B) it insures only the risks of the commercial policies that are placed by or through an insurance agency or brokerage that owns or directly or indirectly controls the agency captive insurance company and, if required by the Commissioner in ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's discretion, it provides the Commissioner the form of such commercial policies;

(C) it discloses to the original policyholder or policyholders, in a form or manner approved by the Commissioner, that the agency captive insurance company as a result of its affiliation with an insurance agency or brokerage may enter into a reinsurance or other risk-sharing agreement with the agency or brokerage; and

(D) if required by the Commissioner in ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's discretion, the business written by an agency captive insurance company is:

(i) Fronted by an insurance company licensed under the laws of any state.

(ii) Reinsured by a reinsurer authorized or approved by the State of Vermont.

(iii) Secured by a trust fund in the United States for the benefit of policyholders and claimants or funded by an irrevocable letter of credit or other arrangement that is acceptable to the Commissioner. The Commissioner may require the agency captive insurance company to increase the funding of any security arrangement established under this subdivision. If the form of security is a letter of credit, the letter of credit shall be issued or confirmed by a bank approved by the Commissioner. A trust maintained pursuant to this subdivision shall be established in a form and upon terms approved by the Commissioner.

(3) No association captive insurance company may insure any risks other than those of its association, those of the member organizations of its association, and those of a member organization's affiliated companies.

(4) No industrial insured captive insurance company may insure any risks other than those of the industrial insureds that comprise the industrial insured group, those of their affiliated companies, and those of the controlled unaffiliated business of an industrial insured or its affiliated companies.

(5) No risk retention group may insure any risks other than those of its members and owners.

(6) No captive insurance company may provide personal motor vehicle or homeowner's insurance coverage or any component thereof.

(7) No captive insurance company may accept or cede reinsurance except as provided in section 6011 of this title.

(8) Any captive insurance company may provide excess workers' compensation insurance to its parent and affiliated companies, unless prohibited by the federal law or laws of the state having jurisdiction over the transaction. Any captive insurance company, unless prohibited by federal law, may reinsure workers' compensation of a qualified self-insured plan of its parent and affiliated companies.

(9) Any captive insurance company that insures risks described in subdivisions 3301(a)(1) and (2) of this title shall comply with all applicable State and federal laws.

(10) Any captive insurance company that transfers risk by means of a parametric contract shall comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations.

Sec. 6. 8 V.S.A. § 6004(d) is amended to read:

(d) Within 30 days after commencing business, each captive insurance company shall file with the Commissioner a statement under oath of its president and secretary or, in the case of a captive insurance company formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, of two individuals authorized by the governing board certifying that the captive insurance company possessed the requisite unimpaired, paid-in capital and surplus prior to commencing business.

Sec. 7. 8 V.S.A. § 6006 is amended to read:

§ 6006. FORMATION OF CAPTIVE INSURANCE COMPANIES IN THIS
STATE

* * *

(h) Other than captive insurance companies formed as limited liability companies under 11 V.S.A. ~~chapter 21~~ chapter 25 or as nonprofit corporations under Title 11B, captive insurance companies formed as corporations under the provisions of this chapter shall have the privileges and be subject to the provisions of Title 11A as well as the applicable provisions contained in this chapter. In the event of conflict between the provisions of said general corporation law and the provisions of this chapter, the latter shall control.

(i) Captive insurance companies formed under the provisions of this chapter:

(1) As limited liability companies shall have the privileges and be subject to the provisions of 11 V.S.A. ~~chapter 24~~ chapter 25 as well as the applicable provisions contained in this chapter. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of 11 V.S.A. ~~chapter 24~~ chapter 25 and the provisions of this chapter, the latter shall control.

(2) As nonprofit corporations shall have the privileges and be subject to the provisions of Title 11B as well as the applicable provisions contained in this chapter. In the event of conflict between the provisions of Title 11B and the provisions of this chapter, the latter shall control.

(3) As mutual insurers shall have the privileges and be subject to the provisions of sections 3303 and 3311 of this title as well as the applicable provisions contained in this chapter. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of sections 3303 and 3311 of this title and the provisions of this chapter, the latter shall control.

* * *

Sec. 8. 8 V.S.A. § 6006a(a) is amended to read:

(a) Any captive insurance company meeting the qualifications set forth in subdivision 6006(j)(1) of this title may merge with any other insurer, whether licensed in this State or elsewhere, in the following manner:

(1) The board of directors of each insurer shall, by a resolution adopted by a majority vote of the members of such board, approve a joint agreement of merger setting forth:

(A) the names of the insurers proposed to merge, and the name of the insurer into which they propose to merge, which is hereafter designated as the surviving company;

(B) the terms and conditions of the proposed merger and the mode of carrying the same into effect;

(C) the manner and basis of converting the ownership interests, if applicable, in other than the surviving insurer into ownership interests or other consideration, securities, or obligations of the surviving insurer;

(D) a restatement of such provisions of the articles of incorporation of the surviving insurer as may be deemed necessary or advisable to give effect to the proposed merger; and

(E) any other provisions with respect to the proposed merger as are deemed necessary or desirable.

(2) The resolution of the board of directors of each insurer approving the agreement shall direct that the agreement be submitted to a vote of the shareholders, members, or policyholders, as the case may be, of each insurer entitled to vote in respect thereof at a designated meeting thereof, or via unanimous written consent of such shareholders, members, or policyholders in lieu of a meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given as provided in the bylaws, charter, or articles of association, or other governance document, as the case may be, of each insurer and shall specifically reflect the agreement as a matter to be considered at the meeting.

(3) The agreement of merger so approved shall be submitted to a vote of the shareholders, members, or policyholders, as the case may be, of each insurer entitled to vote in respect thereof at the meeting directed by the resolution of the board of directors of such company approving the agreement, and the agreement shall be unanimously adopted by the shareholders, members, or policyholders, as the case may be.

(4) Following the adoption of the agreement by any insurer, articles of merger shall be adopted in the following manner:

(A) Upon the execution of the agreement of merger by all of the insurers parties thereto, there shall be executed and filed, in the manner hereafter provided, articles of merger setting forth the agreement of merger, the signatures of the several insurers parties thereto, the manner of its adoption, and the vote by which adopted by each insurer.

(B) The articles of merger shall be signed on behalf of each insurer by a duly authorized officer or, in the case of an insurer formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, by an individual authorized by the governing board, in such multiple copies as shall be required to enable the insurers to comply with the provisions of this subchapter with respect to filing and recording the articles of merger, and shall then be presented to the Commissioner.

(C) The Commissioner shall approve the articles of merger if ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner finds that the merger will promote the general good of the State in conformity with those standards set forth in section 3305 of this title. If ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner approves the articles of merger, ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner shall issue a certificate of approval of merger.

(5) The insurer shall file the articles of merger, accompanied by the agreement of merger and the certificate of approval of merger, with the Secretary of State and pay all fees as required by law. If the Secretary of State finds that they conform to law, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall issue a certificate of merger and return it to the surviving insurer or its representatives. The

merger shall take effect upon the filing of articles of merger with the Secretary of State, unless a later effective date is specified therein.

(6) The surviving insurer shall file a copy of the certificate of merger from the Secretary of State with the Commissioner.

Sec. 9. 8 V.S.A. § 6007(b) is amended to read:

(b) Prior to March 1 of each year, and prior to March 15 of each year in the case of pure captive insurance companies, association captive insurance companies, sponsored captive insurance companies, industrial insured captive insurance companies, or agency captive insurance companies, each captive insurance company shall submit to the Commissioner a report of its financial condition, verified by oath of two of its executive officers or, in the case of a captive insurance company formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, of two individuals authorized by the governing board. Each captive insurance company shall report using generally accepted accounting principles, statutory accounting principles, or international financial reporting standards unless the Commissioner requires, approves, or accepts the use of any other comprehensive basis of accounting, in each case with any appropriate or necessary modifications or adaptations thereof required or approved or accepted by the Commissioner for the type of insurance and kinds of insurers to be reported upon, and as supplemented by additional information required by the Commissioner. As used in this section, statutory accounting principles shall mean the accounting principles codified in the NAIC Accounting Practices and Procedures Manual. Upon application for admission, a captive insurance company shall select, with explanation, an accounting method for reporting. Any change in a captive insurance company's accounting method shall require prior approval. Except as otherwise provided, each risk retention group shall file its report in the form required by subsection 3561(a) of this title, and each risk retention group shall comply with the requirements set forth in section 3569 of this title. The Commissioner shall by rule propose the forms in which pure captive insurance companies, association captive insurance companies, sponsored captive insurance companies, and industrial insured captive insurance companies shall report. Subdivision 6002(c)(3) of this title shall apply to each report filed pursuant to this section, except that such subdivision shall not apply to reports filed by risk retention groups.

Sec. 10. 8 V.S.A. § 6011(a) is amended to read:

(a) Any captive insurance company may provide reinsurance; of policies approved by the Commissioner comprised in subsection 3301(a) section 3301 of this title, on risks of its parent, affiliated companies, and controlled unaffiliated business ceded by any other insurer, and may provide reinsurance

of annuity contracts as defined in section 3717 of this title that are granted by any other insurer.

Sec. 11. 8 V.S.A. § 6024(c) is amended to read:

(c) A dormant captive insurance company that has been issued a certificate of dormancy shall:

(1) possess and thereafter maintain unimpaired, paid-in capital and surplus of not less than \$25,000.00; provided, however, that if the dormant captive insurance company had never capitalized, it shall not be required to add capital upon entering dormancy;

(2) prior to March 15 of each year, submit to the Commissioner a report of its financial condition, verified by oath of two of its executive officers or, in the case of a captive insurance company formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, of two individuals authorized by its governing board, in a form as may be prescribed by the Commissioner; and

(3) pay a license renewal fee of \$500.00.

Sec. 12. 8 V.S.A. § 6045 is amended to read:

§ 6045. BRANCH CAPTIVE REPORTS

Prior to March 15 of each year, or with the approval of the Commissioner within 75 days after its fiscal year-end, a branch captive insurance company shall file with the Commissioner a copy of all reports and statements required to be filed under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the alien captive insurance company is formed, verified by oath of two of its executive officers or, in the case of a branch captive insurance company formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, of two individuals authorized by the governing board. If the Commissioner is satisfied that the annual report filed by the alien captive insurance company in its domiciliary jurisdiction provides adequate information concerning the financial condition of the alien captive insurance company, the Commissioner may waive the requirement for completion of the captive annual statement for business written in the alien jurisdiction.

Sec. 13. 8 V.S.A. § 6048d(c)(2) is amended to read:

(2) The special purpose financial insurance company shall submit an affidavit of its president, a vice president, the treasurer, or the chief financial officer or, in the case of a special purpose financial insurance company formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, of an individual authorized by the governing board that includes the following statements, to the best of such person's knowledge and belief after reasonable inquiry:

(A) the proposed organization and operation of the special purpose financial insurance company comply with all applicable provisions of this chapter;

(B) the special purpose financial insurance company's investment policy reflects and takes into account the liquidity of assets and the reasonable preservation, administration, and management of such assets with respect to the risks associated with the reinsurance contract and the insurance securitization transaction; and

(C) the reinsurance contract and any arrangement for securing the special purpose financial insurance company's obligations under such reinsurance contract, including any agreements or other documentation to implement such arrangement, comply with the provisions of this subchapter.

Sec. 14. 8 V.S.A. § 6052(g) is amended to read:

(g) This subsection establishes governance standards for a risk retention group.

(1) As used in this subsection:

(A) "Board of directors" or "board" means the governing body of a risk retention group elected by risk retention group members to establish policy, elect or appoint officers and committees, and make other governing decisions.

(B) "Director" means a natural person designated in the articles of the risk retention group or designated, elected, or appointed by any other manner, name, or title to act as a member of the governing body of the risk retention group.

(C)(i) "Independent director" means a director who does not have a material relationship with the risk retention group. A director has a material relationship with a risk retention group if ~~he or she~~ the director, or a member of ~~his or her~~ the director's immediate family:

(i) In any 12-month period, receives from the risk retention group, or from a consultant or service provider to the risk retention group, compensation or other item or items of value in an amount equal to or greater than five percent of the risk retention group's gross written premium or two percent of the risk retention group's surplus, as measured at the end of any fiscal quarter falling in such 12-month period, whichever is greater. This provision also applies to compensation or items of value received by any business with which the director is affiliated. Such material relationship shall continue for one year after receipt of the item or items of value or the compensation falls below the threshold established in this subdivision.

~~(H)~~(ii) Has a relationship with an auditor as follows: Is affiliated with or employed in a professional capacity by a current or former internal or external auditor of the risk retention group. Such material relationship shall continue for one year after the affiliation or employment ends.

~~(aa)~~(iii) Is employed as an executive officer of another business entity that is affiliated with the risk retention group by virtue of common ownership and control, if such entity meets all of the following criteria:

~~(AA)~~(I) the entity is not an insured of the risk retention group;

~~(BB)~~(II) the entity has a contractual relationship with the risk retention group; and

~~(CC)~~(III) the governing board of the entity includes executive officers of the risk retention group, unless a majority of the membership of such entity's governing board is composed of individuals who are members of the governing board of the risk retention group.

~~(bb)~~(IV) Such material relationship shall continue until the employment or service ends.

~~(ii)~~(iv) Notwithstanding ~~subdivision (i)~~ subdivisions (i)–(iii) of this subdivision (g)(1)(C), a director who is a direct or indirect owner of the risk retention group is deemed to be independent; and an officer, director, or employee of an insured of the risk retention group is deemed to be independent, unless some other relationship of such officer, director, or employee qualifies as a material relationship.

(D) “Material service provider” includes a captive manager, auditor, accountant, actuary, investment advisor, attorney, managing general underwriter, or other person responsible for underwriting, determination of rates, premium collection, claims adjustment or settlement, or preparation of financial statements, whose aggregate annual contract fees are equal to or greater than five percent of the risk retention group's annual gross written premium or two percent of its surplus, whichever is greater. It does not mean defense counsel retained by a risk retention group, unless ~~his or her~~ the defense counsel's annual fees have been equal to or greater than five percent of a risk retention group's annual gross premium or two percent of its surplus, whichever is greater, during three or more of the previous five years.

* * *

(9) The president or chief executive officer or, in the case of a risk retention group formed as a limited liability company or as a reciprocal insurer, an individual authorized by the board of directors of a risk retention group shall promptly notify the Commissioner in writing of any known

material noncompliance with the governance standards established in this subsection.

Sec. 15. 8 V.S.A. § 2504 is amended to read:

§ 2504. EXEMPTIONS

This chapter does not apply to:

* * *

(18) A person that performs payroll calculations, prepares payroll instructions, prepares and files State or federal income withholding tax reports and unemployment insurance compensation reports, or provides other payroll-related services, but that does not engage in the business of payroll processing services or otherwise engage in the business of money transmission in this State or other acts requiring a license under this chapter.

(19) A person that does not provide payroll processing services to any employer that has its principal place of business in this State and that does not otherwise engage in the business of money transmission in this State or other acts requiring a license under this chapter.

(20) A person that:

(A) provides payroll processing services to 25 or fewer employers that have their principal place of business in this State;

(B) provides payroll processing services to 500 or fewer employers, regardless of where the principal place of business of each employer is located;

(C) provides payroll processing services involving transmission to less than 300 Vermont resident employees, regardless of where the principal place of business of their employer is located;

(D) has not been convicted of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to, a felony in a domestic, foreign, or military court, and no key individual or person in control of such person has been convicted of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to, a felony in a domestic, foreign, or military court;

(E) has never had a financial services license or professional license revoked in any jurisdiction and no key individual or person in control of such person has ever had a financial services license or professional license revoked in any jurisdiction, except that a subsequent formal vacation of such revocation shall not be deemed a revocation;

(F) does not otherwise engage in the business of money transmission in this State or other acts requiring a license under this chapter; and

(G) receives and holds all money or monetary value received for transmission exclusively in:

(i) segregated trust accounts with federally insured financial institutions or credit unions for the benefit of its employer customers or applicable governmental authorities, such that the funds in such accounts are not subject to claims or liens of its creditors; or

(ii) deposit accounts at federally insured financial institutions or credit unions that are both titled in the name and tax identification number of the financial institution or credit union and for the benefit of the person's customers.

Sec. 16. 9 V.S.A. § 42 is amended to read:

§ 42. PERMITTED CHARGES

(a) Except for interest as provided in this chapter, a lender shall make no charges against a borrower for the use or forbearance of money other than:

* * *

(7) the reasonable cost of private mortgage guaranty insurance subject to such limitation as the Commissioner of Financial Regulation has approved; and

(8) the reasonable fees associated with a credit card, agreed upon by the lender and borrower, including late charges and over-limit charges; and

(9) discount points, at the request of the borrower for the purpose of reducing, and which in fact result in a bona fide reduction of, the interest rate or time-price differential applicable to the loan.

(b) A borrower may procure an opinion and abstract of title from an attorney of ~~his or her~~ the borrower's choice acceptable to the lender, or hazard insurance in a company or in companies of ~~his or her~~ the borrower's choice acceptable to the lender, and in such cases the lender's acceptance shall not be unreasonably withheld.

Sec. 17. STUDY; BANKS; SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY; TRANSACTION

HOLD

(a) The Commissioner of Financial Regulation or designee shall study regulatory models that would allow a financial institution to take measures to protect account holders from fraudulent transactions and shall recommend a model for legislative consideration. The study shall include a review of regulatory models enacted or proposed in other jurisdictions.

(b) In conducting the study required by this section, the Commissioner shall consult with a representative from the Vermont Bankers Association, the Association of Vermont Credit Unions, AARP Vermont, the Office of the

Attorney General, Vermont Legal Aid, and any other person deemed appropriate by the Commissioner.

(c) Among other things, the study shall include recommendations regarding the following:

(1) the financial institutions subject to the proposed model;

(2) whether specific account holders, such as seniors or vulnerable populations, should receive heightened protection;

(3) notification and consultation requirements available to an account holder suspected to be the victim of fraudulent activity;

(4) a reasonable time period for imposing a transaction hold pending the outcome of an internal investigation;

(5) notification to the Department of Financial Regulation and, if appropriate, law enforcement or other third parties if fraudulent activity is suspected;

(6) continued account holder access to funds for transactions not suspected of being associated with fraudulent activity;

(7) immunity from civil liability for any financial institution that acts in good faith for the purpose of protecting account holders from fraudulent activity and that otherwise complies with applicable legal requirements; and

(8) any other provision deemed appropriate by the Commissioner.

(d) On or before November 15, 2025, the Commissioner shall provide a status report on the Commissioner's preliminary findings and recommendations to the Chair of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance and, on or before January 15, 2026, shall submit a final report in draft form to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance.

Sec. 18. STUDY; PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF COERCED DEBT

(a) The Commissioner of Financial Regulation or designee shall study regulatory models for providing protections and remedies for victims of coerced debt and shall recommend a model appropriate for Vermont. In particular, the Commissioner shall review the Model State Coerced Debt Law prepared by the National Consumer Law Center in May of 2024, as well as laws enacted or proposed in other jurisdictions.

(b) In conducting the study required by this section, the Commissioner shall consult with a representative from the Vermont Network, the Vermont Bankers Association, the Association of Vermont Credit Unions, the Office of the Attorney General, Vermont Legal Aid, and any other person deemed appropriate by the Commissioner.

(c) Among other things, the study shall include recommendations regarding the following:

(1) a definition of coerced debt;

(2) whether coerced debt should include both secured and unsecured debt;

(3) the requisite information a debtor must provide a creditor when alleging coerced debt;

(4) procedures a creditor must follow regarding the investigation of an allegation of coerced debt, including ceasing collection efforts and notifying the Department of Financial Regulation, the Office of the Attorney General, and other law enforcement personnel, if appropriate;

(5) whether a credit reporting agency should remove coerced debt from a credit report and, if so, the process for doing so;

(6) whether Vermont's identity theft law, 13 V.S.A. § 2030, should be expanded to more specifically reference instances of coerced debt; and

(7) any other provision deemed appropriate by the Commissioner.

(d) On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall report the Commissioner's findings and recommendations in draft form to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance.

Sec. 19. RECOMMENDATION REGARDING INSURANCE AND

GENETIC PRIVACY

On or before November 15, 2025, and for the purpose of preventing unfair genetic discrimination and safeguarding an individual's genetic privacy, the Commissioner of Financial Regulation shall provide a recommendation to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance on whether Vermont should enact a law prohibiting or limiting an insurance company's access to a consumer's personalized genetic report that is not part of the consumer's medical record. Among other things, the Commissioner shall consider whether to require that an insurance company obtain consumer consent prior to the disclosure of genetic information

obtained from a direct-to-consumer entity to an insurance company, including any company that offers health, long-term care, life, or disability insurance.

Sec. 20. 8 V.S.A. § 4062b is amended to read:

§ 4062b. MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH SUPPLEMENT
INSURANCE RATE REVIEW

(a) Within five business days after receiving any request to increase the premium rate for a Medicare supplement insurance policy from the health insurance company, hospital or medical service organization, or health maintenance organization issuing the policy, the Department shall post information about the rate filing on the Department's website, including:

(1) the name of the health insurance company, hospital or medical service organization, or health maintenance organization requesting the rate increase;

(2) the overall composite average rate increase requested;

(3) the increase requested by plan type;

(4) the date on which the proposed increase would take effect;

(5) the System for Electronic Rate and Form Filing (SERFF) tracking number associated with the filing and a web address for accessing the filing electronically; and

(6) instructions for submitting public comments and the deadline for doing so.

(b) Within five business days ~~of~~ after receiving a request for approval of any composite average rate increase in excess of ~~three~~ 10 percent, or any other coverage changes ~~which~~ that the Commissioner determines will have a comparable impact on cost or availability of coverage for a Medicare ~~supplemental supplement~~ insurance policy issued by any ~~group or nongroup~~ health insurance company, hospital or medical service organization, or health maintenance organization, with 5,000 or more total lives in the Vermont Medicare supplement insurance market, the Commissioner shall notify the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living and the Office of the Health Care Advocate of the proposed premium increase. A composite average rate is the enrollment-weighted average rate increase of all plans offered by a carrier.

~~(b)~~(c) Within five business days after receiving notification pursuant to subsection ~~(a)~~(b) of this section, the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living shall inform the members of the Advisory Board established pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 505 of the proposed premium increase.

(e)(d)(1) The Commissioner shall not approve any request to increase Medicare ~~supplemental~~ supplement insurance premium rates unless the amount of the rate increase complies with the statutory standards for approval under sections 4062, 4513, 4584, and 5104 of this title. Any approved rate increase shall not be based on an unreasonable change in loss ratio from the previous year, unless the Commissioner makes written findings that such change is necessary to prevent a substantial adverse impact on the financial condition of the insurer. In acting on such rate increase requests, the Commissioner may deny the request, approve the rate increase as requested, or approve a rate increase in an amount different from the increase requested. A decision by the Commissioner other than an approval of the rate requested may be appealed by the insurer, provided that the burden of proof shall be on the insurer to show that the approved rate does not meet the statutory standards established under this subsection.

(2) Before acting on the rate increase requested, the Commissioner may make such examination or investigation as ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner deems necessary, ~~including where applicable the review process set forth in subdivision (3) of this subsection.~~

(3) ~~In reviewing any Medicare supplement rate increase for which an independent analysis has been performed pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 6706 and wherein the carrier's requested composite average increase, the independent expert's recommended composite average rate increase, or the Department actuary's recommended composite average rate increase differ by two percentage points or more, the Commissioner shall hold a public hearing where the insurer, the Department's actuary, the independent expert, any intervenor, and the public will have the opportunity to present written and oral testimony and will be available to answer questions of the Commissioner and those present. The hearing shall be noticed and held at a time and place so as to facilitate public participation, and shall be recorded and become part of the record before the Commissioner. In the Commissioner's discretion, the hearing may be conducted through interactive. If the carrier's requested composite average increase, the independent expert's recommended composite average increase, or the Department actuary's recommended composite average increase differs by less than two percentage points, the Department and the parties shall confer by conference call, or by any other available media, to review the rate requests and recommendations. However, a public hearing may be held at the Commissioner's discretion for good cause shown.~~

(A) For any filing by a health insurance company, hospital or medical service organization, or health maintenance organization with 5,000 or more total lives in the Vermont Medicare supplement insurance market in

which the requested composite average rate increase exceeds 10 percent, the Commissioner shall:

(i) solicit public comment; and

(ii) hold a public hearing in accordance with the Department of Financial Regulation's applicable rules regarding administrative procedures if, not later than 30 days after the rate filing information is posted on the Department's website pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, a hearing is requested by the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living; by the Office of the Health Care Advocate; or by not fewer than 25 policyholders whose premium rates would be affected by the requested rate increase.

(B) For any filing that does not meet the criteria specified in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), a public hearing may be held in the Commissioner's discretion.

(C) In the Commissioner's discretion, a hearing held pursuant to this subdivision (3) may be conducted through a designated electronic meeting platform.

(4) In any review held in accordance with this subsection, the Commissioner shall permit intervention by any person that the Commissioner determines will materially advance the interests of the insured individuals. The intervenor shall have access to, and may use the information of the independent expert appointed under 33 V.S.A. § 6706. The reasonable and necessary cost of intervention as determined by the Commissioner shall be paid by the affected policyholders or certificate holders. The maximum payment shall be \$2,500.00 except when waived by the Commissioner for good cause shown. The \$2,500.00 maximum amount may be adjusted to reflect, at the Commissioner's discretion, appropriate inflation factors. In any review held in accordance with this section, the Commissioner shall permit intervention by any person whom the Commissioner determines will materially advance the interests of the individuals insured under the policy.

(5) Nonproprietary, relevant information in any Medicare supplement rate filing, including any analysis by the Department's actuary and the independent expert, shall be made available to the public upon request.

(d) For a Medicare supplement insurance policy with an effective date of January 1, the insurer shall file its premium rate request pursuant to this section not later than July 1 of the preceding year. For a Medicare supplement insurance policy with an effective date other than January 1, the insurer shall file its rate request pursuant to this section not later than six months prior to the effective date of the policy.

Sec. 21. REPEAL

33 V.S.A. § 6706 (Medicare supplement insurance; independent analysis) is repealed.

Sec. 22. 8 V.S.A. § 2577(f) is amended to read:

(f) Moratorium. To protect the public safety and welfare and safeguard the rights of consumers, virtual-currency kiosks shall not be permitted to operate in Vermont prior to July 1, 2025 2026. This moratorium shall not apply to a virtual-currency kiosk that was operational in Vermont on or before June 30, 2024.

Sec. 23. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that Secs. 20 and 21 (Medicare supplement insurance) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Rep. Burkhardt of South Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 266**

Rep. Berbeco of Winooski, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to protections for 340B covered entities and 340B contract pharmacies

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. chapter 91, subchapter 6 is added to read:

Subchapter 6. 340B Drug Pricing Program

§ 4681. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “340B contract pharmacy” means a pharmacy that has a contract with a 340B covered entity to receive and dispense 340B drugs to the 340B covered entity’s patients on the covered entity’s behalf.

(2) “340B covered entity” means an entity participating or authorized to participate in the federal 340B drug pricing program, as described in 42 U.S.C. § 256b. The term includes a 340B covered entity’s pharmacy.

(3) “340B drug” means a drug that has been subject to any offer for reduced prices by a manufacturer pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 256b and is purchased by a 340B covered entity.

(4) “Discount” means a reduction in the amount a 340B covered entity is charged for a 340B drug at the time of purchase.

(5) “Manufacturer” has the same meaning as in 26 V.S.A. § 2022.

(6) “Pharmacy” means a place licensed by the Vermont Board of Pharmacy at which drugs, chemicals, medicines, prescriptions, and poisons are compounded, dispensed, or sold at retail.

(7) “Pharmacy benefit manager” has the same meaning as in section 3602 of this title.

(8) “Rebate” means a discount in which the terms are fixed and are disclosed in writing to a 340B covered entity at the time of the initial purchase of the 340B drug to which the discount applies, but which discount is not applied at the time of purchase.

§ 4682. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST 340B ENTITIES PROHIBITED

(a) A manufacturer or its agent shall not deny, restrict, prohibit, or otherwise interfere with, directly or indirectly, the acquisition of a 340B drug by or delivery of a 340B drug to a 340B contract pharmacy on behalf of a 340B covered entity unless receipt by the 340B contract pharmacy is prohibited by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

(b) A manufacturer or its agent shall not directly or indirectly require a 340B covered entity to submit any claims, utilization, encounter, purchase, or other data as a condition for allowing the acquisition of a 340B drug by or delivery of a 340B drug to a 340B contract pharmacy unless the claims or utilization data-sharing is required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

(c) A manufacturer or its agent shall not interfere with the ability of a pharmacy contracted with a 340B covered entity to dispense 340B drugs to eligible patients of the 340B covered entity.

(d) A manufacturer or its agent shall offer or otherwise make available 340B drug pricing to a 340B covered entity or 340B contract pharmacy in the form of a discount at the time of purchase and shall not offer or otherwise make available 340B drug pricing in the form of a rebate.

§ 4683. MEDICAID UNAFFECTED

Nothing in this subchapter shall be deemed to apply to the Vermont Medicaid program as payor.

§ 4684. VIOLATIONS

(a) A 340B covered entity, 340B contract pharmacy, or other person injured by a manufacturer's or its agent's violation of this subchapter may bring an action in Superior Court for injunctive relief, compensatory and punitive damages, costs and reasonable attorney's fees, and other appropriate relief.

(b) A violation occurs each time a prohibited act is committed. For purposes of section 4682 of this subchapter, a prohibited act is defined as each package of 340B drugs that is subject to a discriminatory action by a manufacturer or its agent.

§ 4685. NO CONFLICT WITH FEDERAL LAW

Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed or applied to conflict with or to be less restrictive than federal law for a person regulated by this subchapter.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9406 is added to read:

§ 9406. REPORTING ON PARTICIPATION IN 340B DRUG PRICING PROGRAM

Annually on or before January 31, each hospital participating in the federal 340B drug pricing program established by 42 U.S.C. § 256b shall submit to the Green Mountain Care Board a report detailing the hospital's participation in the program during the previous hospital fiscal year, which report shall be posted on the Green Mountain Care Board's website and which shall contain at least the following information:

(1) The annual estimated savings to the hospital from participating in the 340B program, comparing the acquisition price of drugs under the 340B program to group purchasing organization pricing. If group purchasing organization pricing is not available for a specific drug, the hospital shall compare the acquisition price under the 340B program to the price from another generally accepted pricing source.

(2) The aggregated payment amount that the hospital made to pharmacies with which the hospital contracted to dispense drugs to its patients under the 340B program during the previous hospital fiscal year.

(3) The aggregated payment amount that the hospital made to any other outside vendor for managing, administering, or facilitating any aspect of the hospital's 340B drug program during the previous hospital fiscal year.

(4) The number of claims for all prescription drugs the hospital obtained through the 340B program during the previous hospital fiscal year.

(5) A description of the ways in which the hospital uses savings from its participation in the 340B program to benefit its community through programs and services funded in whole or in part by savings from the 340B program, including services that support community access to care that the hospital could not continue without these savings.

(6) A description of the hospital's internal review and oversight of its participation in the 340B program in compliance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration's 340B program rules and guidance.

Sec. 3. REPEAL

Sec. 2 (18 V.S.A. § 9406; reporting on participation in 340B drug pricing program) is repealed on January 1, 2031.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage, with the first report under Sec. 2 (18 V.S.A. § 9406) due on or before January 31, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to the 340B prescription drug pricing program"

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 25

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 28. An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services.

S. 50. An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration.

S. 69. An act relating to an age-appropriate design code.

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

The Senate has on its part adopted Senate concurrent resolution of the following title:

S.C.R. 3. Senate concurrent resolution congratulating Liliane Gordon of Hinesburg on her receipt of the Girl Scout Gold Award.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 49. House concurrent resolution recognizing March 21, 2025 as World Day for Glaciers in Vermont.

H.C.R. 50. House concurrent resolution recognizing the unique role of certified registered nurse anesthetists in the Vermont health care system.

H.C.R. 51. House concurrent resolution honoring Louis Lamphere on his receipt of the gubernatorial Rays of Kindness recognition.

H.C.R. 52. House concurrent resolution honoring Anthony P. Romeo on his 70th birthday.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 14th day of March 2025, he returned without signature and *vetoed* a bill originating in the House of Representatives of the following title:

H. 141 An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Governor's Veto Letter

“March 14, 2025

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
State House
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I'm returning H.141, *An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments*, without my signature.

For weeks, I have been clear that I do not support H.141 as passed by the House or the Senate for many reasons including:

1. Given growing uncertainty around federal funding and the potential for significant funding cuts to critical programs, spending additional general funds in the budget adjustment for expenses that are not time sensitive is irresponsible. These new spending proposals should be considered as part of the FY26 budget to be weighed against other initiatives that may have been reduced due to federal budget cuts.
2. Expanding the free “hotel/motel program,” moves us backwards, reversing important progress made towards reforming this failed program, agreed upon by the Administration and Legislature just last year. After nearly five years of experience, we know this approach is far too expensive and fails our constituents, communities and taxpayers.

I proposed a compromise path to the Committee of Conference which would have moved these spending and policy decisions to the FY26 budget while providing \$2.1 million in flexible grants to municipalities to address needs in their communities during April, May and June. My compromise proposal protects the most vulnerable, develops emergency shelter capacity, adheres to the agreement from the last session, and limits unnecessary appropriations while we monitor federal action.

This compromise proposal, or something similar, remains on the table.

For these reasons, I’m vetoing H.141 pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.

It’s my hope the Legislature will reconsider and send me a budget adjustment I can agree to.

Sincerely,

Philip B. Scott
Governor”

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and fifty minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 17.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 49

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 21, 2025 as World Day for Glaciers in Vermont

H.C.R. 50

House concurrent resolution recognizing the unique role of certified registered nurse anesthetists in the Vermont health care system

H.C.R. 51

House concurrent resolution honoring Louis Lamphere on his receipt of the gubernatorial Rays of Kindness recognition

H.C.R. 52

House concurrent resolution honoring Anthony P. Romeo on his 70th birthday

S.C.R. 3

Senate concurrent resolution congratulating Liliane Gordon of Hinesburg on her receipt of the Girl Scout Gold Award

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Cameron Ainsworth, Pastor, Rock of Greater Burlington Church.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Skyler Barnard of Montpelier led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 480

By the Committee on Education,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to education law

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 481

By the Committee on Environment,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stormwater management

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 482

By the Committee on Health Care,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Green Mountain Care Board authority to adjust a hospital's reimbursement rates and to appoint a hospital observer

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 483

By the Committee on Ways and Means,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the expansion of existing income tax credits

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 484

By the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 485

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to granting State employees in the Executive Branch and Judiciary the right to strike

To the Committee on General and Housing.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 28

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 50

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

S. 69

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to an age-appropriate design code

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

Bills Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, affecting the revenue of the State, pursuant to House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Ways and Means:

H. 237

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

H. 319

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous environmental subjects

H. 397

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

H. 401

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

Bills Referred to Committee on Appropriations

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, carrying appropriations, under House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 167

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

H. 321

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

Joint Resolution Placed on Calendar**J.R.H. 3**

Offered by Representatives Marcotte of Coventry and Bos-Lun of Westminster

Joint resolution authorizing the Green Mountain Boys State and Green Mountain Girls State educational programs to use the State House facilities on June 26, 2025

Whereas, the American Legion Department of Vermont and the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Vermont respectively sponsor the Green Mountain Boys State and Green Mountain Girls State educational programs, providing groups of boys and girls entering the 12th grade a special opportunity to study the workings of State government, including conducting a mock legislative session at the State House, and

Whereas, this special experience is a unique civic lesson of lasting value for the participants, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That subject to the determination of and limitations established by the Sergeant at Arms, the Green Mountain Boys State and Girls State educational programs are authorized to use the chambers and committee rooms of the State House on Thursday, June 26, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the American Legion Department of Vermont and the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Vermont.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 137

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services

H. 266

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protections for 340B covered entities and 340B contract pharmacies

H. 463

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 125

Rep. Sibilia of Dover, for the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to reporting on the energy transition

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. ENERGY TRANSITION ECONOMIC IMPACTS REPORT

(a) On or before December 15, 2025, the Secretary of Natural Resources, in consultation with the relevant State agencies, including the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the Department of Public Service, the Agency of Transportation, the Department of Labor, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Department of Taxes, shall publish a report that highlights existing data sources and indicators relevant to the impacts of the changing energy landscape on Vermonters and relevant to understanding the distribution of benefits and burdens by region.

(b) The report shall provide data for the previous five years. The report shall include:

(1) current and forecasted electric rates and the number of customers with electric vehicle rates;

(2) the total megawatts of distributed solar generation facilities, including the amount installed, by county and any active certificate of public good applications;

(3) the number of sellers and volume of heating fuel sales;

(4) the number of homes receiving incentivized weatherization services, by income level and county;

(5) firms and workers in thermal and renewable energy sector trades;

- (6) gasoline and diesel transportation fuel sales;
 - (7) the number and location of retail gasoline and diesel outlets as indicated by metered pumps;
 - (8) progress in electric vehicle supply equipment installation, both fast charging and Level 2, to meet recommendations in the Comprehensive Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan and their locations;
 - (9) vehicle registrations by fuel type for light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles; and
 - (10) fossil fuel and electricity consumption per unit of economic output.
- (c) The report shall also include:
- (1) regional distribution and graphic displays of the data compiled;
 - (2) an analysis of the data and recommendations of any additional data necessary to illustrate the impacts of the changing energy landscape by region;
 - (3) an identification of existing reports and requirements that may support the reporting of relevant indicators;
 - (4) consideration of equity and just transition indicators, with the goal of better understanding the benefits and burdens of the changing energy landscape by region; and
 - (5) any recommendations for future reporting requirements, including how and when all relevant data can be mapped.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure?, **Rep. McCoy of Poultney** requested the vote be by division.

Pending the results of the vote by division, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 84. Nays, 59.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Duke of Burlington	Mihaly of Calais
Austin of Colchester	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Morrow of Weston
Bartholomew of Hartland	Eastes of Guilford	Mrowicki of Putney
Berbeco of Winooski	Emmons of Springfield	Nigro of Bennington
Birong of Vergennes	Garofano of Essex	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bishop of Colchester	Goldman of Rockingham	Ode of Burlington
Black of Essex	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Olson of Starksboro
Bluemle of Burlington	Graning of Jericho	Pezzo of Colchester
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harple of Glover	Pouech of Hinesburg
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Rachelson of Burlington
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Satcowitz of Randolph
Burke of Brattleboro	Hooper of Burlington	Scheu of Middlebury
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Houghton of Essex Junction	Sheldon of Middlebury
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Sibilia of Dover
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hunter of Manchester	Squirrell of Underhill
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	James of Manchester *	Stevens of Waterbury
Casey of Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Stone of Burlington
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Cole of Hartford	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sweeney of Shelburne
Conlon of Cornwall	Krasnow of South Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cooper of Pownal	Lalley of Shelburne	Torre of Moretown
Corcoran of Bennington	LaLonde of South Burlington	Waszazak of Barre City
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	White of Waitsfield
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	White of Bethel
Dolan of Essex Junction	McCann of Montpelier	Wood of Waterbury
Donahue of Northfield	McGill of Bridport	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Hango of Berkshire	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Harrison of Chittenden	Nelson of Derby
Bosch of Clarendon	Harvey of Castleton	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City	Higley of Lowell	North of Ferrisburgh
Branagan of Georgia	Howland of Rutland Town	Noyes of Wolcott
Burditt of West Rutland	Kascenska of Burke	Oliver of Sheldon
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Page of Newport City
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Parsons of Newbury
Charlton of Chester	Laroche of Franklin	Pinsonault of Dorset
Coffin of Cavendish	Lipsky of Stowe	Powers of Waterford
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Maguire of Rutland City	Quimby of Lyndon
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Marcotte of Coventry	Southworth of Walden
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney	Steady of Milton
Feltus of Lyndon	McFaun of Barre Town	Tagliavia of Corinth
	Micklus of Milton	Taylor of Milton

Galfetti of Barre Town *	Minier of South Burlington	Toof of St. Albans Town
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, L. of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Greer of Bennington	Morgan, M. of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Gregoire of Fairfield	Morris of Springfield	Winter of Ludlow

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burt of Cabot	Cina of Burlington	Malay of Pittsford
Christie of Hartford	LaMont of Morristown	Nugent of South Burlington

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

This bill represents more government waste. Waste that our constituents sent us here to curtail.”

Rep. James of Manchester provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support H.125 because good policy requires good data. At a time when climate energy policy is clouded by politics, it’s more important than ever that we partner with State Government to start with the same set of facts.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 222

House bill, entitled

An act relating to participation in a domestic violence accountability program as a condition of a final relief from abuse prevention order

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Arsenault of Williston**, action on the bill was postponed until March 19, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 231

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph, for the Committee on Environment, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections to fish and wildlife statutes

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 4001 is amended to read:

§ 4001. DEFINITIONS

Words and phrases used in this part, unless otherwise provided, shall be construed to mean as follows:

* * *

(6) ~~Pickereel: the great northern pike, chain pickerel, or muskellunge.~~
[Repealed.]

(7) ~~Pike perch: walleyed or yellow pike.~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 4905 is amended to read:

§ 4905. BIRDS' NESTS AND EGGS; DESTROYING OR ROBBING

A person shall not take or ~~wilfully~~ willfully destroy the nests or eggs of wild birds, other than rock pigeons, the English sparrow, starling, or purple grackle house sparrows, or European starlings, except when necessary to protect buildings and the nests to be removed contain no eggs or chicks and are no longer being used by birds for feeding, or when taken as provided in section 4152 of this title.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 4502 is amended to read:

§ 4502. UNIFORM POINT SYSTEM; REVOCATION OF LICENSE

(a) A uniform point system that assigns points to those convicted of a violation of a provision of this part is established. The conviction report from the court shall be prima facie evidence of the points assessed. In addition to other penalties assessed for violation of fish and wildlife statutes, the Commissioner shall suspend licenses issued under this part that are held by a person who has accumulated 10 or more points in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

(b) A person violating provisions of this part shall receive points for convictions in accordance with the following schedule (all sections are in this title of the Vermont Statutes Annotated):

(1) Except for biological collection violations determined to be nonpoint violations under the rules of the Board, five points shall be assessed for any violation of statutes or rules adopted under this part except those listed in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection.

(2) Ten points shall be assessed for:

* * *

(I) ~~§ 4706. Snaring animals~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

(Y) Appendix § 2; ~~Appendix § 33, section 14.3.~~ Reporting of big game

* * *

(II) Appendix § 37, ~~as it applies to annual deer limits~~ section 10. Novice season

(JJ) § 4742a. Youth deer hunting weekend. The points shall be assessed solely against the adult who is accompanying the youth hunter.

(KK) § 4908. Youth turkey hunting weekend. The points assessed against the adult accompanying the youth hunter.

(LL) § 4256. Mentored hunting license. The points shall be assessed against the licensed adult who is accompanying the individual holding the mentored hunting license.

(MM) § 4827a. Feeding a black bear

(NN) § 4826. Taking deer doing damage

(OO) § 22a. Taking turkey doing damage

(PP) § 35. Taking moose doing damage

(QQ) ~~Appendix § 22, section 6.7; Appendix § 33, section 13.1(g); Appendix § 37, section 7.7. Possession or transport of a cocked crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled vehicle~~ [Repealed.]

(RR) ~~Appendix § 7, section 6.3(b). Hunting bear with any dog not listed on the permit~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

(3) Twenty points shall be assessed for:

(A) ~~§ 4192. General powers and duties; failure to obey warden~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

(I) § 4745. Taking deer big game out of season prohibited

* * *

(O) Appendix § 7, sections 4.2, ~~5.1, 5.2,~~ 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3(b), 6.3(d), 6.3(e), 6.4, 6.5(e), 6.5(d), 7.1, and 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4. Bear, unauthorized taking

(P) Appendix § 22. Turkey season, excluding: requirements for youth turkey hunting season; ~~section 6.2, and~~ size of shot used or possessed; ~~and section 6.7, transport of cocked crossbow~~

* * *

(U) Appendix § 37. Deer management rule, excluding requirements for youth deer hunting weekend; requirements for novice season; limitations on feeding of deer; ~~section 7.7, transport of cocked crossbow~~; reporting big game; and section 11.0, ban of urine and other natural lures

* * *

(W) ~~§ 4711. Crossbow hunting~~ [Repealed.]

(X) ~~Appendix § 4. Hunting with a crossbow without a permit or license~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

(Z) Appendix § 44, ~~section 4.6~~. Use of tooth jawed traps

(AA) Appendix § 44, ~~section 4.11~~. Taking furbearers with poison

(BB) Appendix § 44, ~~section 4.12~~. Taking furbearers from a den

(CC) § 4716. Holding or conducting a coyote-hunting competition

(DD) § 4706. Snaring animals

* * *

Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 4705 is amended to read:

§ 4705. SHOOTING FROM MOTOR VEHICLES OR AIRCRAFT;
SHOOTING FROM OR ACROSS HIGHWAY; PERMIT

(a) A person shall not take or attempt to take a wild animal by shooting from a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled craft or any vehicle drawn by a motor-propelled vehicle except as permitted under subsection (e) of this section.

(b) A person shall not carry or possess while in or on a vehicle propelled by mechanical power or drawn by a vehicle propelled by mechanical power within the right-of-way of a public highway any of the following:

(1) a rifle or, ~~airgun~~, shotgun, or other projectile implement containing a loaded cartridge or shell in the chamber, mechanism, or in a magazine, or clip within a rifle or shotgun, ~~or~~;

(2) a muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading shotgun that has been charged with powder and projectile and the ignition system of which has been enabled by having an affixed or attached percussion cap, primer, battery, or priming powder, except as permitted under subsections (d) and (e) of this section;

(3) unless it is uncocked, a person shall not possess or transport a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled craft or any vehicle drawn by a motor-propelled vehicle except as permitted under subsection 47059e); and

(4) a person who possesses a rifle, crossbow, or shotgun, including a muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading shotgun, in or on a vehicle propelled by mechanical power, or drawn by a vehicle propelled by mechanical power within a right-of-way of a public highway shall upon demand of an enforcement officer exhibit the firearm for examination to determine compliance with this section.

(c) A person while on or within 25 feet of the traveled portion of a public highway, except a public highway designated Class 4 on a town highway map, shall not take or attempt to take any wild animal by shooting a firearm, a muzzle loader, a bow and arrow, or a crossbow. A person while on or within the traveled portion of a public highway designated Class 4 on a town highway map shall not take or attempt to take any wild animal by shooting a firearm, a muzzle loader, a bow and arrow, or a crossbow. A person shall not shoot a firearm, a muzzle loader, a bow and arrow, or a crossbow over or across the traveled portion of a public highway, except for a person shooting over or across the traveled portion of a public highway from a sport shooting range, as that term is defined in section 5227 of this title, provided that:

(1) the sport shooting range was established before January 1, 2014; and

(2) the operators of the sport shooting range post signage warning users of the public highway of the potential danger from the sport shooting range.

(d) This section shall not restrict the possession or use of a loaded firearm by an enforcement officer in performance of ~~his or her~~ the officer's duty.

(e) Subsections (a) and (c) of this section shall not apply to a licensed hunter with paraplegia or who is certified by a physician to be unable to pursue game because of permanent severe physical disability, if ~~he or she~~ the licensed hunter obtains a permit as provided in this subsection. The Commissioner on receipt of satisfactory proof of the disability of an applicant may issue a permit under this subsection. This permit shall be attached to the license and shall remain in effect until the death of the holder, unless the Commissioner has reason to believe the permit is misused. The holder of the permit shall carry it at all times while hunting and shall produce it on demand for inspection by any game warden or other law enforcement officer authorized to make arrests. The holder of the permit may take game from a vehicle or boat but only if it is stationary and is not within 10 feet of the traveled portion of a public highway.

In no event shall the holder of a permit shoot across the traveled portion of a public highway.

(f) The phrase “public highway,” as used in this section, means roads, including Class 4 roads, shown on the highway maps of the respective towns, made by the Agency of Transportation, but does not include foot trails or private roads.

Sec. 5. 23 V.S.A. § 3317(b) is amended to read:

(b) Penalty or fine; \$300.00 or \$1,000.00 maximum. A person who violates a requirement under 10 V.S.A. § 1454 shall be subject to enforcement under 10 V.S.A. § 8007 or 8008 or a fine under this chapter, provided that the person shall be assessed a penalty or fine of not more than \$1,000.00 for each violation. A person who violates a rule adopted under 10 V.S.A. § 1424 shall be subject to enforcement under 10 V.S.A. chapter 201 or a fine under this chapter, provided that the person shall be assessed a penalty of not more than \$300.00 for each violation. A person who violates any of the following sections of this title shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$300.00 for each violation:

* * *

Sec. 6. 4 V.S.A. § 1102 is amended to read:

§ 1102. JUDICIAL BUREAU; JURISDICTION

(a) The Judicial Bureau is created within the Judicial Branch under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

(b) The Judicial Bureau shall have jurisdiction of the following matters:

* * *

(19) Violations of rules adopted under 10 V.S.A. § 1424, relating to the use of public waters.

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Environment agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 259**

Rep. Cordes of Bristol, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 1911b is added to read:

§ 1911b. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLANNING

(a)(1) A hospital licensed pursuant to this chapter shall establish and implement a security plan for preventing workplace violence and managing aggressive behaviors. Each hospital shall establish a team for the purpose of providing advice during the development of the hospital's security plan. The hospital shall select individuals from the following groups to serve on its security plan development team:

(A) health care employees providing direct patient care at the hospital;

(B) representatives from the designated agency serving the region where the hospital is located; and

(C) representatives of relevant law enforcement agencies.

(2) The security plan shall be based on the results of a security risk assessment that addresses all high-risk areas of the hospital, including the emergency department, and all patient care areas. The security risk assessment shall be conducted in consultation with the medical and nursing directors of each department and those hospital employees supervising other high-risk areas of the hospital. The security risk assessment shall consider overall patient volume, crime rates in the community, and the availability of law enforcement to respond to violent incidents at the hospital.

(3) The security plan shall include an option for health care employees who provide direct patient care to request an identification badge containing only their first name or their first name and last initial.

(4)(A) The security plan shall require at least one hospital employee trained in de-escalation strategies to be present at all time in the hospital's emergency department and all other patient care areas.

(B) The security plan shall require that a hospital employee trained in trauma-informed care and victim support serve as a liaison to law enforcement, support victims through the legal process, and ensure that the response to incidents of violence at the hospital prioritize the safety and retention of hospital employees providing health care services.

(5) The security plan shall establish training requirements for appropriate hospital employees on the following:

(A) the culture of safety as determined by the hospital;

(B) response to the presence or use of weapons;

(C) defensive tactics;

(D) de-escalation techniques;

(E) appropriate physical restraint and seclusion techniques;

(F) crisis intervention;

(G) trauma-informed care and strategies;

(H) clinician well-being practices;

(I) presence and intervention of law enforcement; and

(J) safely addressing situations involving patients, family members, or other individuals who pose a risk of self-harm or harm to others.

(6) The security plan shall include guidelines indicating when a law enforcement officer should remain with a patient who has demonstrated violence or harm to others pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 1883. The guidelines shall be developed jointly by a health care provider representative and law enforcement.

(7)(A) A hospital shall review and evaluate the security plan developed pursuant to this subsection annually in conjunction with the data collected pursuant to subdivision (b)(3) of this section. If necessary, the hospital shall revise the security plan.

(B) The security plan and any annual revisions to the security plan shall be distributed annually to all hospital employees, volunteers, the hospital's board of directors, relevant law enforcement agencies, and any other partners identified by the security plan development team.

(b)(1) A hospital licensed pursuant to this chapter shall establish and utilize a workplace violence incident reporting system to document, track, analyze, and evaluate incidents of workplace violence at the hospital. Data collection through the reporting system and resulting analysis shall be used to improve workplace safety and to manage aggressive behaviors, including improvements

achieved through continuing education in targeted areas such as de-escalation training, risk identification, and prevention planning.

(2) All hospital employees shall be notified about the existence of the reporting system and shall receive training on how to report incidents of workplace violence to the hospital, hospital security, law enforcement, or any other entity the hospital deems appropriate.

(3) A hospital shall use its reporting system to track the following:

(A) the number of reported incidents; and

(B) the number of incidents reported to law enforcement.

(c) A hospital shall adopt a policy prohibiting discrimination or retaliation for:

(1) reporting an incidence of workplace violence;

(2) seeking assistance or intervention from the hospital, hospital security, law enforcement, or any other appropriate entity; or

(3) participating or refusing to participate in an investigation of workplace violence.

(d)(1) A hospital shall post a notice in a conspicuous location, either electronically or in print, indicating that hospital employees do not tolerate an unsafe work environment where any type of threatening or aggressive behavior is present. The notice shall remind hospital patrons of the serious legal consequences of assaulting a hospital employee.

(2) As used in this subsection, “conspicuous” could include the hospital’s website, waiting room areas, or any other areas of the hospital that the hospital deems appropriate.

(e) The Agency of Human Services shall collaborate with hospitals to identify incentives, funding sources, and other means to support the development and operation of workplace violence prevention programs at hospitals.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9435 is amended to read:

§ 9435. EXCLUSIONS

* * *

(i) Excluded from this subchapter are expenditures by a hospital that are necessary to implement the security plan required pursuant to section 1911b of this title.

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 9454 is amended to read:

§ 9454. HOSPITALS; DUTIES

(a) Hospitals shall file the following information at the time and place and in the manner established by the Board:

- (1) a budget for the forthcoming fiscal year;
- (2) financial information, including costs of operation, revenues, assets, liabilities, fund balances, other income, rates, charges, units of services, and wage and salary data;
- (3) scope-of-service and volume-of-service information, including inpatient services, outpatient services, and ancillary services by type of service provided;
- (4) utilization information;
- (5) new hospital services and programs proposed for the forthcoming fiscal year;
- (6) costs associated with implementing their security plan pursuant to section 1911b of this title, including capital investments, program operation, and staff;
- (7) known depreciation schedules on existing buildings, a four-year capital expenditure projection, and a one-year capital expenditure plan; and
- ~~(7)~~(8) such other information as the Board may require.

* * *

Sec. 4. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

§ 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

(a) The Board shall conduct reviews of each hospital's proposed budget based on the information provided pursuant to this subchapter and in accordance with a schedule established by the Board.

* * *

(c) Individual hospital budgets established under this section shall:

* * *

(5) include a finding that the analysis provided in subdivision (b)(9) of this section is a reasonable methodology for reflecting a reduction in net revenues for non-Medicaid payers; ~~and~~

(6) demonstrate that they support equal access to appropriate mental health care that meets standards of quality, access, and affordability equivalent

to other components of health care as part of an integrated, holistic system of care; and

(7) take into consideration the costs associated with implementing a security plan pursuant to section 1911b of this title.

* * *

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Speaker presiding.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 396

Rep. Lipsky of Stowe, for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Mollie Beattie Distinguished Service Award

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 26

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 44. An act relating to authorization to enter into certain immigration agreements.

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

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 18. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 21, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and fifty-four minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 486

By Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to homestead declarations and the property tax credit
To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 487

By Reps. Walker of Swanton and Oliver of Sheldon,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to local option tax revenue sharing between a town and village

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 488

By the Committee on Transportation,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 489

By the Committee on Appropriations,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Senate Bill Referred**S. 44**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to authorization to enter into certain immigration agreements

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar**Bills Referred to the Committee on Appropriations**

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carry an appropriation, the following House bills were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 397

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

H. 472

House bill, entitled

An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation

H. 479

House bill, entitled

An act relating to housing

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 18**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 18. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 21, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, March 21, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 13**

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution in memory of the former esteemed Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives Robert Louis Picher of Winooski

Whereas, dispassionate, informed, and nonpartisan are all essential attributes for the Clerk of the House of Representatives, and for three decades in this role (1963–1993), and again in 2002 on an acting basis, House Clerk Bob Picher always adhered to these core principles, as was reflected in his election, during the 1980s, as President of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries, and

Whereas, Bob Picher, a lifelong resident of Winooski, was born on July 30, 1924, and graduated from the former Cathedral High School in Burlington; Assumption College (University) in Worcester, Massachusetts; and Georgetown University Law School in Washington, DC, and

Whereas, he served in Europe as a World War II U.S. Army combat platoon leader, returned to active duty during the Korean Conflict, achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Vermont National Guard, and was the Commander of and a Major General in the Vermont State Guard, and

Whereas, a respected lawyer, Bob Picher was an extraordinary public servant, who, prior to his election as Clerk of the House, served as Executive Clerk to Governor Joseph B. Johnson and as Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs under Governor Robert T. Stafford, and

Whereas, locally, he was elected as a zoning board member, justice of the peace, and grand juror, and

Whereas, Bob Picher’s religious and musical passions found commonality as a parishioner, chorister, and choral director at St. Francis Xavier Church; he also sang in the South Burlington Community Chorus; and he enjoyed other voluntary roles related to his French-Canadian heritage, veterans’ affairs, and the Winooski community’s history, and

Whereas, Bob Picher died on May 10, 2024, at 99 years of age, and his survivors include his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its sincere condolences to the family of the former esteemed Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives Robert Louis Picher, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the family of Bob Picher.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, January 31, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Berbeco of Winooski**, the following remarks by **Rep. Emmons of Springfield** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I would like to say a few words on the resolution honoring our former Clerk, Bob Picher. I had the distinct pleasure of working with Mr. Picher. When I was a freshman back in 1982, when I was a lot younger than I am now and very naïve and I will share some of that shortly.

With us today livestreaming, not here in person, are some family and friends of Mr. Picher, watching the livestream of the reading of the resolution. As well as his long-time Journal Clerk, Sandra Collins, who served in the House Clerk’s Office for over two decades. Hopefully Mr. Picher’s son, who lives in Boston, may also be livestreaming. I would like to recognize them and thank them for sharing this today.

When I first came here in 1982, we had a general idea of what the Legislative Branch does and how the House functions. Madam Speaker, Mr. Picher brought everyone—each and every one of us, the 150 members—under his wing to teach us how to be legislators. He taught us the value of this General Assembly and the value of the House of Representatives and the value of each and every one of us as members. And he also taught us how legislation works, and how it goes through this body, but he particularly

focused on decorum of this General Assembly and this Chamber. Everything that I have learned today about the legislative process and the decorum of how we operate as members of the General Assembly in this body. I have tremendous respect for Mr. Picher, and I want to thank him and his family and the members that supported him throughout his time here in this Chamber.

The resolution started by describing Mr. Picher as dispassionate, informed, and nonpartisan, all the essential attributes of the Clerk. He adhered to those principles, and he instilled those principles in each and every one of us. One of the best ways he did it that I remember was that he always had a story. He always had a sense of humor. He always had a joke about what transpired on the floor of the House, and we learned how to operate in this building. And we learned the decorum of this General Assembly through those jokes and through those stories of previous members and how they interacted on the floor. I am going to say a word that maybe some folks do not like to hear but I am going to say it. Mr. Picher was a gentleman and I thank him and his family for sharing that with us.

Thank you.”

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 243

Rep. Cooper of Pownal, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Updates to Title 3 language * * *

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 102a is amended to read:

§ 102a. FACSIMILE SIGNATURE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

A facsimile of the signature of the Secretary of State imprinted by or at ~~his~~ ~~or her~~ the Secretary's direction upon any certification issued ~~under Title 11 or 11A pursuant to law~~, upon any attestation required of the Secretary by law, or upon any certification of official documents or records of which the Secretary is custodian, shall have the same validity as the Secretary of State's written signature.

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 133 is amended to read:

§ 133. BUSINESS REGISTRATION

When professional services are required by law to be performed in or by a business entity registered with the Office, the business entity shall:

(1) register with the ~~Corporations~~ Business Services Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, if required by law; and

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 11 language * * *

Sec. 3. 11 V.S.A. chapter 7 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 7. ~~COOPERATIVES~~ GENERAL COOPERATIVE
CORPORATIONS AND COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Subchapter 1. ~~Provisions Relating to Cooperatives Formed Under General~~
~~Corporation Law~~ General Cooperative Corporations

§ 981. GENERAL COOPERATIVE CORPORATION; USE OF

“COOPERATIVE”

A corporation formed under Title 11A shall not have the word “cooperative” or any abbreviation thereof as part of its name, unless the corporation is a worker cooperative corporation organized under chapter 8 of this title, a cooperative housing corporation organized under chapter 14 of this title, or ~~the a general cooperative corporation that includes in its~~ articles of incorporation contain all of the following provisions:

* * *

Subchapter 2. ~~The Cooperative Marketing Act;~~ Cooperative Associations

§ 991. DEFINITIONS

~~In~~ As used in this subchapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

(1) “Agricultural products” includes horticultural, viticultural, forestry, dairy, livestock, poultry, bee, and any farm products.

(2) “Association” means any ~~corporation~~ nonprofit cooperative association organized under this chapter.

(3) “Associations” organized hereunder means nonprofit cooperative associations.

(4) “Consumers’ cooperative” means ~~a corporation~~ an association organized under this chapter for the acquisition and distribution for the benefit of ultimate consumers of property, goods, commodities, or services.

(5) “Handcraft product” means any product fashioned primarily by hand with the final form and its characteristics shaped by hand and produced in the home or a small craft center by the artisan or craftsman in a skilled or artistic process rather than in an assembly line technique.

(6) “Marketing cooperative” means ~~a corporation~~ an association organized under this chapter for the marketing of agricultural or handcraft products.

(7) “Member” includes actual members of associations without capital stock and holders of common stock in associations organized with capital stock.

(8) “Person” includes individuals, firms, partnerships, corporations and associations.

(9) “Railroad cooperative” means any ~~corporation~~ association organized under this chapter for the organization, acquisition, and operation of a general transportation business by railroad, including truck, bus, air, and water transportation subsidiaries of the railroad.

* * *

§ 994. POWERS

Each association incorporated under this subchapter shall have the following powers:

(1) In the case of a marketing cooperative, the power to engage in any activity in connection with the purchasing, marketing, selling, preserving, harvesting, drying, processing, manufacturing, canning, packing, grading, storing, handling, or utilization of any agricultural or handcraft products or the manufacturing or marketing of the ~~by-products~~ byproducts thereof, any activity in connection with the purchase, hiring, or use by its members of supplies, machinery or equipment, and in financing any of the aforementioned activities. However, a marketing association shall not handle agricultural or handcraft products of nonmembers to an extent greater in value than the products of its own members ~~which~~ that it handles. In the case of a consumers’ cooperative, the power to engage in any one or more lawful mode or modes of acquiring, producing, building, operating, manufacturing, furnishing, exchanging, or distributing any type of property, commodities, goods, or services for the primary and mutual benefit of the patrons of the association, or their patrons, if any, as ultimate consumers. In the case of a

railroad cooperative, to engage in any activity in connection with the organization, acquisition, and operation of a subsidiary transportation business, whether by means of railroad, truck, water carrier, air, or other. ~~Such a corporation formed under this subchapter shall have any other rights, powers, and privileges granted by the laws of this State to corporations in a like business organized under the general laws of this State.~~

* * *

§ 995. ARTICLES

Each association formed under this subchapter shall prepare and file articles of incorporation setting forth:

- (1) The name of the association.
- (2) The purpose for which it is formed.
- (3) ~~The place where its principal business will be transacted~~ address of its principal office in this State, and the name, email, and address information of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.
- (4) The names and business addresses of the directors thereof who are to serve until the election and qualification of their successors.
- (5) The name and ~~residence~~ business address of the clerk, and of any other principal the association provides.
- (6) When organized without capital stock, whether the property rights and interest of the members are equal, and, if unequal, the general rules applicable to all members by which the property rights and interest, respectively, of each member shall be determined and fixed, and provision for the admission of new members who shall be entitled to share in the property of the association in accordance with such general rules. This provision or paragraph of the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation shall not be altered, amended, or replaced except by the written consent or vote representing three-fourths of the members.
- (7) When organized with capital stock, the amount of such stock, the number of shares into which it is divided, and the par value thereof.
- (8) The capital stock may be divided into preferred and one or more classes of common stock. When so divided, the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation shall contain a statement of the number of shares of stock to which preference is granted, the number of shares of stock to which no preference is granted, and the nature and definite extent of the preference and privileges granted to each.

(9) The articles of incorporation of any association organized under this subchapter may provide that the members or stockholders thereof shall have the right to vote in person or through another method of communication, including through a telecommunications or electronic medium, but a member or stockholder may not vote by proxy. This provision or paragraph of the articles of incorporation shall not be altered and shall not be subject to amendment.

(10) In addition to the foregoing, the articles of incorporation of any association incorporated hereunder may contain any provision consistent with law with respect to management, regulation, government, financing, indebtedness, membership, the establishment of voting districts and the election of delegates for representative purposes, the issuance, retirement, and transfer of its stock, if formed with capital stock, or any provisions relative to the way or manner in which it shall operate or with respect to its members, officers, or directors and any other provisions relating to its affairs.

(11) The ~~certificate~~ articles of incorporation shall be subscribed by the incorporators and shall be sworn to by one or more of them; and shall be filed with the Secretary of State. A certified copy shall also be filed with the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

(12) When so filed, the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation or a certified copy thereof shall be received in the courts of this State as prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein and of the due incorporation of such association.

§ 996. AMENDMENT OF ~~CERTIFICATE~~ ARTICLES; STATEMENT OF
CHANGE

(a) The ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation may be altered or amended except as otherwise provided in this subchapter at any regular meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose. An amendment must first be approved by two-thirds of the directors and adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members or delegates present and voting at such meeting. Amendments to the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation, when so adopted, shall be filed in accordance with the provisions of section 995 of this title.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, an association shall amend the name, email, or address information of its agent for service of process by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

§ 997. FEE

~~For filing a certificate of organization, an association shall pay \$20.00 to the Secretary of State, and for filing an amendment thereto, \$10.00~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this chapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in section 1651 of this title.

* * *

§ 1001. CONTENTS OF BYLAWS

Each association may provide in its bylaws for any or all of the following matters:

* * *

(10) In the case of a ~~consumer's~~ consumers' or railroad cooperative, the method of distributing among members or stockholders and patrons, both members and nonmembers, the net savings derived from the excess of total income over operating expenses. Provision may be made for the accumulation of reserve funds out of net savings.

* * *

§ 1013. OFFICERS

The directors shall elect from their number a president and one or more vice presidents. They shall also elect a secretary, who shall be the clerk of the ~~corporation~~ association, and a treasurer, who need not be directors or members of the association. The directors may combine the two latter offices and designate the combined office as that of secretary-treasurer, or unite both functions and titles in one person. The treasurer may be a bank or any depository, and as such, shall not be considered as an officer, but as a function of the board of directors, and in such case, the secretary shall perform the usual accounting duties of the treasurer, except that the funds shall be deposited only as and where authorized by the board of directors.

* * *

§ 1023. OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL OF OTHER CORPORATIONS

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

An association may organize, form, operate, own, control, have an interest in, own stock of, or be a member of, any other ~~corporation or corporations, with or without capital stock, and business organization~~ engaged in preserving, drying, processing, canning, packing, storing, handling, shipping, utilizing, manufacturing, marketing, or selling the agricultural products handled by the association or byproducts thereof.

§ 1024. WAREHOUSE RECEIPTS

~~When such corporations are warehousing corporations, they~~ An association engaged in warehousing may issue negotiable or nonnegotiable warehouse receipts of the association against the commodities delivered, and such warehouse receipts shall be considered as adequate collateral to the extent of the usual and current value of the commodity represented thereby. In case such warehouse is licensed, or licensed and bonded, under the laws of this or any other state of the United States, its warehouse receipt delivered to the association on commodities of the association or its members, or delivered by the association or by its members, shall not be challenged or discriminated against because of ownership or control, wholly or in part, by the association.

* * *

Subchapter 3. Consolidation of Cooperative Associations

§ 1061. PROCEDURE

Two or more cooperative associations organized under, or which have adopted the provisions of subchapter 4 2 of this chapter, or similar laws of other states, whether having or not having capital stock, may merge or consolidate into one cooperative association which may be a new cooperative association or one of the constituent cooperatives by complying with the following requirements:

* * *

(3) If the articles of merger or consolidation are adopted by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members attending and voting of each consolidating cooperative voting thereon at the meeting called to consider the same, or by not less than by a two-thirds vote of its delegates if qualified as provided in subdivision (4) of this section, articles of merger or consolidation in the form adopted shall be executed under its seal and acknowledged on behalf of each consolidating cooperative by its president or vice-president. Such articles of merger or consolidation shall recite that they are executed pursuant to this subchapter and shall state:

(A) the name of each consolidating cooperative and the address of its principal office;

(B) the name of the new cooperative and the address of its principal office in this State, or if none, the name, email, and address of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title;

(C) a statement that each consolidating cooperative agrees to the merger or consolidation;

(D) the names and business addresses of the directors of the new cooperative, and of any other principal the association provides; and

(E) the terms and conditions of the merger or consolidation and the mode of carrying the same into effect, including the manner in which the members of the consolidating cooperative may or shall become members of the new cooperative; and may contain provisions, not inconsistent with law or this subchapter, which are deemed necessary or advisable for the conduct of the business of the new cooperative.

(4) The president or vice president and the clerk or secretary of each consolidating cooperative executing such articles of merger or consolidation shall make and annex thereto an affidavit stating that the provisions of this section in respect to such articles were duly complied with by such cooperative.

(4)(5) In the case of any consolidating cooperative having a district election of delegates and a delegate system of voting as permitted by subdivision 995(10) of this title, in which, under its articles of incorporation or bylaws, such delegates have complete voting power on behalf of the membership for every purpose, except that of their own election and the election of district directors, the vote adopting the merger or consolidation required by subdivision (3) of this section shall be that of not less than two-thirds of the delegates attending and voting at such meeting.

* * *

§ 1063. ~~FEE~~

~~For filing articles of merger or consolidation the new cooperative shall pay \$20.00 to the Secretary of State; and for filing an amendment thereof \$10.00. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

Sec. 4. 11 V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. REGISTRATION OF BUSINESS ENTITIES ASSUMED BUSINESS NAMES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND UNINCORPORATED NONPROFIT ASSOCIATIONS; ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY; ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Subchapter 1. Assumed Business Names, Partnerships, and Unincorporated Nonprofit Associations

§ 1621. REGISTRATION OF ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME BY PERSONS
NAMES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND UNINCORPORATED
NONPROFIT ASSOCIATIONS

~~(a) A person doing business in this State under any name other than his or her own, and every copartnership~~ An individual doing business under an assumed business name, or a partnership or unincorporated nonprofit or association of individuals, except corporations and limited liability companies, doing business in this State, resident or nonresident, shall cause to be recorded with submit to the Secretary of State for filing a return setting forth a registration that provides:

~~(1) the name under which such business is carried on,~~ the name of the business;

~~(2) the name of the town wherein such place of business is located,~~ the address of its principal office;

~~(3) a brief description of the kind of business to be transacted under such name, and its business purpose;~~

~~(4) the individual names and residences of all persons, general partners, or members so doing business thereunder~~ the name and business address of the individual doing business under the assumed name, as a partner of the partnership, or as a member of the association, and of any other principal the registrant provides; and

~~(5) for each individual, partner, or member who is not a resident of this State, or for whom the registrant does not provide an address in this State for service of process, the name, email, and address information of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) Such returns~~ A registration shall be subscribed and sworn to by one or more of the persons so doing business, and shall be a person with authority to act on behalf of the registrant and filed with the Secretary of State ~~within~~ not later than 10 days after commencement of business.

(c) The Secretary of State shall decline to register any business name unless the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any other business name of any name registered or reserved under this chapter, or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State, or any name that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the business is a type of entity that it is not.

(d) The Secretary of State shall establish rules ~~and regulations~~ for the administration of this section.

(e) Prior to registering its business name under this section, a person intending to operate a postsecondary school, as defined in 16 V.S.A. §§ 176 and 176a, shall apply to the State Board of Education for a certificate of approval pursuant to those sections.

§ 1621a. ~~RESERVED NAME~~

~~(a) The exclusive right to the use of a business name may be reserved by any person, copartnership, or association intending to register its name under this section.~~

~~(b) The reservation shall be made by filing with the Secretary of State an application to reserve a specified business name, executed by the applicant, its agent, or attorney. If the Secretary of State finds that the name is available for use, he or she shall reserve the same for the exclusive use of the applicant for a period of 120 days.~~

~~(c) The right to the exclusive use of a specified business name so reserved may be transferred to any other person, copartnership, or association by filing in the office of the Secretary of State a notice of such transfer, executed by the applicant for whom the name was reserved, and specifying the name and address of the transferee. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 1623. ~~REGISTRATION BY BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS~~

~~(a) A business organization doing business in this State under any name other than that of the business organization shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter; and shall file returns sworn to by some officer or director of the corporation or mutual benefit enterprise, or by some director or manager of the limited liability company, or by some partner of the partnership or limited partnership, setting forth:~~

~~(1) the name and location of the principal office of the business organization;~~

~~(2) the name under which the organization will conduct business;~~

~~(3) the town or towns where the organization conducts business under the name; and~~

~~(4) a brief description of the kind of business the organization conducts under the name.~~

~~(b) The Secretary of State shall decline to register any business name unless the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any other business name of any name registered or reserved under this chapter or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State, or any name that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the business is a type of entity that it is not. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1624. FORMS

~~The Secretary of State shall formulate forms for the returns and shall, on request, furnish such forms by mail or otherwise to persons, copartnerships, associations, or corporations subject to the provisions of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1625. FEES

~~(a) A person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation required by the provisions of this chapter to file a return shall, at the time of filing as provided, pay a registration fee of \$70.00 to the Secretary of State.~~

~~(b) A person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation required by the provisions of this chapter to file a certificate of cessation or change of business status or an application to reserve a business name shall, at the time of filing, pay a fee of \$35.00 to the Secretary of State.~~

~~(c) Statement of change of designated agent or designated office, or both: \$25.00, not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year.~~

~~(d) The Secretary shall collect \$25.00 each time process is served on the Secretary under this chapter. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if he or she prevails in the proceeding. A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this subchapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in section 1651 of this title.~~

§ 1626. FAILURE TO REGISTER; ENFORCING COMPLIANCE

~~(a) A person transacting business in this State who is not registered with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter~~ subchapter and any successor to the person or assignee of a cause of action arising out of the business of the person, may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State until the person, successor, or assignee registers with the Secretary.~~

(b) The failure of a person to register as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ does not impair the validity of a contract or act of the person or preclude it from defending an action or proceeding in this State.

(c) An individual does not waive a limitation on his or her personal liability afforded by other law solely by transacting business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~.

(d) If a person transacts business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~, the Secretary is its agent for service of process with respect to a right of action arising out of the transaction of business in this State.

(e) A person that transacts business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ shall be liable to the State for:

(1) a civil penalty of \$50.00 for each day, not to exceed a total of \$10,000.00 for each year, it transacts business in this State without a registration;

(2) an amount equal to the fees due under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ during the period it transacted business in this State without a registration; and

(3) other penalties imposed by law.

(f) The Attorney General may maintain an action in the Civil Division of the Superior Court to collect the penalties imposed in subsection (e) of this section and to restrain a person from transacting business in this State in violation of this ~~chapter subchapter~~.

§ 1627. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~Service of such complaint and process thereunder may be made by delivering within this State a true and attested copy thereof to any person so doing business or any servant or agent of such person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation, or in any manner otherwise provided by law. A name so registered shall not thereafter be used by a person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation, unless it is lawfully entitled thereto at the date of such registration. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1628. CERTIFICATE OF CESSATION OF BUSINESS OR CHANGE OF BUSINESS STATUS; AMENDMENT

(a) ~~When a person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation subject to the provisions of this chapter shall cease to do business~~

~~in this State, a certificate setting forth such fact and the date whereon it so ceased shall be filed with the Secretary of State within 10 days after the date such business ceases. Such certificate may be sworn to and filed by a surviving partner, member of such association, officer of such corporation, member or manager of such limited liability company, or person so doing business, or his or her executor or administrator~~ A registrant that ceases to do business in this State shall submit to the Secretary of State for filing a certificate of cessation of business not later than 10 days after the date of cessation.

~~(b) Whenever any general partner of such partnership, or member of such association withdraws from the business, a remaining general partner or member shall within 30 days file a certificate with the Secretary of State signed and sworn by a remaining general partner or member, setting forth the fact of such withdrawal, together with the date of that withdrawal. Filing of this certificate shall avoid any interruption in the period of registration remaining before the need for renewal, as if no partner or member of the association had withdrawn~~ A registrant that adds or removes an individual, partner, or member named in its registration shall submit to the Secretary of State for filing an amendment to reflect the change not later than 30 days after the date of the change.

~~(c) A registrant may amend its agent information by filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title and may amend any other information in its registration by submitting an amendment to the Secretary of State for filing.~~

§ 1629. PENALTIES

~~Failure to file such certificate at the time so required by section 1628 of this title shall work a forfeiture of \$10.00 to be recovered by the Secretary of State in a civil action on this statute, in his or her name, against any surviving partner, any member of such association, any officer of such corporation, or any person so doing business, or his executor or administrator, and the same shall be paid into the Treasury of the State. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1630. PROCESS AGENT

~~Each nonresident doing business in this State in his or her individual capacity, or as copartner or member of a copartnership or association required by sections 1621 and 1623 of this title to file the returns therein specified, or under any name other than his or her own, except as otherwise provided, shall appoint in writing a person having an office or place of business and residing in the town wherein the principal office of such nonresident, copartnership, or association is located, upon whom process against such nonresident may be served in an action founded upon a liability incurred in this State. Such~~

~~appointment shall continue in force until revoked by a like instrument appointing another person therein residing, and having therein an office or place of business. Such instrument shall be recorded with the Secretary of State. In the event a nonresident has not appointed a process agent, and has not filed such appointment, as set forth in this section, the Secretary of State shall be such process agent. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1631. VACANCY

~~When an appointee dies or removes from the State, another person residing in such town and having therein an office or place of business, within 10 days from the date of such death or removal, shall be appointed in the manner hereinbefore specified, upon whom service of process may be made as provided in section 1630 of this title. In case of such death or removal, or if a person is not appointed as aforesaid, process against such nonresident person may be served by delivering to the Secretary of State duplicate copies thereof, one of which shall be filed with the Secretary of State and the other shall be forwarded by mail prepaid by the clerk to the last known residence of such person. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1632. EXCEPTIONS

~~The provisions of sections 1630 and 1631 of this title shall not apply to foreign investment companies, foreign building and loan associations, or foreign creamery companies. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1633. SECRETARY OF STATE AS PROCESS AGENT

~~A foreign insurance, express, shipping car, telegraph, or telephone company, or a foreign company under any other name engaged in like business, shall not do business in this State as an unincorporated association or partnership, until it has filed with the Secretary of State a written stipulation containing the association or firm name, and the names and residences of the associates or partners, and appointing the Secretary of State as its process agent. Such stipulation shall be in form and substance like that specified in subdivision 692(3) of this title, and shall have the same legal effect. The provisions of 12 V.S.A. §§ 851-853, shall apply to service of process on such company and to acts done by persons or agents in its behalf. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1634. EFFECT OF FAILURE AND NEGLECT

~~A person, copartnership, limited liability company, or corporation subject to this chapter shall not institute any proceedings in this State for the enforcement of any right or obligation unless it shall, prior to the issuance of the original return or complaint therein, have filed the returns and paid the registration fee required by this chapter; nor shall a license or certificate be granted to a nonresident individual, copartnership, or unincorporated association to transact~~

~~a business specified in Titles 5 and 23 or in 6 V.S.A. chapter 29 until such individual, copartnership, or association has complied with the provisions of section 1630 of this title. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1635. REREGISTRATION

~~(a) One or more persons doing business under a registered business name~~ A registrant shall reregister ~~the name~~ every five years by filing a reregistration ~~return~~ with the Secretary of State ~~with a fee of \$65.00 within~~ not sooner than 60 days ~~following the date five years after the date~~ prior to the expiration of the original registration or of the last reregistration. The Secretary of State shall prepare and supply the necessary forms.

(b) When reregistration is not accomplished as provided in subsection (a) of this section, a business name may be registered by the first applicant making application to the Secretary of State for an original registration as provided by this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Subchapter 2. Administrative Authority

§ 1636. TERMINATION OF BUSINESS NAME; HEARING

(a) If the Secretary of State declines to register a business ~~in accordance with the provisions of subsection 1621(c) of this title~~ because it is not distinguishable in the records of the Secretary from another business name, the applicant may request that the Secretary determine whether the person to whom the business name is registered is doing business or taking steps to do business in this State.

* * *

§ 1637. AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE AND AMEND REGISTRATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall have the authority to:

(1) terminate the registration of a person who, pursuant to an administrative order, a final court order, or an assurance of discontinuance, is not authorized to conduct business in this State; and

(2) amend ~~his or her~~ the person's records to reflect the termination of a registration pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b)(1) If the Secretary of State terminates the registration of a person pursuant to this section, the person appoints the Secretary as ~~his or her~~ the person's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the person was authorized to transact, or was transacting without authorization, business in this State.

(2) Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall deliver by registered mail a copy of the process to ~~the secretary of the terminated person~~ at its principal office shown in its most recent annual report or in any subsequent communication received from the person stating the current mailing address of its principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for registration.

(c)(1) If a court or other person with sufficient legal authority reinstates the ability of a terminated person to conduct business in this State, the terminated person may file with the Secretary of State evidence of the reinstated authority and ~~pay to the Secretary a fee of \$25.00 for each year the person is delinquent~~ submit any filing necessary to update its registration.

(2) Upon receipt of a filing and payment pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Secretary shall cancel the termination and prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the person.

§ 1638. AUTHORITY TO REJECT, AMEND, OR TERMINATE

(a) The Secretary of State shall have the authority to:

(1) reject a record submitted for filing that the Secretary reasonably determines contains false, fraudulent, or clearly erroneous information; and

(2) amend a record or terminate the registration of a person who the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for hearing pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, has submitted false or fraudulent information in a record, or has attempted or submitted a record for filing in bad faith, without lawful authority, or to commit fraud or cause injury.

(b)(1) If the Secretary terminates the registration of a person pursuant to this section, or the Secretary's rejection or amendment of a record results in the person's failure to designate or maintain an agent for service of process, then the person appoints the Secretary as the person's agent for service of process.

(2) Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall deliver by registered mail a copy of the process to the person's last known address.

(c) A person aggrieved by a final decision of the Secretary under this section may appeal to the Superior Court of Washington County, which shall consider the matter de novo.

§ 1639. FORMS; PROCEDURES; RULES

The Secretary of State may adopt forms, procedures, and rules to implement the processes and provisions of governing business registration in this State.

Subchapter 3. Administrative Provisions for Business Organizations§ 1651. FEES

The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees for services and for documents submitted for filing pursuant to the provisions of Titles 11–11C and 30 V.S.A. chapter 81:

(1) \$150.00 for the initial filing of a domestic business organization, including:

(A) articles of incorporation for a nonprofit cooperative association pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 7;

(B) a statement of qualification for a limited liability partnership pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 22;

(C) a certificate of limited partnership for a limited partnership pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 23;

(D) articles of organization for a limited liability company pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 25;

(E) articles of incorporation for a business corporation pursuant to Title 11A;

(F) articles of incorporation for a nonprofit corporation pursuant to Title 11B;

(G) articles of organization for a mutual benefit enterprise pursuant to Title 11C; and

(H) articles of incorporation for a utility cooperative pursuant to 30 V.S.A. chapter 81;

(2) \$175.00 for the initial filing of a foreign business organization, including:

(A) a statement of foreign qualification for a limited liability partnership pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 22;

(B) an application for registration for a limited partnership pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 23;

(C) an application for a certificate of authority for a limited liability company pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 25;

(D) an application for a certificate of authority for a business corporation pursuant to Title 11A;

(E) an application for a certificate of authority for a nonprofit corporation pursuant to Title 11B; and

(F) an application for a certificate of authority of a foreign enterprise pursuant to Title 11C;

(3) \$75.00 for a registration or reregistration of an assumed business name, partnership, or unincorporated nonprofit association pursuant to 11 V.S.A. chapter 15;

(4) \$50.00 for the annual report of a domestic business organization;

(5) \$175.00 for the annual report of a foreign business organization;

(6) \$35.00 for the biennial report of a nonprofit corporation, except that the Secretary shall waive the fee for the biennial report of a nonprofit corporation that in the prior calendar year did not pay compensation to any officer, director, or employee; and

(7) \$35.00 for recording any other document submitted for filing and for any related fees, including fees for a certified copy, for a returned check or charge back, for each year a reinstatement fee is due, and for service of process on the Secretary.

§ 1652. RESERVED NAME

(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall state the name and address of the applicant and the name to be reserved. If the Secretary finds that the entity name is available, the Secretary shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for 120 days.

(b) The owner of a reserved name may transfer the reservation to another person by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a notice of the transfer, which states the name and address of the transferee.

§ 1653. ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

A business organization that is authorized to do business in this State may conduct business under an assumed name by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a registration that identifies the authorized business and the assumed name.

§ 1654. [Reserved]

§ 1655. DESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS;CHANGE; RESIGNATION

(a) Duty to designate agent for service of process. A person doing business in this State that is required to designate and maintain an agent for service of process shall provide the name, email, and address information of an individual resident of this State or of a business organization that has a place of business in, and is authorized to conduct business in, this State.

(b) Attestation. A person who designates an agent for service of process attests that the agent consents to the appointment.

(c) Duty to maintain current agent information; statement of change. Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, a person registered with the Secretary of State may change its agent for service of process, or the agent's email or address information, solely by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that provides its current agent information and specifies any changes to the agent information.

(d) Bulk statement of change by agent.

(1) If an agent for service of process changes its name, email, or address information in the records of the Secretary of State, the agent may submit to the Secretary for filing a bulk statement of change that:

(A) identifies the businesses for which the agent serves as the agent for service of process and whose records the Secretary shall update to reflect the change to the agent's information; and

(B) attests that the agent has or will promptly provide notice to each business whose record is updated pursuant to the bulk statement of change.

(2) For a bulk statement of change, the Secretary of State shall collect from the agent a separate filing fee for each business whose record is amended.

(e) Agent resignation; termination.

(1) An agent for service of process may resign as agent by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation and delivering a copy of the statement to the affected business.

(2) An agency for service of process terminates on the earlier of:

(A) 30 days after the Secretary files a statement of resignation; or

(B) the date on which a statement of change designating a new agent takes effect.

(3) The Secretary shall waive the filing fee for a statement of resignation if the agent on record attests that it did not consent to serve as agent for service of process.

§ 1655. SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT FOR SERVICE OF
PROCESS

(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a person registered with the Secretary of State is an agent for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the person.

(b) If a person registered with the Secretary of State fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State as required by law, or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the person upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.

(c)(1) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand.

(2) If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its principal office or last known address.

(d) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.

(e) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a person in any manner otherwise provided by law.

§ 1656. SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT FOR SERVICE OF
PROCESS

(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a person registered with the Secretary of State is an agent for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the person.

(b) If a person registered with the Secretary of State fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State as required by law, or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the person upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.

(c)(1) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand.

(2) If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its principal office or last known address.

(d) Service is effective on the earliest of:

(1) the date the person receives the process, notice, or demand;

(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the person; or

(3) five days after the process, notice, or demand is deposited by the Secretary of State for delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, if postage is prepaid to the address of the principal office or last known address reflected in the records of the Secretary of State.

(e) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.

(f) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a person in any manner otherwise provided by law.

Sec. 5. 11 V.S.A. chapter 22 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 22. PARTNERSHIPS

* * *

§ 3205. EXECUTION, FILING, AND RECORDING OF STATEMENTS

* * *

(f) The Secretary of State shall collect a fee for filing or providing a certified copy of a statement as set forth in section ~~3340~~ 1651 of this title.

* * *

§ 3291. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATION

* * *

(c) After the approval required by subsection (b) of this section, a partnership may only become a limited liability partnership by filing a statement of qualification. The statement must contain:

(1) the name of the partnership;

- (2) the location of the principal place of business in this State;
 - (3) if the partnership does not have a principal place of business in this State, the name, email, and street address information of the partnership's agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title;
 - (4) a statement that the partnership elects to be a limited liability partnership; and
 - (5) a deferred effective date, if any.
- (d) ~~The agent of a limited liability partnership for service of process must be an individual who is a resident of this State or other person authorized to do business in this State. [Repealed.]~~
- (e) The status of a partnership as a limited liability partnership is effective on the later of the filing of the statement or a date specified in the statement. The status remains effective, regardless of changes in the partnership, until it is canceled pursuant to subsection 3205(d) of this title or revoked pursuant to section 3293 of this title.

* * *

§ 3293. ANNUAL REPORT

- (a) A limited liability partnership, and a foreign limited liability partnership authorized to transact business in this State, shall file an annual report in the Office of the Secretary of State ~~which~~ that contains:
- (1) the name of the limited liability partnership and the state or other jurisdiction under whose laws the foreign limited liability partnership is formed;
 - (2) the ~~street~~ address of the partnership's principal office and, if different, the ~~street~~ address of an office in this State, if any; and
 - (3) if the partnership does not have an office in this State, the name, email, and street address of the partnership's designated agent for service of process.

* * *

- (f) A reinstatement under subsection (e) of this section relates back to and takes effect as of the effective date of the revocation, and the partnership's status as a limited liability partnership continues as if the revocation had never occurred.
- (g) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

§ 3302. STATEMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION

(a) Before transacting business in this State, a foreign limited liability partnership must file a statement of foreign qualification. The statement must contain:

* * *

(3) If there is no office of the partnership in this State, the name, email, and street address information of the partnership's agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

(4) A deferred effective date, if any.

(b) ~~The agent of a foreign limited liability partnership for service of process must be an individual who is a resident of this State or other person authorized to do business in this State.~~ [Repealed.]

(c) The status of a partnership as a foreign limited liability partnership is effective on the later of the filing of the statement of foreign qualification or a date specified in the statement. The status remains effective, regardless of changes in the partnership, until it is canceled pursuant to subsection 3205(d) or revoked pursuant to section 3293 of this title.

(d) An amendment or cancellation of a statement of foreign qualification is effective when it is filed or on a deferred effective date specified in the amendment or cancellation.

§ 3303. EFFECT OF FAILURE TO QUALIFY

(a)(1) A foreign limited liability partnership transacting business in this State may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State unless it has in effect a statement of foreign qualification.

(2) The successor to a foreign limited liability partnership that transacted business in this State without a ~~certificate of authority~~ statement of foreign qualification in effect and the assignee of a cause of action arising out of that business may not maintain a proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense based on that cause of action in any court in this State until the foreign limited liability partnership or its successor or assignee obtains files a ~~certificate of authority~~ statement of foreign qualification.

* * *

§ 3310. FEES

(a) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees when a document described in this section is delivered to the Office of the Secretary of State for filing:

(1) Statement of authority	\$155.00
(2) Statement of denial	\$25.00
(3) Statement of dissociation	\$20.00
(4) Statement of dissolution	\$20.00
(5) Statement of merger	\$85.00
(6) Statement of qualification	\$130.00
(7) Statement of foreign qualification	\$170.00
(8) Amendment	\$45.00
(9) Cancellation	\$10.00
(10) Annual report of domestic limited liability partnership	\$30.00
(11) Annual report of foreign limited liability partnership	\$170.00
(12) Reinstatement	\$45.00
(13) Statement of change of designated agent or designated office, or both	\$35.00
	not to exceed
	\$1,000.00
	per
	filer
	per
	calendar
	year
(14) Application for certificate of good standing	\$45.00

(15) Any other document permitted or required to

be filed by this chapter \$20.00

(16) Amendment— Foreign \$35.00

(b) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees:

(1) ~~\$ 25.00 each time process is served on the Secretary under this chapter. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if he or she prevails in the proceeding.~~

(2) ~~\$ 25.00 for the certificate certifying the copy of any filed document related to a partnership, limited liability partnership, or a foreign limited liability partnership~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this chapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in section 1651 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 6. 11 V.S.A. chapter 23 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 23. LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS

* * *

§ 3403. RESERVATION OF NAME

(a) The exclusive right to the use of a name may be reserved by:

(1) ~~any person intending to organize a limited partnership under this chapter and to adopt that name;~~

(2) ~~any domestic limited partnership or any foreign limited partnership registered in this State which, in either case, intends to adopt that name;~~

(3) ~~any foreign limited partnership intending to register in this State and adopt that name; and~~

(4) ~~any person intending to organize a foreign limited partnership and intending to have it registered in this State and to adopt that name.~~

(b) ~~The reservation shall be made by filing with the Secretary of State an application, executed by the applicant, to reserve a specified name. If the Secretary of State finds that the name is available for use by a domestic or foreign limited partnership, he or she shall reserve the name for the exclusive use of the applicant for a period of 120 days. The owner of a name reserved under this section may renew the reservation for two successive periods of 120 days each. The right to the exclusive use of a reserved name may be transferred to any other person by filing in the Office of the Secretary of State a notice of the transfer, executed by the applicant for whom the name was~~

~~reserved and specifying the name and address of the transferee~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to section 1652 of this title.

§ 3404. SPECIFIED OFFICE AND AGENT

Each limited partnership shall continuously maintain in this State:

(1) an office, which may but need not be a place of its business in this State, at which shall be kept the records required by section 3405 of this title to be maintained; and

(2) an agent for service of process on the limited partnership, ~~which agent must be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or a foreign corporation, partnership, or limited liability company authorized to do business in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

* * *

§ 3411. CERTIFICATE OF LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

(a) In order to form a limited partnership, a certificate of limited partnership must be executed and filed in the Office of the Secretary of State. The certificate shall set forth:

(1) the name of the limited partnership;

(2) the address of the office and the name, email, and address information of the agent for service of process required to be maintained by section 3404 of this title;

(3) the name and the business address of each general partner, and of any other principal the limited partnership provides;

(4) the name and ~~place of residence~~ the business address of each limited partner and the amount of cash and a description of and the agreed value of other property contributed by each limited partner;

* * *

§ 3420. FEES

~~(a) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees when a document described in this section is delivered to the Office of the Secretary of State for filing:~~

~~(1) Certificate of Limited Partnership~~	\$130.00
~~(2) Registration of Foreign Limited Partnership~~	\$155.00
~~(3) Amendment—Domestic~~	\$35.00

(4) Cancellation	\$25.00
(5) Merger	\$65.00
(6) Statement of change of designated agent or designated office, or both	\$35.00
	not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year
(7) Application for certificate of good standing	\$35.00
(8) Any other document permitted or required to be filed by this chapter	\$20.00
(9) Amendment—Foreign	\$35.00.
(10) Name reservation, application	\$20.00.
(11) Name reservation, transfer	\$20.00.
(12) Restated certificate of limited partnership	\$20.00.

(b) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees:

(1) ~~\$25.00 each time process is served on the Secretary under this chapter. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if he or she prevails in the proceeding.~~

(2) ~~\$25.00 for the certificate certifying the copy of any filed document related to a partnership, limited liability partnership, or a foreign limited liability partnership~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this chapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in section 1651 of this title.

* * *

§ 3482. REGISTRATION

Before transacting business in this State, a foreign limited partnership shall register with the Secretary of State. In order to register, a foreign limited partnership shall submit to the Secretary of State, ~~in duplicate,~~ an application

for registration as a foreign limited partnership, signed and sworn to by a general partner and setting forth:

(1) the name of the foreign limited partnership and, if different, the name under which it proposes to register and transact business in this State;

(2) the state and date of its formation;

(3) the name, email, and address information of any agent for service of process on the foreign limited partnership ~~whom the foreign limited partnership elects to appoint; the agent must be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, or a foreign corporation having a place of business in, and authorized to do business in, this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title;~~

(4) a statement that the Secretary of State is appointed the agent of the foreign limited partnership for service of process if no agent has been appointed under subdivision (3) of this section or, if appointed, the agent's authority has been revoked or if the agent cannot be found or served with the exercise of reasonable diligence;

(5) the address of the office required to be maintained in the state of its organization by the laws of that state or, if not so required, of the principal office of the foreign limited partnership;

(6) the name and business address of each general partner, and of any other principal the foreign limited partnership provides; and

(7) the address of the office at which is kept a list of the names and addresses of the limited partners and their capital contributions, together with an undertaking by the foreign limited partnership to keep those records until the foreign limited partnership's registration in this State is canceled or withdrawn.

* * *

§ 3487. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS WITHOUT REGISTRATION

(a)(1) A foreign limited partnership transacting business in this State may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State until it has registered in this State.

(2) The successor to a foreign limited partnership that transacted business in this State without a ~~certificate of authority~~ registration and the assignee of a cause of action arising out of that business may not maintain a proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense based on that cause of action in any court in this State until the foreign limited

partnership or its successor or assignee ~~obtains a certificate of authority~~ has registered.

* * *

Sec. 7. 11 V.S.A. chapter 25 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 25. LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES

* * *

§ 4006. RESERVED NAME

~~(a)(1) A person may reserve the exclusive use of the name of a limited liability company, including a fictitious or assumed name for a foreign limited liability company whose name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing.~~

~~(2) The application shall state the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved.~~

~~(3) If the Secretary of State finds that the name applied for is available, the Secretary shall reserve that name for the applicant's exclusive use for a 120-day period.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved limited liability company name may renew the reservation for successive periods of 120 days each by delivering a renewal application to the Secretary of State during the 45-day period preceding the date of expiration of the reservation.~~

~~(c) The owner of a name reserved for a limited liability company may assign the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a signed notice of the assignment that states the name and address of the assignee.~~

~~(d) The owner of a reserved limited liability company name may terminate the name reservation by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a signed notice of withdrawal of name reservation~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to section 1652 of this title.

§ 4007. DESIGNATED OFFICE AND AGENT

~~(a)~~ A limited liability company and a foreign limited liability company authorized to do business in this State shall designate and continuously maintain:

(1) a designated office for notification purposes, which may but need not be a place of its business, and may but need not be located in this State; and

(2) ~~an agent and street address of the agent for service of process on the limited liability company in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) An agent for service of process shall be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, another limited liability company, or a foreign corporation or foreign limited liability company authorized to do business in this State.~~

§ 4008. CHANGE OF DESIGNATED OFFICE OR AGENT FOR SERVICE
OF PROCESS

(a) A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company may change its designated office or agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that sets forth: its current designated office information and any change to the information.

~~(1) the name of the company;~~

~~(2) the street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address, of its current designated office;~~

~~(3) if the current designated office is to be changed, the street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address, of the new designated office;~~

~~(4) the name and address of its current agent for service of process; and~~

~~(5) if the current agent for service of process is to be changed, the name of the new agent for service of process and the new agent's written consent, either on the statement or attached to it, to the appointment.~~

~~(b) If an agent for service of process changes the street address of the agent's business office, the agent may change the street address of the designated office of any limited liability company or foreign limited liability company for which the agent is the agent for service of process by notifying the company in writing of the change and signing, either manually or in facsimile, and filing with the Secretary of State a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the company has been notified of the change. A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company shall change its agent for service of process, or the agent's email or address information, by delivering to the Secretary for filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

§ 4009. RESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) To resign as an agent for service of process of a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company, the agent shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation ~~containing the company~~

~~name and stating that the agent is resigning pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) The Secretary of State shall file a statement of resignation delivered under subsection (a) of this section and mail or otherwise deliver a copy to the designated office of the limited liability company.~~

~~(c) An agency for service of process terminates on the earlier of:~~

~~(1) the 41st day after the Secretary of State files the statement of resignation; or~~

~~(2) when a record designating a new agent for service of process is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing on behalf of the limited liability company and becomes effective.~~

§ 4010. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a limited liability company or a foreign limited liability company is an agent of the company for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the company.~~

~~(b) If a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the company upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.~~

~~(c) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand. If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its registered office. Service on the Secretary of State shall be returnable in not less than 30 days.~~

~~(d) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.~~

~~(e) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company in any manner otherwise provided by law. A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company is subject to the service of process provisions in section 1656 of this title.~~

* * *

 § 4012. FEES

(a) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees when a document described in this section is delivered to the Office of the Secretary of State for filing:

(1) Articles of organization	\$155.00
(2) Application for certificate of authority	\$155.00
(3) Amendment of articles or certificate of authority	\$35.00
(4) Cancellation of certificate of authority	\$25.00
(5) Application for reserved name	\$25.00
(6) Notice of transfer of reserved name	\$20.00
(7) Application for registered name	\$25.00
(8) Application for renewal of registered name	\$25.00
(9) Statement of change of designated agent or designated office, or both	\$35.00 and not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year
(10) Agent's statement of resignation	no fee
(11) Restatement of articles of organization	\$25.00
(12) Articles of correction	\$35.00
(13) Application for certificate of existence or authorization	\$35.00
(14) Articles of merger	\$55.00
(15) Annual report of a domestic limited liability company	\$45.00
(16) Annual report of a foreign limited liability company	\$170.00
(17) Reinstatement	\$35.00
(18) Any other document required or permitted to be filed by this chapter	\$20.00
(19) Articles of domestication	\$20.00
(20) Articles of termination	\$20.00
(21) Notice of withdrawal of reserved name	\$20.00
(22) Statement of conversion	\$20.00

(b) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees:

(1) ~~\$35.00 each time process is served on the Secretary under this chapter. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if the party prevails in the proceeding.~~

(2) ~~\$25.00 for the certificate certifying the copy of any filed document relating to a limited liability company or a foreign limited liability company~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this chapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in section 1651 of this title.

* * *

§ 4023. ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

* * *

(b) Articles of organization of a limited liability company may set forth:

(1) provisions permitted to be set forth in an operating agreement; ~~and~~

(2) name, email, and address information for one or more owners, officers, or other principals of the company; and

(3) other matters not inconsistent with law.

* * *

§ 4033. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic limited liability company and each foreign limited liability company authorized to transact business in this State shall file an annual report with the Secretary of State. The annual report shall set forth the following information:

(1) the name of the company and the state or country under whose law it is organized; ~~and~~

(2) the address of its designated office; ~~and~~

(3) the name, email, and address of its designated agent for service of process at that office in this State.

(b) Information in the annual report shall be current as of the date the annual report is signed on behalf of the company.

(c) The annual report shall be delivered to the Secretary of State within three months after the expiration of the company's fiscal year.

(d) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

§ 4112. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign limited liability company may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign company and, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, an alternate name that satisfies the requirements of section 4116 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is organized;

(3) the address of its initial designated office; and

(4) the name, email, and address information ~~and street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address,~~ of its designated agent for service of process in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

(b) An application may set forth:

(1) provisions permitted to be included in an operating agreement;

(2) the name, email, and address information for one or more owners, officers, or other principals of the company; and

(3) other matters not inconsistent with law.

(c) A foreign limited liability company shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of existence or a document of similar import, authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of company records in the state or country under whose law it is organized, dated ~~no~~ not earlier than 90 days prior to filing of the application.

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 11A language * * *

Sec. 8. 11A V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 1.20. FILING REQUIREMENTS

* * *

(j)(1) Any of the terms of a plan or filed documents may be made dependent on facts ascertainable outside the plan or filed documents as follows:

(A) The manner in which the facts operate on the terms of the plan or filed document must be clearly and expressly set forth in the plan or filed document.

(B) The facts may include without limitation actions or events within the control of, or determinations made by, a ~~part~~ party to the plan or filing the filed document or a representative of a party to the plan or filing the filed document.

(2) As used in this section:

(A) "Filed document" means a document filed with the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State under any provision of this title, except chapter 15 or section 16.22 of this title.

(B) "Plan" means a plan of merger or share exchange.

* * *

§ 1.22. ~~FILING; SERVICE AND COPYING FEES~~

~~(a) The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees when the documents described in this section are delivered to the Office of the Secretary of State for filing:~~

~~(1) Articles of incorporation~~	~~\$155.00~~
~~(2) Application for reserved name~~	~~\$40.00~~
~~(3) Notice of transfer of reserved name~~	~~\$20.00~~
~~(4) Application for registered name of a foreign corporation~~	~~\$50.00~~
~~(5) Application for renewal of registered name of a foreign corporation~~	~~\$50.00~~
~~(6) Statement of change of registered agents or registered office, or both~~	~~\$25.00 and not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year.~~
~~(7) Agent's statement of resignation~~	~~No fee~~
~~(8) Amendment of articles of incorporation~~	~~\$50.00~~
~~(9) Restatement of articles of incorporation~~	~~\$50.00~~
~~(10) Articles of merger or share exchange~~	~~\$95.00~~
~~(11) Articles of dissolution~~	~~\$35.00~~
~~(12) Articles of revocation of dissolution~~	~~\$35.00~~
~~(13) Application for certificate of authority~~	~~\$155.00~~

(14) Application for amended certificate of authority	\$50.00
(15) Application for certificate of withdrawal	\$25.00
(16) Annual report of a foreign corporation	\$250.00
(17) Annual report of a domestic corporation	\$60.00
(18) Application for certificate of good standing	\$25.00
(19) Any other document required or permitted to be filed by this title	\$35.00
(20) Articles of correction	\$20.00
(21) Articles of domestication	\$20.00
(22) Statement of conversion	\$20.00

(b) ~~The Secretary of State shall collect a fee of \$25.00 each time process is served on him or her under this title. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if he or she prevails in the proceeding.~~

(c) ~~The Secretary of State shall collect a fee of \$25.00 for copying and certifying the copy of any filed document relating to a domestic or foreign corporation.~~

(d) ~~When a corporation has been involuntarily terminated for failure to file its annual report, the Secretary of State shall collect, for each year the corporation failed to file its annual report, the annual report filing fee and a reinstatement fee of \$50.00~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this title shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651.

* * *

§ 1.40. DEFINITIONS

As used in this title:

* * *

(8) “Entity” includes corporation and foreign corporation; ~~not-for-profit~~ nonprofit corporation; profit and not-for-profit nonprofit unincorporated association; business trust, estate, partnership, trust, and two or more persons having a joint or common economic interest; and state, United States, and foreign government.

* * *

Sec. 9. 11A V.S.A. § 2.02 is amended to read:

§ 2.02. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(a) The articles of incorporation shall set forth:

(1) a corporate name for the corporation that satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title;

(2) the classes of shares, if any, and the number of shares in each class that the corporation is authorized to issue;

(3) the number of shares the corporation is authorized to issue;

(4) the street address of the corporation's initial registered office and the name and email of its initial registered agent for service of process at that office pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655;

(5) the name and address of each incorporator;

(6) one or more classes of shares that together have unlimited voting rights; and

(7) one or more classes of shares, (which may be the same class or classes as those with voting rights), that together are entitled to receive the net assets of the corporation upon dissolution.

(b) The articles of incorporation may set forth:

(1) the names and addresses of the individuals who are to serve as the initial board of directors, and of any other principals the corporation provides;

(2) provisions not inconsistent with law regarding:

* * *

Sec. 10. 11A V.S.A. chapter 4 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 4. NAME

§ 4.01. CORPORATE ~~HEAD~~ NAME

(a) A corporate name:

(1) shall contain the word "corporation," "incorporated," "company," or "limited," or the abbreviation "corp.," "inc.," "co.," or "ltd.," or words or abbreviations of like import in another language;

(2) may not contain language stating or implying that the corporation is organized for a purpose other than that permitted by section 3.01 of this title and its articles of incorporation;

(3) shall not have the word “cooperative” or any abbreviation thereof as part of its name unless the corporation is a worker cooperative corporation organized under 11 V.S.A. chapter 8, a housing cooperative corporation organized under 11 V.S.A. chapter 14, or the articles of incorporation contain all of the provisions required of a ~~corporation organized as a cooperative association~~ general cooperative corporation in 11 V.S.A. § 981; and

(4) shall not include any word not otherwise authorized by law.

* * *

§ 4.02. RESERVED NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a corporate name, including a fictitious name for a foreign corporation whose corporate name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved. If the Secretary of State finds that the corporate name applied for is available, he or she shall reserve the name for the applicant’s exclusive use for a 120-day period. Such 120-day period may be renewed no more than twice.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved corporate name may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer that states the name and address of the transferee~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.

§ 4.03. REGISTERED NAME

(a) A foreign corporation may register its corporate name, or its alternate name ~~or corporate name~~ with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, if the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from the corporate or business names that are not available under section 4.01(b)(3) of this title.

(b) A foreign corporation registers its corporate name, or its alternate name ~~or corporate name~~ with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing an application:

(1) setting forth its corporate name, or its alternate name ~~or corporate name~~ with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, the state or country and date of its incorporation, and a brief description of the nature of the business in which it is engaged; and

(2) accompanied by a certificate of good standing or a document of similar import from the state or country of incorporation.

* * *

Sec. 11. 11A V.S.A. chapter 5 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 5. OFFICE AND AGENT

§ 5.01. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS

Each corporation must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, who may be:

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose business office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic corporation or nonprofit domestic corporation whose business office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign corporation or nonprofit foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose business office is identical with the registered office.~~

§ 5.02. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) A corporation may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process information by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, that sets forth:

~~(1) the name of the corporation;~~

~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~

~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of the new registered office;~~

~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~

~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of the new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~

~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the business office of its registered agent will be identical~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of the agent's business office, the agent may change the street address of the registered office of any corporation for which he or she is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change.~~

§ 5.03. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT

~~(a) A registered agent may resign his or her agency appointment by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing, and the corporation at its registered office, the signed original and two exact copies of a statement of resignation. The statement may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall mail one copy to the registered office (if not discontinued) and the other copy to the corporation at its principal office.~~

~~(c) The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement is filed~~ A registered agent for service of process may resign as agent by filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.

§ 5.04. SERVICE ON CORPORATION

~~(a) The corporation's registered agent shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the corporation may be served.~~

~~(b) Whenever a corporation shall fail to appoint or maintain a registered agent in this State, or whenever its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the registered office, then the Secretary of State shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any such process, notice or demand may be served. Service on the Secretary of State of any such process, notice, or demand shall be made by delivering to and leaving with him or her, or with any clerk having charge of the corporation department of his or her office, duplicate copies of such process, notice, or demand. In the event any such process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, he or she shall immediately cause one of the copies thereof to be forwarded by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the corporation at its registered office.~~

~~(c) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served upon the Secretary under this section, and shall record therein the time of such service and the Secretary's action with reference thereto.~~

~~(d) Nothing herein contained shall limit or affect the right to serve any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon a corporation in any other manner now or hereafter permitted by law, or by rule. A corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. 1656.~~

Sec. 12. 11A V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. DISSOLUTION

* * *

§ 14.05. EFFECT OF DISSOLUTION

* * *

(b) Dissolution of a corporation does not:

- (1) transfer title to the corporation's property;
- (2) prevent transfer of its shares or securities, although the authorization to dissolve may provide for closing the corporation's share transfer records;
- (3) subject its directors or officers to standards of conduct different from those prescribed in chapter 8 of this title;
- (4) change quorum or voting requirements for its board of directors or shareholders; change provisions for selection, resignation, or removal of its directors or officers or both; or change provisions for amending its bylaws;
- (5) prevent commencement of a proceeding by or against the corporation in its corporate name;
- (6) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of dissolution; or
- (7) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

* * *

§ 14.20. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

* * *

(d) Involuntary termination of a corporation does not:

- (1) prevent commencement of a proceeding against the corporation in its corporate name;
- (2) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of involuntary termination; or

(3) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

* * *

Sec. 13. 11A V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. FOREIGN CORPORATIONS

* * *

§ 15.03. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign corporation may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application and the applicable filing fee to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation or, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, a corporate name that satisfies the requirements of section 15.06 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(3) its date of incorporation and period of duration;

(4) the street address of its principal office;

(5) the address of its registered office in this State and the name of its registered agent for service of process at that office, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655; and

(6) the names and usual business addresses of its current directors and officers, and of any other principals the corporation provides.

(b) The foreign corporation shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of good standing (or a document of similar import) duly authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporate records in the state or country under whose law it is incorporated.

* * *

§ 15.06. CORPORATE NAME OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) If the corporate name of a foreign corporation does not satisfy the requirements of section 4.01 of this title, the foreign corporation to obtain or maintain a certificate of authority to transact business in this State:

(1) may add the word “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” or “limited,” or the abbreviation “corp.,” “inc.,” “co.,” or “ltd.,” to its corporate name for use in this State; or

(2) ~~may use an available trade~~ adopt an alternate name to transact business in this State if its corporate name is unavailable and it delivers to the Secretary of State for filing a copy of the resolution of its board of directors, certified by its secretary, adopting the ~~trade~~ alternate name.

(b) Except as authorized by subsections (c) and (d) of this section, the corporate name, including ~~a trade~~ an alternate name, of a foreign corporation shall be distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any name granted, registered, or reserved under this chapter, or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State.

(c) A foreign corporation may apply to the Secretary of State for authorization to use in this State the name of another corporation incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State that is not distinguishable in the records from one or more of the names described in subsection (b) of this section, by submitting to the Secretary of State a satisfactory written form indicating the other corporation's consent and change of name.

(d) A foreign corporation may use in this State the name, including the ~~trade~~ alternate name, of another domestic or foreign corporation that is used in this State if the other corporation is incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State and the foreign corporation:

- (1) has merged with the other corporation;
- (2) has been formed by reorganization of the other corporation; or
- (3) has acquired all or substantially all of the assets, including the corporate name, of the other corporation.

* * *

§ 15.07. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

Each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, ~~who may be:~~

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose business office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic corporation or domestic not-for-profit corporation whose business office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign corporation or foreign not-for-profit corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose business office is identical with the registered office.~~

§ 15.08. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that sets forth:

~~(1) its name;~~

~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~

~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of its new registered office;~~

~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~

~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of its new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~

~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the business office of its registered agent will be identical.~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of his or her business office, he or she may change the street address of the registered office of any foreign corporation for which he or she is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.09. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF
PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation may resign his or her agency as agent by filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 appointment by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of

~~resignation. The statement of resignation may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall attach the filing receipt to one copy and mail the copy and receipt to the registered office if not discontinued. The Secretary of State shall mail the other copy to the foreign corporation at its principal office address shown in its most recent annual report.~~

~~(c) The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement was filed.~~

§ 15.10. SERVICE OF PROCESS ON FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~Service of process on a foreign corporation is governed by 12 V.S.A. subchapter 6, chapter 25 and by the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure. A foreign corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

* * *

§ 15.30. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall terminate the certificate of authority of a foreign corporation if:

(1) the foreign corporation fails to deliver its annual report to the Secretary of State as required by section 16.22 of this title;

(2) the foreign corporation does not pay any franchise taxes or penalties imposed by this title or other law;

(3) the foreign corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State;

(4) the foreign corporation fails to inform the Secretary of State under section 15.08 or 15.09 of this title that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has changed;

(5) a material misrepresentation is knowingly made in a signed document delivered to the Secretary of State for filing;

(6) the Secretary of State receives a duly authenticated certificate from the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporation records in the state or country under whose law the foreign corporation is incorporated stating that it has been dissolved or terminated or disappeared as the result of a merger;

(7) the foreign corporation has failed to comply with subdivision 11.07(a)(3) of this title requiring it to file articles of merger where it is the survivor of a merger with a domestic corporation; or

(8) the Commissioner of Taxes notifies the Secretary of State that a foreign corporation has failed to make a return, to pay a tax, to file a bond, or to do any other act required to be done under the provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 211.

(b) The Secretary of State shall serve the foreign corporation with written notice of termination of its certificate of authority under section 15.10 of this title, setting out each deficiency.

(c) The authority of a foreign corporation to transact business in this State ceases on the date shown on the notice terminating its certificate of authority. Termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority does not terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

(d) The Secretary of State's termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority appoints the Secretary of State the foreign corporation's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the foreign corporation was authorized to transact or was transacting without authorization business in this State. Service of process on the Secretary of State under this subsection is service on the foreign corporation. Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of the process to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its most recent annual report or in any subsequent communication received from the corporation stating the current mailing address of its principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for a certificate of authority, or otherwise perfect service under section 15.10 of this title.

(e) If the foreign corporation corrects each ground for termination and demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the Secretary of State that each ground cited in the notice of termination does not exist, and pays to the Secretary of State a reinstatement fee of ~~\$25.00~~ for each year it is delinquent, the secretary may cancel the termination and prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the corporation under section 15.10 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 14. 11A V.S.A. chapter 16 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 16. RECORDS AND REPORTS

* * *

§ 16.22. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic corporation, and each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State, shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an annual report that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation and the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) the address of its registered office and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at that office in this State;

* * *

~~(e) Listing the name of the registered agent and the address of the registered office does not effectuate a change in such agent or office unless the report also contains the requirements of section 5.02 of this title The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.~~

* * * Updates to Title 11B language * * *

Sec. 15. 11B V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 1.21. FORMS

(a) The Secretary of State may prescribe the form or electronic format of and furnish on request, forms or specifications for formats for:

(1) an application for a certificate of ~~existence~~ good standing;

(2) a foreign corporation's application for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State;

(3) a foreign corporation's application for a certificate of withdrawal;
and

(4) the biennial report.

(b) The Secretary of State may prescribe and furnish on request forms for other documents required or permitted to be filed by this title but their use is not mandatory.

§ 1.22. ~~FILING; SERVICE AND COPYING FEES~~

~~The Secretary of State shall collect the following fees when the documents described in this section are delivered to the Office of the Secretary of State for filing:~~

(1) Articles of incorporation	\$155.00
(2) Application for reserved name	\$35.00
(3) Transfer of reserved name	\$35.00
(4) Application for registered name	\$45.00
(5) Renewal of registered name	\$45.00
(6) Statement of change of registered agents or registered office, or both	
\$35.00 and not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year.	
(7) Agent's statement of resignation	No fee
(8) Amendment of articles of association	\$45.00
(9) Restatement of articles of association	\$45.00
(10) Articles of merger	\$90.00
(11) Articles of dissolution	No fee
(12) Articles of revocation of dissolution	\$10.00
(13) Application for reinstatement following administrative dissolution	
	\$45.00
(14) Application for certificate of authority for a foreign corporation	
	\$175.00
(15) Application for amended certificate of authority	\$45.00
(16) Application for certificate of withdrawal	\$10.00
(17) Biennial report	\$35.00 except that
a corporation which certifies to the Secretary of State, on a form approved by the Secretary, that it did not compensate its officers, directors, or employees during the prior calendar year shall be exempt from the fee required by this subdivision.	
(18) Articles of correction	\$30.00
(19) Application for certificate of good standing	\$35.00
(20) Certified copy of any filed document	\$25.00
(21) Restatement of articles of organization	\$30.00
<u>A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this title shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651.</u>	

Sec. 16. 11B V.S.A. chapter 2 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 2. INCORPORATION

* * *

§ 2.02. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(a) The articles of incorporation must set forth:

(1) a A corporate name for the corporation that satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title;

(2) ~~one~~ One of the following statements:

(A) This corporation is a public benefit corporation.

(B) This corporation is a mutual benefit corporation.

(3) ~~the~~ The street address of the corporation's initial registered office and the name and email of its initial registered agent for service of process at that office, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655;

(4) ~~the~~ The name and address of each incorporator;

(5) ~~whether~~ Whether or not the corporation will have members; ~~and~~.

(6) ~~provisions~~ Provisions not inconsistent with law regarding the distribution of assets on dissolution.

(b) The articles of incorporation may set forth:

(1) the purpose or purposes for which the corporation is organized, which may be, either alone or in combination with other purposes, the transaction of any lawful activity;

(2) the names and addresses of the individuals who are to serve as the initial directors, and of any other principals the corporation provides;

(3) provisions not inconsistent with law regarding:

(A) managing and regulating the affairs of the corporation;

(B) defining, limiting, and regulating the powers of the corporation, its board of directors, and members (or any class of members);

(C) the characteristics, qualifications, rights, limitations, and obligations attaching to each or any class of members; and

(4) any provision that under this title is required or permitted to be set forth in the bylaws.

* * *

Sec. 17. 11B V.S.A. chapter 4 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 4. NAME

* * *

§ 4.02. RESERVED NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a corporate name, including a fictitious name for a foreign corporation whose corporate name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. Upon finding that the corporate name applied for is available, the Secretary of State shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for a 120-day period. Such 120-day period may be renewed no more than twice.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved corporate name may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer that states the name and address of the transferee~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.

§ 4.03. REGISTERED NAME

(a) A foreign corporation may register its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, if the name is distinguishable upon the records of the Secretary of State from:

(1) the corporate name of a nonprofit or business corporation incorporated or authorized to do business in this State; and

(2) a corporate name reserved under section 4.02 of this title or 11A V.S.A. § 4.02 or registered under this section.

(b) A foreign corporation registers its corporate name, or its alternate name corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, by delivering to the Secretary of State an application:

(1) setting forth its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, the state or country and date of its incorporation, and a brief description of the nature of the activities in which it is engaged; and

(2) accompanied by a certificate of existence (or a document of similar import) from the state or country of incorporation.

* * *

Sec. 18. 11B V.S.A. chapter 5 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 5. OFFICE AND AGENT

§ 5.01. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS

Each corporation must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, whose business office is identical with the registered office.

§ 5.02. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) A corporation may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation;

(2) the street address of its current registered office;

(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of the new registered office;

(4) the name of its current registered agent;

(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of the new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and

(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the office of its registered agent will be identical

(b) If the street address of a registered agent's office is changed, the registered agent may change the street address of the registered office of any corporation for which the registered agent is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and by signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change.

§ 5.03. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF
PROCESS

(a) A registered agent may resign as registered agent by ~~signing and delivering to the Secretary of State a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of resignation. The statement may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

(b) ~~After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall mail one copy to the registered office (if not discontinued) and the other copy to the corporation at its principal office as shown in the most recent biennial report filed pursuant to section 16.22 of this title.~~

(c) ~~The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement is filed.~~

§ 5.04. SERVICE ON CORPORATION

(a) ~~The corporation's registered agent shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the corporation may be served~~

(b) ~~Whenever a corporation shall fail to appoint or maintain a registered agent in this State, or whenever its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the registered office, then the Secretary of State shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any such process, notice, or demand may be served. Service on the Secretary of State of any such process, notice, or demand shall be made by delivering to and leaving with him or her, or with any clerk having charge of the corporation department of his or her office, duplicate copies of such process, notice, or demand. In the event any such process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, he or she shall immediately cause one of the copies thereof to be forwarded by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the corporation at its registered office.~~

(c) ~~The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served upon the Secretary under this section, and shall record therein the time of such service and the Secretary's action with reference thereto.~~

(d) ~~Nothing herein contained shall limit or affect the right to serve any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon a corporation in any other manner now or hereafter permitted by law, or by rule~~ A corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.

Sec. 19. 11B V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. DISSOLUTION

* * *

§ 14.05. EFFECT OF DISSOLUTION

* * *

(b) Dissolution of a corporation does not:

- (1) transfer title to the corporation's property;
- (2) subject its directors or officers to standards of conduct different from those prescribed in chapter 8 of this title;
- (3) change quorum or voting requirements for its board or members; change provisions for selection, resignation, or removal of its directors or officers or both; or change provisions for amending its bylaws;
- (4) prevent commencement of a proceeding by or against the corporation in its corporate name;
- (5) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of dissolution; or
- (6) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process.

* * *

§ 14.20. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

The Secretary of State may commence a proceeding under section 14.21 of this title to administratively dissolve a corporation if:

- (1) the corporation does not pay within 60 days after they are due fees imposed by this title;
- (2) the corporation does not deliver its biennial report to the Secretary of State within 60 days after it is due;
- (3) the corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State for 60 days or more; or
- (4) the corporation does not notify the Secretary of State within 120 days that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has been changed, that its registered agent for service of process has resigned, or that its registered office has been discontinued.

§ 14.21. PROCEDURE FOR AND EFFECT OF INVOLUNTARY
TERMINATION

* * *

(d) The ~~involuntarily~~ involuntary dissolution of a corporation does not terminate the authority of its registered agent for service of process.

§ 14.22. REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING INVOLUNTARY
DISSOLUTION

(a) A corporation involuntarily dissolved that has not distributed its assets under section 14.21 of this title may apply to the Secretary of State for reinstatement upon payment of ~~\$25.00~~ the fee specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651 for each year the corporation is delinquent. The application must:

(1) recite the name of the corporation and the effective date of its involuntary dissolution;

(2) state that the ground or grounds for dissolution either did not exist or have been eliminated; and

(3) state that the corporation's name satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 20. 11B V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. FOREIGN CORPORATIONS

* * *

§ 15.03. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign corporation may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application to the Secretary of State. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation or, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, a corporate name that satisfies the requirements of section 15.06 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(3) the date of incorporation and period of duration;

(4) the street address of its principal office;

(5) the address of its registered office in this State and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at that office;

(6) the names and usual business or home addresses of its current directors and officers and of any other principals the corporation provides;

(7) whether the foreign corporation has members; and

(8) whether the corporation, if it had been incorporated in this State, would be a public benefit or mutual benefit corporation.

(b) The foreign corporation shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of existence, (or a document of similar import), duly authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporate records in the state or country under whose law it is incorporated.

* * *

§ 15.06. CORPORATE NAME OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) If the corporate name of a foreign corporation does not satisfy the requirements of section 4.01 of this title, the foreign corporation to obtain or maintain a certificate of authority to transact business in this State:

(1) may add the word “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” or “limited,” or the abbreviation “corp.,” “inc.,” “co.,” or “Ltd.,” to its corporate name for use in this State; or

(2) may ~~use an available trade~~ adopt an alternate name to transact business in this State if its corporate name is unavailable and it delivers to the Secretary of State for filing a copy of the resolution of its board of directors, certified by its secretary, adopting the ~~trade~~ alternate name.

(b) Except as authorized by subsections (c) and (d) of this section, the corporate name, ~~(including a trade~~ an alternate name,) of a foreign corporation must be distinguishable upon the records of the Secretary of State from reserved or registered trade names or corporate names.

(c) A foreign corporation may apply to the Secretary of State for authorization to use in this State the name of another corporation incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State that is not distinguishable upon the records from the name applied for by submitting to the Secretary of State a satisfactory written form indicating the other corporation’s consent and change of name.

(d) A foreign corporation may use in this State the name, ~~(including the trade~~ alternate name,) of another domestic or foreign corporation that is used in this State if the other corporation is incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State and the foreign corporation:

* * *

§ 15.07. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

Each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office with the same address as that of its registered agent for service of process; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process, ~~who may be:~~

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic business or nonprofit corporation whose office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign business or nonprofit corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose office is identical with the registered office pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.08. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change ~~that sets forth:~~

~~(1) its name;~~

~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~

~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of its new registered office;~~

~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~

~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of its new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~

~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the office of its registered agent will be identical.~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of its business office, the agent may change the address of the registered office of any foreign corporation for which the agent is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of~~

~~change that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.09. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation may resign as agent by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of resignation. The statement of resignation may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall attach the filing receipt to one copy and mail the copy and receipt to the registered office if not discontinued. The Secretary of State shall mail the other copy to the foreign corporation at its principal office address shown in its most recent biennial report.~~

~~(c) The agency is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement was filed.~~

§ 15.10. SERVICE ON FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State is the corporation's agent for service of process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served on the foreign corporation.~~

~~(b) A foreign corporation may be served by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its application for a certificate of authority or in its most recent biennial report filed under section 16.22 of this title if the foreign corporation:~~

~~(1) has no registered agent or its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be served;~~

~~(2) has withdrawn from transacting business in this State under section 15.20 of this title; or~~

~~(3) has had its certificate of authority revoked under section 15.31 of this title.~~

~~(c) Service is perfected under subsection (b) of this section at the earliest of:~~

~~(1) the date the foreign corporation receives the mail;~~

~~(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the foreign corporation; or~~

~~(3) five days after its deposit in the U.S. mail, as evidenced by the postmark if mailed postpaid and correctly addressed.~~

~~(d) This section does not prescribe the only means, or necessarily the required means, of serving a foreign corporation. A foreign corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

§ 15.20. WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

* * *

(b) A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may apply for a certificate of withdrawal by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation and the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) that it is not transacting business in this State and that it surrenders its authority to transact business in this State;

(3) that it revokes the authority of its registered agent for service of process to accept service on its behalf and appoints the Secretary of State as its agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action arising during the time it was authorized to do business in this State;

(4) a mailing address to which the Secretary of State may mail a copy of any process served on him or her under subdivision (3) of this subsection; and

(5) a commitment to notify the Secretary of State in the future of any change in the mailing address.

* * *

§ 15.30. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall terminate the certificate of authority of a foreign corporation if:

(1) the foreign corporation fails to deliver its biennial report to the Secretary of State as required by section 16.22 of this title;

(2) the foreign corporation does not pay any penalties imposed by this title or other law;

(3) the foreign corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State;

(4) the foreign corporation fails to inform the Secretary of State under section 15.08 or 15.09 of this title that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has changed;

(5) a material misrepresentation is knowingly made in a signed document delivered to the Secretary of State for filing;

(6) the Secretary of State receives a duly authenticated certificate from the secretary of state or other official having custody of corporation records in the state or country under whose law the foreign corporation is incorporated stating that it has been dissolved or terminated or disappeared as the result of a merger; or

(7) the foreign corporation has failed to comply with subdivision 11.07(a) of this title requiring it to file articles of merger where it is the survivor of a merger with a domestic corporation.

(b) The Secretary of State shall serve the foreign corporation with written notice of termination of its certificate of authority under section 15.10 of this title, setting out each deficiency.

(c) The authority of a foreign corporation to transact business in this State ceases on the date shown on the notice terminating its certificate of authority. Termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority does not terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

(d) The Secretary of State's termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority appoints the Secretary of State the foreign corporation's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the foreign corporation was authorized to transact or was transacting without authorization business in this State. Service of process on the Secretary of State under this subsection is service on the foreign corporation. Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of the process to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its most recent biennial report or in any subsequent communication received from the corporation stating the current mailing address of its principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for a certificate of authority, or otherwise perfect service under section 15.10 of this title.

(e) If the foreign corporation corrects each ground for termination and demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the Secretary of State that each ground cited in the notice of termination does not exist, and pays to the Secretary of State ~~a fee of \$25.00~~ the fee specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651 for each year it is delinquent, the Secretary may cancel the termination and

prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the corporation under section 15.10 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 21. 11B V.S.A. chapter 16 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 16. RECORDS AND REPORTS

* * *

§ 16.22. BIENNIAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic corporation, and each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State, shall deliver to the Secretary of State a biennial report on a form prescribed and furnished by the Secretary of State that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation and the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) the address of its registered office and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at the office in this State;

(3) the address of its principal office;

(4) the names and business or residence addresses of its directors and principal officers; and

(5) a brief description of the nature of its activities.

(b) The information in the biennial report must be current on the date the biennial report is executed on behalf of the corporation.

(c) The first biennial report must be delivered to the Secretary of State between January 1 and April 1 of the year following the calendar year in which a domestic corporation was incorporated or a foreign corporation was authorized to transact business. Subsequent biennial reports must be delivered to the Secretary of State between January 1 and April 1 following each succeeding two calendar years.

(d) If a biennial report does not contain the information required by this section, the Secretary of State shall promptly notify the reporting domestic or foreign corporation in writing and return the report to it for correction. If the report is corrected to contain the information required by this section and delivered to the Secretary of State within 30 days after the effective date of notice, it is deemed to be timely filed.

(e) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * * Updates to Title 11C language * * *

Sec. 22. 11C V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 112. RESERVATION OF NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of the name of a mutual benefit enterprise, including a fictitious name for a foreign enterprise whose name is not available under section 111 of this title, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall set forth the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved. If the Secretary of State finds that the name applied for is available under section 111 of this title, the Secretary of State shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for a nonrenewable period of 120 days.~~

~~(b) A person who has reserved a name for a mutual benefit enterprise may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer which states the name, street address, and, if different, the mailing address of the transferee. If the person is an organizer of the enterprise and the name of the enterprise is the same as the reserved name, the delivery of articles of organization for filing by the Secretary of State is a transfer by the person to the enterprise. A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.~~

* * *

§ 117. DESIGNATED OFFICE AND AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) A mutual benefit enterprise or a foreign enterprise that has a certificate of authority under section 1404 of this title shall designate and continuously maintain in this State:~~

~~(1) an office, as its designated office, which need not be a place of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's activity in this State; and~~

~~(2) an agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, at the designated office.~~

~~(b) An agent for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise shall be an individual who is a resident of this State or an entity that is authorized to do business in this State.~~

§ 118. CHANGE OF DESIGNATED OFFICE OR AGENT FOR SERVICE
OF PROCESS

~~(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 207(e) of this title, to change its designated office, its agent for service of process, or the street address or, if different, mailing address of its principal office, a mutual benefit enterprise shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change containing:~~

- ~~(1) the name of the mutual benefit enterprise;~~
- ~~(2) the street address and, if different, mailing address of its designated office;~~
- ~~(3) if the designated office is to be changed, the street address and, if different, mailing address of the new designated office;~~
- ~~(4) the name of its agent for service of process; and~~
- ~~(5) if the agent for service of process is to be changed, the name of the new agent.~~

~~(b) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 207(e) of this title, to change its agent for service of process, the address of its designated office, or the street address or, if different, mailing address of its principal office, a foreign enterprise shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change containing:~~

- ~~(1) the name of the foreign enterprise;~~
- ~~(2) the name, street address, and, if different, mailing address of its designated office;~~
- ~~(3) if the current agent for service of process or an address of the designated office is to be changed, the new information;~~
- ~~(4) the street address and, if different, the mailing address of its principal office; and~~
- ~~(5) if the street address or, if different, the mailing address of its principal office is to be changed, the street address and, if different, the mailing address of the new principal office.~~

~~(c) Except as otherwise provided in section 204 of this title, a statement of change is effective when filed by the Secretary of State A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise shall change its designated office or agent for service of process information by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 119. RESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) To resign as an agent for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise, the agent shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation containing the name of the agent and the name of the enterprise or foreign enterprise.~~

~~(b) After receiving a statement of resignation under subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary of State shall file it and mail or otherwise provide or deliver a copy to the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise at its principal office.~~

~~(c) An agency for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise terminates on the earlier of:~~

~~(1) the 31st day after the Secretary of State files a statement of resignation under subsection (b) of this section; or~~

~~(2) when a record designating a new agent for service of process is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing on behalf of the enterprise or foreign enterprise and becomes effective An agent for service of process may resign as agent by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 120. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is an agent of the enterprise or foreign enterprise for service of process, notice, or a demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the enterprise or foreign enterprise.~~

~~(b) If a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise does not appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the address of the designated office on file with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State is an agent of the enterprise or foreign enterprise upon which process, notice, or a demand may be served.~~

~~(c) Service of process, notice, or a demand on the Secretary of State as agent of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise may be made by delivering to the Secretary of State two copies of the process, notice, or demand. The Secretary of State shall forward one copy by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the enterprise or foreign enterprise at its principal office.~~

~~(d) Service is effected under subsection (c) of this section on the earliest of:~~

~~(1) the date the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise receives the process, notice, or demand;~~

~~(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the enterprise or foreign enterprise; or~~

~~(3) five days after the process, notice, or demand is deposited by the Secretary of State for delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, if postage is prepaid to the address of the principal office on file with the Secretary of State.~~

~~(e) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of each process, notice, and demand served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.~~

~~(f) This section does not affect the right to serve process, notice, or a demand in any other manner provided by law. A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

Sec. 23. 11C V.S.A. chapter 2 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 2. FILING AND ANNUAL REPORTS

* * *

§ 202. SIGNING AND FILING OF RECORDS PURSUANT TO JUDICIAL ORDER

(a) If a person required by this title to sign or deliver a record to the Secretary of State for filing does not do so, the Superior Court of the county of the mutual benefit enterprise's principal office or the foreign enterprise's registered designated office, upon petition of an aggrieved person, may order:

(1) the person to sign the record and deliver it to the Secretary of State for filing; or

(2) delivery of the unsigned record to the Secretary of State for filing.

* * *

§ 206. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING OR AUTHORIZATION

(a) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish any person that requests it a certificate of good standing for a mutual benefit enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the enterprise's articles of organization, that the enterprise is in good standing, and that the Secretary of State has not filed a statement of termination.

(b) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish to any person that requests it a certificate of ~~authority~~ authorization for a foreign enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the foreign enterprise's certificate of authority, has not revoked nor has reason to revoke the certificate of authority, and has not filed a notice of cancellation.

(c) Subject to any exceptions stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing or ~~authority~~ authorization issued by the Secretary of State establishes conclusively that the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is in good standing or is authorized to transact business in this State.

§ 207. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise authorized to transact business in this State shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an annual report that states:

(1) the name of the enterprise or foreign enterprise;

(2) the ~~street address and, if different, mailing~~ address of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's designated office and the name of its agent for service of process at the designated office;

(3) the ~~street address and, if different, mailing~~ address of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's principal office;

(4) the name and business address of any director or officer; and

(5) in the case of a foreign enterprise, the state or other jurisdiction under whose law the foreign enterprise is formed and any alternative name adopted under section 1405 of this title.

(b) Information in an annual report shall be current as of the date the report is delivered to the Secretary of State.

(c) A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise authorized to transact business in this State shall deliver its annual report to the Secretary for filing between January 1 and April 1 of each year, beginning in the year following the calendar year in which the mutual benefit enterprise is formed or the foreign enterprise is authorized to transact business in this State.

(d) If an annual report does not contain the information required by subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary of State shall promptly notify the reporting mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise and return the report for correction. If the report is corrected to contain the information required by subsection (a) of this section and delivered to the Secretary of State not later

than 30 days after the date of the notice from the Secretary of State, it is timely delivered.

(e) ~~If a filed annual report contains an address of the designated office, the name or business address of a director or officer, or address of the principal office which differs from the information shown in the records of the Secretary of State immediately before the filing, the differing information in the annual report is considered a statement of change~~ The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

§ 208. FILING FEES

~~The filing fees for records filed under this article by the Secretary of State are the same as those set forth for a limited liability company under 11 V.S.A. § 3013~~ A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this title shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651.

Sec. 24. 11C V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. FOREIGN ENTERPRISES

* * *

§ 1402. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign enterprise may apply for a certificate of authority by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall state:

(1) the name of the foreign enterprise and, if the name does not comply with section 111 of this title, an alternative name adopted pursuant to section 1405 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or other jurisdiction under whose law the foreign enterprise is organized;

(3) the street address and, if different, mailing address of the principal office and, if the law of the jurisdiction under which the foreign enterprise is organized requires the foreign enterprise to maintain another office in that jurisdiction, the street address and, if different, mailing address of the required office;

(4) the street address and, if different, mailing address of the foreign enterprise's designated office in this State, and the name of the foreign enterprise's agent for service of process at the designated office; and

(5) the name, street address and, if different, mailing address of each of the foreign enterprise's current directors and officers, and of any other principal the enterprise provides.

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 12 language * * *

Sec. 25. 12 V.S.A. chapter 25, subchapter 6 is amended to read:

Subchapter 6. ~~Foreign Corporations~~ Business Organizations

§ 851. SERVICE ON SECRETARY OF STATE

~~When a foreign corporation has appointed the Secretary of State as its process agent pursuant to the statutes relating to such corporations, service of process made upon the Secretary by delivering to him or her duplicate copies thereof, shall be sufficient. A copy of the stipulation, filed under the provisions of 11 V.S.A. § 3011, 11A V.S.A. § 15.10, and 11B V.S.A. § 15.10, certified by the Secretary, with his or her certificate that process has been served on him or her, shall be sufficient evidence thereof~~ A business organization is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.

§ 852. FEES; MAILING OF COPY TO CORPORATION BUSINESS

ORGANIZATION

~~When process is served on the Secretary of State under the provisions of section 851 of this title 11 V.S.A. § 1656, there shall be paid to the Secretary by the officer at the time of such service the sum of \$35.00 amount specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651. The Secretary shall forthwith forward by mail prepaid one of the duplicate copies to the corporation at its home office or to a person whom it designates.~~

§ 853. DOING BUSINESS BY PARTICULAR COMPANIES WITHOUT
DESIGNATING PROCESS AGENT; PENALTY

A person or agent for a foreign insurance, express, shipping car, telephone or telegraph company, or other foreign company doing like business, which has not designated the Secretary of State as its process agent, ~~as required by 11 V.S.A. § 692~~ who solicits or receives a risk or application for insurance, or receives money or value for such insurance by such company, or receives money or value for the transportation of a package or property by such express or shipping car company, or for the transmission of a message or dispatch by such telegraph company, or receives money, rent, royalty, or income for such telephone company for the use of its instruments or lines or for the sending of any message, shall be fined not more than \$500.00 nor less than \$100.00.

* * *

§ 855. DOING BUSINESS AS APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS AGENT

If the contact with the State or the activity in the state of a foreign ~~corporation~~ business organization, or the contact or activity imputable to it, is sufficient to support a Vermont personal judgment against it, the contact or activity shall be deemed to be doing business in Vermont by that foreign ~~corporation~~ organization and shall be equivalent to the appointment by it of the Secretary of the State of Vermont and ~~his or her~~ the Secretary's successors to be its true and lawful attorney upon whom may be served all lawful process in any action or proceedings against it arising or growing out of that contact or activity, and also shall be deemed to be its agreement that any process against it ~~which~~ that is so served upon the Secretary of State shall be of the same legal force and effect as if served on the foreign corporation at its principal place of business in the state or country where it is incorporated according to the law of that state or country.

§ 856. SERVICE OF PROCESS

Service of process by virtue of section 855 of this title shall be made pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1656 ~~by delivering to the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, with the officer's return of service thereon, and a fee of \$25.00, to be taxed in the plaintiff's costs if he or she prevails. The Secretary shall forthwith forward one of the duplicate copies by registered mail prepaid to the corporation at its principal place of business in the state or country where it is incorporated, which principal place of business shall be stated in the process. The service shall be sufficient if a copy of the process, with the officer's return thereon showing the service upon the Secretary of State, is sent by the plaintiff to the foreign corporation by registered mail, and if the plaintiff's affidavit of compliance herewith is filed with the process in court. The Secretary shall file one of the copies and endorse upon each copy the day and hour of service.~~

§ 857. CONTINUANCE; COSTS

~~The court in which the action is pending may order such continuances as may be necessary to afford the defendant reasonable opportunity to appear and defend. The fee provided in section 856 of this title shall be taxed in the plaintiff's costs if he or she prevails. [Repealed.]~~

§ 858. ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SERVICE

~~As an alternative to service of process under this subchapter or when a stipulation appointing the Secretary of State as process agent is not filed with the Commissioner of Foreign Corporations, process may be served upon a foreign corporation in accordance with sections 912 and 913 of this title or by~~

~~any method that the Supreme Court shall by rule provide for service upon a domestic corporation. [Repealed.]~~

* * * Updates to Title 30 language * * *

Sec. 26. 30 V.S.A. chapter 81 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 81. ~~ELECTRIC~~ UTILITY COOPERATIVES

* * *

§ 3001a. PURPOSE

~~Cooperatives~~ A cooperative may be organized under this chapter for the purpose of creating or supplying energy, cable television, telecommunications, interactive media, and internet access and facilitating and extending the use thereof, and in addition, any other lawful business not inconsistent with this chapter that utilizes the electric distribution facilities of the cooperative.

§ 3002. POWERS

A cooperative shall have power:

- (1) To sue and be sued in its corporate name.
- (2) To have perpetual existence.
- (3) To adopt a corporate seal and alter the same.

(4) To generate, manufacture, purchase, acquire, accumulate, and transmit electric energy; and to distribute, sell, supply, and dispose of energy, cable television, telecommunications, interactive media, and internet access to its members, to governmental agencies, and to political subdivisions; provided, however, that in the generation of electric energy by water power, a cooperative shall comply with the provisions of 10 V.S.A. §§ 1081–1099, relating to the construction and maintenance of dams and, provided further, that a cooperative doing any activity governed by this title shall be regulated for that activity.

* * *

§ 3003. NAME

The name of a cooperative governed by this chapter shall include the words “utility” or “energy” or a word designating any specific form of energy such as “electric,” “propane,” or “natural gas” and “cooperative” and the abbreviation “inc.” unless, in an affidavit made by its president or vice president and filed with the Secretary of State, or in an affidavit made by a person signing articles of incorporation, consolidation, merger, or conversion, which relate to the cooperative and filed, together with the articles, with the Secretary of State, it shall appear that the cooperative desires to do business in another state and is

or would be precluded by reason of the inclusion of the words in its name. The name of a cooperative shall be distinct from the name of any other cooperative or corporation organized under the laws of, or authorized to do business in, this State.

* * *

§ 3037. FOREIGN COMPANIES; SERVICE OF PROCESS

A foreign nonprofit or cooperative corporation supplying or authorized to supply electric energy and owning or operating electric transmission or distribution lines in an adjacent state, prior to March 26, 1943, may construct or acquire extensions of lines in this State within an area no point of which is more than 25 miles from the boundary line of this State and may operate those extensions without qualifying as a foreign corporation to do business in this State. Before constructing or operating such extensions, by an instrument executed and acknowledged on its behalf by its president or vice president, under its seal attested by its clerk or secretary, and filed with the Secretary of State, a corporation shall designate the Secretary of State its agent to accept service of process on its behalf. Thereafter, the corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges, and immunities of a cooperative. Service of process shall be made upon the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of ~~12 V.S.A. §§ 851 and 852 and shall forward one copy of the same by registered mail to such corporation at the address of its principal office~~ 11 V.S.A. § 1656.

§ 3038. FEES

(a) ~~There shall be paid to the Secretary of State fees for filing as follows:~~

- ~~(1) Articles of incorporation, \$15.00;~~
- ~~(2) Articles of amendment, \$10.00;~~
- ~~(3) Articles of consolidation or merger, \$15.00;~~
- ~~(4) Articles of conversion, \$10.00;~~
- ~~(5) Certificate of election to dissolve, \$5.00;~~
- ~~(6) Articles of dissolution, \$5.00; and~~
- ~~(7) Certificate of change of principal office, \$5.00.~~

~~(b) Such fees shall include two certified copies of the respective instruments~~
A person who submits a document for filing pursuant to this chapter shall pay to the Secretary of State the amount specified in 11 V.S.A. § 1651.

* * * Business Organizations Study * * *

Sec. 27. BUSINESS SERVICES AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS;
STUDY

(a) Task. The Secretary of State shall conduct a public engagement process with interested partners to study, consider, and address the following issues:

(1) technical, procedural, and substantive issues concerning the online business filing system;

(2) statutory revisions to adopt provisions of the Uniform Business Organizations Code or other provisions to further harmonize the laws governing business organizations in this State, including provisions governing commercial registered agents and updates to the Titles of the Vermont Statutes Annotated related to business organizations;

(3) statutory revisions to the laws governing trademarks and possible expansion to include service marks;

(4) statutory revisions to the dual framework governing partnerships in 11 V.S.A. chapters 15 and 22 and the mandatory registration of assumed business names and unincorporated nonprofit associations;

(5) assessment of the need for any updates to current model laws or the addition of new model legislation; and

(6) assessment of the administrative oversight authority and substantive provisions governing data brokers, telemarketers, utility cooperatives, and amusement ride operators.

(b) Reporting. The Secretary of State shall, based on the task set forth in subsection (a) of this section, submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, an interim report on or before November 15, 2025 and a final report on or before December 1, 2026 including its findings and any proposed legislation for the General Assembly's consideration. The interim report shall provide the General Assembly with any recommended actions to pursue in the 2026 legislative session.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 28. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Burkhardt of South Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Updates to Title 3 language * * *

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 102a is amended to read:

§ 102a. FACSIMILE SIGNATURE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

A facsimile of the signature of the Secretary of State imprinted by or at his or her the Secretary's direction upon any certification issued ~~under Title 11 or 11A pursuant to law~~, upon any attestation required of the Secretary by law, or upon any certification of official documents or records of which the Secretary is custodian, shall have the same validity as the Secretary of State's written signature.

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 133 is amended to read:

§ 133. BUSINESS REGISTRATION

When professional services are required by law to be performed in or by a business entity registered with the Office, the business entity shall:

(1) register with the ~~Corporations~~ Business Services Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, if required by law; and

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 11 language * * *

Sec. 3. 11 V.S.A. chapter 7 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 7. ~~COOPERATIVES~~ GENERAL COOPERATIVE
CORPORATIONS AND COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS

Subchapter 1. ~~Provisions Relating to Cooperatives Formed Under General Corporation Law~~ General Cooperative Corporations

§ 981. GENERAL COOPERATIVE CORPORATION; USE OF

"COOPERATIVE"

A corporation formed under Title 11A shall not have the word "cooperative" or any abbreviation thereof as part of its name, unless the corporation is a worker cooperative corporation organized under chapter 8 of this title, a cooperative housing corporation organized under chapter 14 of this title, or the a general cooperative corporation that includes in its articles of incorporation ~~contain all of~~ the following provisions:

* * *

Subchapter 2. The Cooperative Marketing Act; Cooperative Associations

§ 991. DEFINITIONS

~~In~~ As used in this subchapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

(1) “Agricultural products” includes horticultural, viticultural, forestry, dairy, livestock, poultry, bee, and any farm products.

(2) “Association” means any ~~corporation~~ nonprofit cooperative association organized under this chapter.

(3) “Associations” organized hereunder means nonprofit cooperative associations.

(4) “Consumers’ cooperative” means a ~~corporation~~ an association organized under this chapter for the acquisition and distribution for the benefit of ultimate consumers of property, goods, commodities, or services.

(5) “Handcraft product” means any product fashioned primarily by hand with the final form and its characteristics shaped by hand and produced in the home or a small craft center by the artisan or craftsman in a skilled or artistic process rather than in an assembly line technique.

(6) “Marketing cooperative” means a ~~corporation~~ an association organized under this chapter for the marketing of agricultural or handcraft products.

(7) “Member” includes actual members of associations without capital stock and holders of common stock in associations organized with capital stock.

(8) “Person” includes individuals, firms, partnerships, corporations and associations.

(9) “Railroad cooperative” means any ~~corporation~~ association organized under this chapter for the organization, acquisition, and operation of a general transportation business by railroad, including truck, bus, air, and water transportation subsidiaries of the railroad.

* * *

§ 994. POWERS

Each association incorporated under this subchapter shall have the following powers:

(1) In the case of a marketing cooperative, the power to engage in any activity in connection with the purchasing, marketing, selling, preserving, harvesting, drying, processing, manufacturing, canning, packing, grading,

storing, handling, or utilization of any agricultural or handcraft products or the manufacturing or marketing of the ~~by-products~~ byproducts thereof, any activity in connection with the purchase, hiring, or use by its members of supplies, machinery or equipment, and in financing any of the aforementioned activities. However, a marketing association shall not handle agricultural or handcraft products of nonmembers to an extent greater in value than the products of its own members ~~which~~ that it handles. In the case of a consumers' cooperative, the power to engage in any one or more lawful mode or modes of acquiring, producing, building, operating, manufacturing, furnishing, exchanging, or distributing any type of property, commodities, goods, or services for the primary and mutual benefit of the patrons of the association, or their patrons, if any, as ultimate consumers. In the case of a railroad cooperative, to engage in any activity in connection with the organization, acquisition, and operation of a subsidiary transportation business, whether by means of railroad, truck, water carrier, air, or other. ~~Such a corporation formed under this subchapter shall have any other rights, powers, and privileges granted by the laws of this State to corporations in a like business organized under the general laws of this State.~~

* * *

§ 995. ARTICLES

Each association formed under this subchapter shall prepare and file articles of incorporation setting forth:

- (1) The name of the association.
- (2) The purpose for which it is formed.
- (3) ~~The place where its principal business will be transacted~~ address of its principal office in this State, and the name, email, and address information of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.
- (4) The names and business addresses of the directors thereof who are to serve until the election and qualification of their successors.
- (5) The name and ~~residence~~ business address of the clerk, and of any other principal the association provides.
- (6) When organized without capital stock, whether the property rights and interest of the members are equal, and, if unequal, the general rules applicable to all members by which the property rights and interest, respectively, of each member shall be determined and fixed, and provision for the admission of new members who shall be entitled to share in the property of the association in accordance with such general rules. This provision or paragraph of the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation shall not

be altered, amended, or replaced except by the written consent or vote representing three-fourths of the members.

(7) When organized with capital stock, the amount of such stock, the number of shares into which it is divided, and the par value thereof.

(8) The capital stock may be divided into preferred and one or more classes of common stock. When so divided, the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation shall contain a statement of the number of shares of stock to which preference is granted, the number of shares of stock to which no preference is granted, and the nature and definite extent of the preference and privileges granted to each.

(9) The articles of incorporation of any association organized under this subchapter may provide that the members or stockholders thereof shall have the right to vote in person or through another method of communication, including through a telecommunications or electronic medium, but a member or stockholder may not vote by proxy. This provision or paragraph of the articles of incorporation shall not be altered and shall not be subject to amendment.

(10) In addition to the foregoing, the articles of incorporation of any association incorporated hereunder may contain any provision consistent with law with respect to management, regulation, government, financing, indebtedness, membership, the establishment of voting districts and the election of delegates for representative purposes, the issuance, retirement, and transfer of its stock, if formed with capital stock, or any provisions relative to the way or manner in which it shall operate or with respect to its members, officers, or directors and any other provisions relating to its affairs.

(11) The ~~certificate~~ articles of incorporation shall be subscribed by the incorporators and shall be sworn to by one or more of them; and shall be filed with the Secretary of State. A certified copy shall also be filed with the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

(12) When so filed, the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation or a certified copy thereof shall be received in the courts of this State as prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein and of the due incorporation of such association.

§ 996. AMENDMENT OF CERTIFICATE ARTICLES; STATEMENT OF CHANGE

(a) The ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation may be altered or amended except as otherwise provided in this subchapter at any regular meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose. An amendment must

first be approved by two-thirds of the directors and adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members or delegates present and voting at such meeting. Amendments to the ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation, when so adopted, shall be filed in accordance with the provisions of section 995 of this title.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, an association shall amend the name, email, or address information of its agent for service of process by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

§ 997. FEE

For filing a ~~certificate of organization~~ articles of incorporation, an association shall pay \$20.00 to the Secretary of State, and for filing an amendment thereto, \$10.00.

* * *

§ 1001. CONTENTS OF BYLAWS

Each association may provide in its bylaws for any or all of the following matters:

* * *

(10) In the case of a ~~consumer's~~ consumers' or railroad cooperative, the method of distributing among members or stockholders and patrons, both members and nonmembers, the net savings derived from the excess of total income over operating expenses. Provision may be made for the accumulation of reserve funds out of net savings.

* * *

§ 1013. OFFICERS

The directors shall elect from their number a president and one or more vice presidents. They shall also elect a secretary, who shall be the clerk of the ~~corporation~~ association, and a treasurer, who need not be directors or members of the association. The directors may combine the two latter offices and designate the combined office as that of secretary-treasurer, or unite both functions and titles in one person. The treasurer may be a bank or any depository, and as such, shall not be considered as an officer, but as a function of the board of directors, and in such case, the secretary shall perform the usual accounting duties of the treasurer, except that the funds shall be deposited only as and where authorized by the board of directors.

* * *

§ 1023. OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL OF OTHER CORPORATIONS

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

An association may organize, form, operate, own, control, have an interest in, own stock of, or be a member of, any other ~~corporation or corporations, with or without capital stock, and business organization~~ engaged in preserving, drying, processing, canning, packing, storing, handling, shipping, utilizing, manufacturing, marketing, or selling the agricultural products handled by the association or byproducts thereof.

§ 1024. WAREHOUSE RECEIPTS

~~When such corporations are warehousing corporations, they~~ An association engaged in warehousing may issue negotiable or nonnegotiable warehouse receipts of the association against the commodities delivered, and such warehouse receipts shall be considered as adequate collateral to the extent of the usual and current value of the commodity represented thereby. In case such warehouse is licensed, or licensed and bonded, under the laws of this or any other state of the United States, its warehouse receipt delivered to the association on commodities of the association or its members, or delivered by the association or by its members, shall not be challenged or discriminated against because of ownership or control, wholly or in part, by the association.

* * *

Subchapter 3. Consolidation of Cooperative Associations

§ 1061. PROCEDURE

Two or more cooperative associations organized under, or which have adopted the provisions of subchapter 1 ~~2~~ of this chapter, or similar laws of other states, whether having or not having capital stock, may merge or consolidate into one cooperative association which may be a new cooperative association or one of the constituent cooperatives by complying with the following requirements:

* * *

(3) If the articles of merger or consolidation are adopted by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the members attending and voting of each consolidating cooperative voting thereon at the meeting called to consider the same, or by not less than by a two-thirds vote of its delegates if qualified as provided in subdivision (4) of this section, articles of merger or consolidation in the form adopted shall be executed under its seal and acknowledged on behalf of each consolidating cooperative by its president or vice-president. Such articles of merger or consolidation shall recite that they are executed pursuant to this subchapter and shall state:

(A) the name of each consolidating cooperative and the address of its principal office;

(B) the name of the new cooperative and the address of its principal office in this State, or if none, the name, email, and address of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title;

(C) a statement that each consolidating cooperative agrees to the merger or consolidation;

(D) the names and business addresses of the directors of the new cooperative, and of any other principal the association provides; and

(E) the terms and conditions of the merger or consolidation and the mode of carrying the same into effect, including the manner in which the members of the consolidating cooperative may or shall become members of the new cooperative; and may contain provisions, not inconsistent with law or this subchapter, which are deemed necessary or advisable for the conduct of the business of the new cooperative.

(4) The president or vice president and the clerk or secretary of each consolidating cooperative executing such articles of merger or consolidation shall make and annex thereto an affidavit stating that the provisions of this section in respect to such articles were duly complied with by such cooperative.

~~(4)~~(5) In the case of any consolidating cooperative having a district election of delegates and a delegate system of voting as permitted by subdivision 995(10) of this title, in which, under its articles of incorporation or bylaws, such delegates have complete voting power on behalf of the membership for every purpose, except that of their own election and the election of district directors, the vote adopting the merger or consolidation required by subdivision (3) of this section shall be that of not less than two-thirds of the delegates attending and voting at such meeting.

* * *

Sec. 4. 11 V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. REGISTRATION OF BUSINESS ENTITIES ASSUMED
BUSINESS NAMES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND UNINCORPORATED
NONPROFIT ASSOCIATIONS; ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY;
ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Subchapter 1. Assumed Business Names, Partnerships, and Unincorporated
Nonprofit Associations

§ 1621. REGISTRATION OF ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME BY PERSONS
NAMES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND UNINCORPORATED
NONPROFIT ASSOCIATIONS

~~(a) A person doing business in this State under any name other than his or her own, and every copartnership~~ An individual doing business under an assumed business name, or a partnership or unincorporated nonprofit or association of individuals, except corporations and limited liability companies, doing business in this State, resident or nonresident, shall cause to be recorded with submit to the Secretary of State for filing a return setting forth a registration that provides:

~~(1) the name under which such business is carried on,~~ the name of the business;

~~(2) the name of the town wherein such place of business is located,~~ the address of its principal office;

~~(3) a brief description of the kind of business to be transacted under such name, and its business purpose;~~

~~(4) the individual names and residences of all persons, general partners, or members so doing business thereunder~~ the name and business address of the individual doing business under the assumed name, as a partner of the partnership, or as a member of the association, and of any other principal the registrant provides; and

~~(5) for each individual, partner, or member who is not a resident of this State, or for whom the registrant does not provide an address in this State for service of process, the name, email, and address information of an agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) Such returns~~ A registration shall be subscribed and sworn to by one or more of the persons so doing business, and shall be a person with authority to act on behalf of the registrant and filed with the Secretary of State ~~within~~ not later than 10 days after commencement of business.

(c) The Secretary of State shall decline to register any business name unless the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any other business name of any name registered or reserved under this chapter, or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State, or any name that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the business is a type of entity that it is not.

(d) The Secretary of State shall establish rules ~~and regulations~~ for the administration of this section.

(e) Prior to registering its business name under this section, a person intending to operate a postsecondary school, as defined in 16 V.S.A. §§ 176 and 176a, shall apply to the State Board of Education for a certificate of approval pursuant to those sections.

§ 1621a. ~~RESERVED NAME~~

~~(a) The exclusive right to the use of a business name may be reserved by any person, copartnership, or association intending to register its name under this section.~~

~~(b) The reservation shall be made by filing with the Secretary of State an application to reserve a specified business name, executed by the applicant, its agent, or attorney. If the Secretary of State finds that the name is available for use, he or she shall reserve the same for the exclusive use of the applicant for a period of 120 days.~~

~~(c) The right to the exclusive use of a specified business name so reserved may be transferred to any other person, copartnership, or association by filing in the office of the Secretary of State a notice of such transfer, executed by the applicant for whom the name was reserved, and specifying the name and address of the transferee. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 1623. ~~REGISTRATION BY BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS~~

~~(a) A business organization doing business in this State under any name other than that of the business organization shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter; and shall file returns sworn to by some officer or director of the corporation or mutual benefit enterprise, or by some director or manager of the limited liability company, or by some partner of the partnership or limited partnership, setting forth:~~

~~(1) the name and location of the principal office of the business organization;~~

~~(2) the name under which the organization will conduct business;~~

~~(3) the town or towns where the organization conducts business under the name; and~~

~~(4) a brief description of the kind of business the organization conducts under the name.~~

~~(b) The Secretary of State shall decline to register any business name unless the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any other business name of any name registered or reserved under this chapter or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State, or any name that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the business is a type of entity that it is not. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1624. FORMS

~~The Secretary of State shall formulate forms for the returns and shall, on request, furnish such forms by mail or otherwise to persons, copartnerships, associations, or corporations subject to the provisions of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1625. FEES

~~(a) A person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation required by the provisions of this chapter subchapter to file a return shall, at the time of filing as provided, pay a registration fee of \$70.00 to the Secretary of State.~~

~~(b) A person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation required by the provisions of this chapter subchapter to file an amendment, a certificate of cessation of business, or change of business status or an application to reserve a business name shall, at the time of filing, pay a fee of \$35.00 to the Secretary of State.~~

~~(c) Statement of change of designated agent or designated office, or both, for a person registered under this subchapter: \$25.00, not to exceed \$1,000.00 per filer per calendar year.~~

~~(d) The Secretary shall collect \$25.00 each time process is served on the Secretary on behalf of a person registered under this chapter subchapter. The party to a proceeding causing service of process is entitled to recover this fee as costs if he or she prevails in the proceeding.~~

§ 1626. FAILURE TO REGISTER; ENFORCING COMPLIANCE

~~(a) A person transacting business in this State who is not registered with the Secretary of State as required under this chapter subchapter and any successor to the person or assignee of a cause of action arising out of the business of the person, may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State until the person, successor, or assignee registers with the Secretary.~~

(b) The failure of a person to register as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ does not impair the validity of a contract or act of the person or preclude it from defending an action or proceeding in this State.

(c) An individual does not waive a limitation on his or her personal liability afforded by other law solely by transacting business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~.

(d) If a person transacts business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~, the Secretary is its agent for service of process with respect to a right of action arising out of the transaction of business in this State.

(e) A person that transacts business in this State without registering with the Secretary of State as required under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ shall be liable to the State for:

(1) a civil penalty of \$50.00 for each day, not to exceed a total of \$10,000.00 for each year, it transacts business in this State without a registration;

(2) an amount equal to the fees due under this ~~chapter subchapter~~ during the period it transacted business in this State without a registration; and

(3) other penalties imposed by law.

(f) The Attorney General may maintain an action in the Civil Division of the Superior Court to collect the penalties imposed in subsection (e) of this section and to restrain a person from transacting business in this State in violation of this ~~chapter subchapter~~.

§ 1627. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~Service of such complaint and process thereunder may be made by delivering within this State a true and attested copy thereof to any person so doing business or any servant or agent of such person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation, or in any manner otherwise provided by law. A name so registered shall not thereafter be used by a person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation, unless it is lawfully entitled thereto at the date of such registration. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1628. CERTIFICATE OF CESSATION OF BUSINESS OR CHANGE OF BUSINESS STATUS; AMENDMENT

(a) ~~When a person, copartnership, association, limited liability company, or corporation subject to the provisions of this chapter shall cease to do business~~

~~in this State, a certificate setting forth such fact and the date whereon it so ceased shall be filed with the Secretary of State within 10 days after the date such business ceases. Such certificate may be sworn to and filed by a surviving partner, member of such association, officer of such corporation, member or manager of such limited liability company, or person so doing business, or his or her executor or administrator~~ A registrant that ceases to do business in this State shall submit to the Secretary of State for filing a certificate of cessation of business not later than 10 days after the date of cessation.

~~(b) Whenever any general partner of such partnership, or member of such association withdraws from the business, a remaining general partner or member shall within 30 days file a certificate with the Secretary of State signed and sworn by a remaining general partner or member, setting forth the fact of such withdrawal, together with the date of that withdrawal. Filing of this certificate shall avoid any interruption in the period of registration remaining before the need for renewal, as if no partner or member of the association had withdrawn~~ A registrant that adds or removes an individual, partner, or member named in its registration shall submit to the Secretary of State for filing an amendment to reflect the change not later than 30 days after the date of the change.

~~(c) A registrant may amend its agent information by filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title and may amend any other information in its registration by submitting an amendment to the Secretary of State for filing.~~

§ 1629. PENALTIES

~~Failure to file such certificate at the time so required by section 1628 of this title shall work a forfeiture of \$10.00 to be recovered by the Secretary of State in a civil action on this statute, in his or her name, against any surviving partner, any member of such association, any officer of such corporation, or any person so doing business, or his executor or administrator, and the same shall be paid into the Treasury of the State. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1630. PROCESS AGENT

~~Each nonresident doing business in this State in his or her individual capacity, or as copartner or member of a copartnership or association required by sections 1621 and 1623 of this title to file the returns therein specified, or under any name other than his or her own, except as otherwise provided, shall appoint in writing a person having an office or place of business and residing in the town wherein the principal office of such nonresident, copartnership, or association is located, upon whom process against such nonresident may be served in an action founded upon a liability incurred in this State. Such~~

~~appointment shall continue in force until revoked by a like instrument appointing another person therein residing, and having therein an office or place of business. Such instrument shall be recorded with the Secretary of State. In the event a nonresident has not appointed a process agent, and has not filed such appointment, as set forth in this section, the Secretary of State shall be such process agent. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1631. VACANCY

~~When an appointee dies or removes from the State, another person residing in such town and having therein an office or place of business, within 10 days from the date of such death or removal, shall be appointed in the manner hereinbefore specified, upon whom service of process may be made as provided in section 1630 of this title. In case of such death or removal, or if a person is not appointed as aforesaid, process against such nonresident person may be served by delivering to the Secretary of State duplicate copies thereof, one of which shall be filed with the Secretary of State and the other shall be forwarded by mail prepaid by the clerk to the last known residence of such person. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1632. EXCEPTIONS

~~The provisions of sections 1630 and 1631 of this title shall not apply to foreign investment companies, foreign building and loan associations, or foreign creamery companies. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1633. SECRETARY OF STATE AS PROCESS AGENT

~~A foreign insurance, express, shipping car, telegraph, or telephone company, or a foreign company under any other name engaged in like business, shall not do business in this State as an unincorporated association or partnership, until it has filed with the Secretary of State a written stipulation containing the association or firm name, and the names and residences of the associates or partners, and appointing the Secretary of State as its process agent. Such stipulation shall be in form and substance like that specified in subdivision 692(3) of this title, and shall have the same legal effect. The provisions of 12 V.S.A. §§ 851-853, shall apply to service of process on such company and to acts done by persons or agents in its behalf. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1634. EFFECT OF FAILURE AND NEGLECT

~~A person, copartnership, limited liability company, or corporation subject to this chapter shall not institute any proceedings in this State for the enforcement of any right or obligation unless it shall, prior to the issuance of the original return or complaint therein, have filed the returns and paid the registration fee required by this chapter; nor shall a license or certificate be granted to a nonresident individual, copartnership, or unincorporated association to transact~~

~~a business specified in Titles 5 and 23 or in 6 V.S.A. chapter 29 until such individual, copartnership, or association has complied with the provisions of section 1630 of this title. [Repealed.]~~

§ 1635. REREGISTRATION

~~(a) One or more persons doing business under a registered business name~~ A registrant shall reregister ~~the name~~ every five years by filing a reregistration ~~return~~ with the Secretary of State with a fee of \$65.00 ~~within~~ not sooner than 60 days ~~following the date five years after the date~~ prior to the expiration of the original registration or of the last reregistration. The Secretary of State shall prepare and supply the necessary forms.

(b) When reregistration is not accomplished as provided in subsection (a) of this section, a business name may be registered by the first applicant making application to the Secretary of State for an original registration as provided by this ~~chapter~~ subchapter.

Subchapter 2. Administrative Authority

§ 1636. TERMINATION OF BUSINESS NAME; HEARING

(a) If the Secretary of State declines to register a business ~~in accordance with the provisions of subsection 1621(c) of this title~~ because it is not distinguishable in the records of the Secretary from another business name, the applicant may request that the Secretary determine whether the person to whom the business name is registered is doing business or taking steps to do business in this State.

* * *

§ 1637. AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE AND AMEND REGISTRATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall have the authority to:

(1) terminate the registration of a person who, pursuant to an administrative order, a final court order, or an assurance of discontinuance, is not authorized to conduct business in this State; and

(2) amend ~~his or her~~ the person's records to reflect the termination of a registration pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b)(1) If the Secretary of State terminates the registration of a person pursuant to this section, the person appoints the Secretary as ~~his or her~~ the person's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the person was authorized to transact, or was transacting without authorization, business in this State.

(2) Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall deliver by registered mail a copy of the process to ~~the secretary of~~ the terminated person at its principal office shown in its most recent annual report or in any subsequent communication received from the person stating the current mailing address of its principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for registration.

(c)(1) If a court or other person with sufficient legal authority reinstates the ability of a terminated person to conduct business in this State, the terminated person may file with the Secretary of State evidence of the reinstated authority and pay to the Secretary a fee of \$25.00 for each year the person is delinquent.

(2) Upon receipt of a filing and payment pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Secretary shall cancel the termination and prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the person.

§ 1638. AUTHORITY TO REJECT, AMEND, OR TERMINATE

(a) The Secretary of State shall have the authority to:

(1) reject a record submitted for filing that the Secretary reasonably determines contains false, fraudulent, or clearly erroneous information; and

(2) amend a record or terminate the registration of a person who the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for hearing pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, has submitted false or fraudulent information in a record, or has attempted or submitted a record for filing in bad faith, without lawful authority, or to commit fraud or cause injury.

(b)(1) If the Secretary terminates the registration of a person pursuant to this section, or the Secretary's rejection or amendment of a record results in the person's failure to designate or maintain an agent for service of process, then the person appoints the Secretary as the person's agent for service of process.

(2) Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall deliver by registered mail a copy of the process to the person's last known address.

(c) A person aggrieved by a final decision of the Secretary under this section may appeal to the Superior Court of Washington County, which shall consider the matter de novo.

§ 1639. FORMS; PROCEDURES; RULES

The Secretary of State may adopt forms, procedures, and rules to implement the processes and provisions of governing business registration in this State.

Subchapter 3. Administrative Provisions for Business Organizations§ 1652. RESERVED NAME

(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall state the name and address of the applicant and the name to be reserved. If the Secretary finds that the entity name is available, the Secretary shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for 120 days.

(b) The owner of a reserved name may transfer the reservation to another person by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a notice of the transfer, which states the name and address of the transferee.

§ 1653. ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME OF BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

A business organization that is authorized to do business in this State may conduct business under an assumed name by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a registration that identifies the authorized business and the assumed name.

§ 1654. [Reserved]§ 1655. DESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS;CHANGE; RESIGNATION

(a) Duty to designate agent for service of process. A person doing business in this State that is required to designate and maintain an agent for service of process shall provide the name, email, and address information of an individual resident of this State or of a business organization that has a place of business in, and is authorized to conduct business in, this State.

(b) Attestation. A person who designates an agent for service of process attests that the agent consents to the appointment.

(c) Duty to maintain current agent information; statement of change. Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, a person registered with the Secretary of State may change its agent for service of process, or the agent's email or address information, solely by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that provides its current agent information and specifies any changes to the agent information.

(d) Bulk statement of change by agent.

(1) If an agent for service of process changes its name, email, or address information in the records of the Secretary of State, the agent may submit to the Secretary for filing a bulk statement of change that:

(A) identifies the businesses for which the agent serves as the agent for service of process and whose records the Secretary shall update to reflect the change to the agent's information; and

(B) attests that the agent has or will promptly provide notice to each business whose record is updated pursuant to the bulk statement of change.

(2) For a bulk statement of change, the Secretary of State shall collect from the agent a separate filing fee for each business whose record is amended, subject to subsection 1625(c) of this title.

(e) Agent resignation; termination.

(1) An agent for service of process may resign as agent by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation and delivering a copy of the statement to the affected business.

(2) An agency for service of process terminates on the earlier of:

(A) 30 days after the Secretary files a statement of resignation; or

(B) the date on which a statement of change designating a new agent takes effect.

(3) The Secretary shall waive the filing fee for a statement of resignation if the agent on record attests that it did not consent to serve as agent for service of process.

§ 1655. SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a person registered with the Secretary of State is an agent for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the person.

(b) If a person registered with the Secretary of State fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State as required by law, or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the person upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.

(c)(1) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand.

(2) If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its principal office or last known address.

(d) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.

(e) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a person in any manner otherwise provided by law.

§ 1656. SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT FOR SERVICE OF

PROCESS

(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a person registered with the Secretary of State is an agent for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the person.

(b) If a person registered with the Secretary of State fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State as required by law, or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the person upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.

(c)(1) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand.

(2) If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its principal office or last known address.

(d) Service is effective on the earliest of:

(1) the date the person receives the process, notice, or demand;

(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the person; or

(3) five days after the process, notice, or demand is deposited by the Secretary of State for delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, if postage is prepaid to the address of the principal office or last known address reflected in the records of the Secretary of State.

(e) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.

(f) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a person in any manner otherwise provided by law.

Sec. 5. 11 V.S.A. chapter 22 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 22. PARTNERSHIPS

* * *

§ 3205. EXECUTION, FILING, AND RECORDING OF STATEMENTS

* * *

(f) The Secretary of State shall collect a fee for filing or providing a certified copy of a statement as set forth in section 3310 of this title.

* * *

§ 3291. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATION

* * *

(c) After the approval required by subsection (b) of this section, a partnership may only become a limited liability partnership by filing a statement of qualification. The statement must contain:

- (1) the name of the partnership;
- (2) the location of the principal place of business in this State;
- (3) if the partnership does not have a principal place of business in this State, the name, email, and street address information of the partnership's agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title;
- (4) a statement that the partnership elects to be a limited liability partnership; and
- (5) a deferred effective date, if any.

(d) ~~The agent of a limited liability partnership for service of process must be an individual who is a resident of this State or other person authorized to do business in this State. [Repealed.]~~

(e) The status of a partnership as a limited liability partnership is effective on the later of the filing of the statement or a date specified in the statement. The status remains effective, regardless of changes in the partnership, until it is canceled pursuant to subsection 3205(d) of this title or revoked pursuant to section 3293 of this title.

* * *

§ 3293. ANNUAL REPORT

(a) A limited liability partnership, and a foreign limited liability partnership authorized to transact business in this State, shall file an annual report in the Office of the Secretary of State ~~which~~ that contains:

(1) the name of the limited liability partnership and the state or other jurisdiction under whose laws the foreign limited liability partnership is formed;

(2) the ~~street~~ address of the partnership's principal office and, if different, the ~~street~~ address of an office in this State, if any; and

(3) if the partnership does not have an office in this State, the name, email, and ~~street~~ address of the partnership's designated agent for service of process.

* * *

(f) A reinstatement under subsection (e) of this section relates back to and takes effect as of the effective date of the revocation, and the partnership's status as a limited liability partnership continues as if the revocation had never occurred.

(g) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

§ 3302. STATEMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION

(a) Before transacting business in this State, a foreign limited liability partnership must file a statement of foreign qualification. The statement must contain:

* * *

(3) If there is no office of the partnership in this State, the name, email, and ~~street~~ address information of the partnership's agent for service of process pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

(4) A deferred effective date, if any.

~~(b) The agent of a foreign limited liability partnership for service of process must be an individual who is a resident of this State or other person authorized to do business in this State. [Repealed.]~~

(c) The status of a partnership as a foreign limited liability partnership is effective on the later of the filing of the statement of foreign qualification or a date specified in the statement. The status remains effective, regardless of changes in the partnership, until it is canceled pursuant to subsection 3205(d) or revoked pursuant to section 3293 of this title.

(d) An amendment or cancellation of a statement of foreign qualification is effective when it is filed or on a deferred effective date specified in the amendment or cancellation.

§ 3303. EFFECT OF FAILURE TO QUALIFY

(a)(1) A foreign limited liability partnership transacting business in this State may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State unless it has in effect a statement of foreign qualification.

(2) The successor to a foreign limited liability partnership that transacted business in this State without a ~~certificate of authority~~ statement of foreign qualification in effect and the assignee of a cause of action arising out of that business may not maintain a proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense based on that cause of action in any court in this State until the foreign limited liability partnership or its successor or assignee ~~obtains~~ files a ~~certificate of authority~~ statement of foreign qualification.

* * *

Sec. 6. 11 V.S.A. chapter 23 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 23. LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS

* * *

§ 3403. RESERVATION OF NAME

(a) The exclusive right to the use of a name may be reserved by:

~~(1) any person intending to organize a limited partnership under this chapter and to adopt that name;~~

~~(2) any domestic limited partnership or any foreign limited partnership registered in this State which, in either case, intends to adopt that name;~~

~~(3) any foreign limited partnership intending to register in this State and adopt that name; and~~

~~(4) any person intending to organize a foreign limited partnership and intending to have it registered in this State and to adopt that name.~~

(b) The reservation shall be made by filing with the Secretary of State an application, executed by the applicant, to reserve a specified name. If the Secretary of State finds that the name is available for use by a domestic or foreign limited partnership, he or she shall reserve the name for the exclusive use of the applicant for a period of 120 days. The owner of a name reserved under this section may renew the reservation for two successive periods of 120

~~days each. The right to the exclusive use of a reserved name may be transferred to any other person by filing in the Office of the Secretary of State a notice of the transfer, executed by the applicant for whom the name was reserved and specifying the name and address of the transferee. A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to section 1652 of this title.~~

§ 3404. SPECIFIED OFFICE AND AGENT

Each limited partnership shall continuously maintain in this State:

(1) an office, which may but need not be a place of its business in this State, at which shall be kept the records required by section 3405 of this title to be maintained; and

(2) an agent for service of process on the limited partnership, ~~which agent must be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or a foreign corporation, partnership, or limited liability company authorized to do business in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

* * *

§ 3411. CERTIFICATE OF LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

(a) In order to form a limited partnership, a certificate of limited partnership must be executed and filed in the Office of the Secretary of State. The certificate shall set forth:

(1) the name of the limited partnership;

(2) the address of the office and the name, email, and address information of the agent for service of process required to be maintained by section 3404 of this title;

(3) the name and the business address of each general partner, and of any other principal the limited partnership provides;

(4) the name and ~~place of residence~~ the business address of each limited partner and the amount of cash and a description of and the agreed value of other property contributed by each limited partner;

* * *

§ 3482. REGISTRATION

Before transacting business in this State, a foreign limited partnership shall register with the Secretary of State. In order to register, a foreign limited partnership shall submit to the Secretary of State, ~~in duplicate~~, an application

for registration as a foreign limited partnership, signed and sworn to by a general partner and setting forth:

(1) the name of the foreign limited partnership and, if different, the name under which it proposes to register and transact business in this State;

(2) the state and date of its formation;

(3) the name, email, and address information of any agent for service of process on the foreign limited partnership ~~whom the foreign limited partnership elects to appoint; the agent must be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, or a foreign corporation having a place of business in, and authorized to do business in, this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title;~~

(4) a statement that the Secretary of State is appointed the agent of the foreign limited partnership for service of process if no agent has been appointed under subdivision (3) of this section or, if appointed, the agent's authority has been revoked or if the agent cannot be found or served with the exercise of reasonable diligence;

(5) the address of the office required to be maintained in the state of its organization by the laws of that state or, if not so required, of the principal office of the foreign limited partnership;

(6) the name and business address of each general partner, and of any other principal the foreign limited partnership provides; and

(7) the address of the office at which is kept a list of the names and addresses of the limited partners and their capital contributions, together with an undertaking by the foreign limited partnership to keep those records until the foreign limited partnership's registration in this State is canceled or withdrawn.

* * *

§ 3487. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS WITHOUT REGISTRATION

(a)(1) A foreign limited partnership transacting business in this State may not maintain an action or proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense in this State until it has registered in this State.

(2) The successor to a foreign limited partnership that transacted business in this State without a ~~certificate of authority~~ registration and the assignee of a cause of action arising out of that business may not maintain a proceeding or raise a counterclaim, crossclaim, or affirmative defense based on that cause of action in any court in this State until the foreign limited

partnership or its successor or assignee ~~obtains a certificate of authority~~ has registered.

* * *

Sec. 7. 11 V.S.A. chapter 25 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 25. LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES

* * *

§ 4006. RESERVED NAME

~~(a)(1) A person may reserve the exclusive use of the name of a limited liability company, including a fictitious or assumed name for a foreign limited liability company whose name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing.~~

~~(2) The application shall state the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved.~~

~~(3) If the Secretary of State finds that the name applied for is available, the Secretary shall reserve that name for the applicant's exclusive use for a 120-day period.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved limited liability company name may renew the reservation for successive periods of 120 days each by delivering a renewal application to the Secretary of State during the 45-day period preceding the date of expiration of the reservation.~~

~~(c) The owner of a name reserved for a limited liability company may assign the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a signed notice of the assignment that states the name and address of the assignee.~~

~~(d) The owner of a reserved limited liability company name may terminate the name reservation by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a signed notice of withdrawal of name reservation~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to section 1652 of this title.

§ 4007. DESIGNATED OFFICE AND AGENT

~~(a) A limited liability company and a foreign limited liability company authorized to do business in this State shall designate and continuously maintain:~~

~~(1) a designated office for notification purposes, which may but need not be a place of its business, and may but need not be located in this State; and~~

(2) ~~an agent and street address of the agent for service of process on the limited liability company in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) An agent for service of process shall be an individual resident of this State, a domestic corporation, another limited liability company, or a foreign corporation or foreign limited liability company authorized to do business in this State.~~

§ 4008. CHANGE OF DESIGNATED OFFICE OR AGENT FOR SERVICE
OF PROCESS

(a) A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company may change its designated office or agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that sets forth: its current designated office information and any change to the information.

~~(1) the name of the company;~~

~~(2) the street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address, of its current designated office;~~

~~(3) if the current designated office is to be changed, the street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address, of the new designated office;~~

~~(4) the name and address of its current agent for service of process; and~~

~~(5) if the current agent for service of process is to be changed, the name of the new agent for service of process and the new agent's written consent, either on the statement or attached to it, to the appointment.~~

~~(b) If an agent for service of process changes the street address of the agent's business office, the agent may change the street address of the designated office of any limited liability company or foreign limited liability company for which the agent is the agent for service of process by notifying the company in writing of the change and signing, either manually or in facsimile, and filing with the Secretary of State a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the company has been notified of the change. A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company shall change its agent for service of process, or the agent's email or address information, by delivering to the Secretary for filing a statement of change pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

§ 4009. RESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) To resign as an agent for service of process of a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company, the agent shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation ~~containing the company~~

~~name and stating that the agent is resigning pursuant to section 1655 of this title.~~

~~(b) The Secretary of State shall file a statement of resignation delivered under subsection (a) of this section and mail or otherwise deliver a copy to the designated office of the limited liability company.~~

~~(c) An agency for service of process terminates on the earlier of:~~

~~(1) the 41st day after the Secretary of State files the statement of resignation; or~~

~~(2) when a record designating a new agent for service of process is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing on behalf of the limited liability company and becomes effective.~~

§ 4010. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a limited liability company or a foreign limited liability company is an agent of the company for service of any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the company.~~

~~(b) If a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company fails to appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the agent's address, the Secretary of State is an agent of the company upon whom process, notice, or demand may be served.~~

~~(c) Service of any process, notice, or demand on the Secretary of State may be made by delivering to and leaving with the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, notice, or demand. If the process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State shall forward one of the copies by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the company at its registered office. Service on the Secretary of State shall be returnable in not less than 30 days.~~

~~(d) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.~~

~~(e) This section shall not affect the right to serve process, notice, or demand upon a limited liability company or foreign limited liability company in any manner otherwise provided by law. A limited liability company or foreign limited liability company is subject to the service of process provisions in section 1656 of this title.~~

* * *

§ 4023. ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

* * *

(b) Articles of organization of a limited liability company may set forth:

- (1) provisions permitted to be set forth in an operating agreement; ~~and~~
- (2) name, email, and address information for one or more owners, officers, or other principals of the company; and
- (3) other matters not inconsistent with law.

* * *

§ 4033. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic limited liability company and each foreign limited liability company authorized to transact business in this State shall file an annual report with the Secretary of State. The annual report shall set forth the following information:

- (1) the name of the company and the state or country under whose law it is organized; ~~and~~
- (2) the address of its designated office; and
- (3) the name, email, and address of its designated agent for service of process at that office in this State.

(b) Information in the annual report shall be current as of the date the annual report is signed on behalf of the company.

(c) The annual report shall be delivered to the Secretary of State within three months after the expiration of the company's fiscal year.

(d) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

§ 4112. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign limited liability company may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall set forth:

- (1) the name of the foreign company and, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, an alternate name that satisfies the requirements of section 4116 of this title;
- (2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is organized;

(3) the address of its initial designated office; and

(4) the name, email, and address information and street address, and the mailing address if different from the street address, of its designated agent for service of process in this State pursuant to section 1655 of this title.

(b) An application may set forth:

(1) provisions permitted to be included in an operating agreement;

(2) the name, email, and address information for one or more owners, officers, or other principals of the company; and

(3) other matters not inconsistent with law.

(c) A foreign limited liability company shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of existence or a document of similar import, authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of company records in the state or country under whose law it is organized, dated ~~no~~ not earlier than 90 days prior to filing of the application.

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 11A language * * *

Sec. 8. 11A V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 1.20. FILING REQUIREMENTS

* * *

(j)(1) Any of the terms of a plan or filed documents may be made dependent on facts ascertainable outside the plan or filed documents as follows:

(A) The manner in which the facts operate on the terms of the plan or filed document must be clearly and expressly set forth in the plan or filed document.

(B) The facts may include without limitation actions or events within the control of, or determinations made by, a ~~part~~ party to the plan or filing the filed document or a representative of a party to the plan or filing the filed document.

(2) As used in this section:

(A) “Filed document” means a document filed with the ~~secretary of state~~ Secretary of State under any provision of this title, except chapter 15 or section 16.22 of this title.

(B) “Plan” means a plan of merger or share exchange.

* * *

§ 1.40. DEFINITIONS

As used in this title:

* * *

(8) “Entity” includes corporation and foreign corporation; ~~not-for-profit~~ nonprofit corporation; profit and not-for-profit nonprofit unincorporated association; business trust, estate, partnership, trust, and two or more persons having a joint or common economic interest; and state, United States, and foreign government.

* * *

Sec. 9. 11A V.S.A. § 2.02 is amended to read:

§ 2.02. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(a) The articles of incorporation shall set forth:

(1) a corporate name for the corporation that satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title;

(2) the classes of shares, if any, and the number of shares in each class that the corporation is authorized to issue;

(3) the number of shares the corporation is authorized to issue;

(4) the street address of the corporation’s initial registered office and the name and email of its initial registered agent for service of process at that office pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655;

(5) the name and address of each incorporator;

(6) one or more classes of shares that together have unlimited voting rights; and

(7) one or more classes of shares, (which may be the same class or classes as those with voting rights), that together are entitled to receive the net assets of the corporation upon dissolution.

(b) The articles of incorporation may set forth:

(1) the names and addresses of the individuals who are to serve as the initial board of directors, and of any other principals the corporation provides;

(2) provisions not inconsistent with law regarding:

* * *

Sec. 10. 11A V.S.A. chapter 4 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 4. NAME

§ 4.01. CORPORATE ~~HEAD~~ NAME

(a) A corporate name:

(1) shall contain the word “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” or “limited,” or the abbreviation “corp.,” “inc.,” “co.,” or “ltd.,” or words or abbreviations of like import in another language;

(2) may not contain language stating or implying that the corporation is organized for a purpose other than that permitted by section 3.01 of this title and its articles of incorporation;

(3) shall not have the word “cooperative” or any abbreviation thereof as part of its name unless the corporation is a worker cooperative corporation organized under 11 V.S.A. chapter 8, a housing cooperative corporation organized under 11 V.S.A. chapter 14, or the articles of incorporation contain all of the provisions required of a ~~corporation organized as a cooperative association~~ general cooperative corporation in 11 V.S.A. § 981; and

(4) shall not include any word not otherwise authorized by law.

* * *

§ 4.02. RESERVED NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a corporate name, including a fictitious name for a foreign corporation whose corporate name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved. If the Secretary of State finds that the corporate name applied for is available, he or she shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for a 120-day period. Such 120-day period may be renewed no more than twice.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved corporate name may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer that states the name and address of the transferee~~ A person may

reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.

§ 4.03. REGISTERED NAME

(a) A foreign corporation may register its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, if the name is distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from the corporate or business names that are not available under section 4.01(b)(3) of this title.

(b) A foreign corporation registers its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing an application:

(1) setting forth its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, the state or country and date of its incorporation, and a brief description of the nature of the business in which it is engaged; and

(2) accompanied by a certificate of good standing or a document of similar import from the state or country of incorporation.

* * *

Sec. 11. 11A V.S.A. chapter 5 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 5. OFFICE AND AGENT

§ 5.01. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS

Each corporation must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, who may be:

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose business office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic corporation or nonprofit domestic corporation whose business office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign corporation or nonprofit foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose business office is identical with the registered office.~~

§ 5.02. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) A corporation may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process information by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655. ~~that sets forth:~~

- ~~(1) the name of the corporation;~~
- ~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~
- ~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of the new registered office;~~
- ~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~
- ~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of the new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~
- ~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the business office of its registered agent will be identical~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of the agent's business office, the agent may change the street address of the registered office of any corporation for which he or she is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change.~~

§ 5.03. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT

~~(a) A registered agent may resign his or her agency appointment by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing, and the corporation at its registered office, the signed original and two exact copies of a statement of resignation. The statement may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall mail one copy to the registered office (if not discontinued) and the other copy to the corporation at its principal office.~~

~~(c) The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement is filed~~ A registered agent for service of process may resign as agent by filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.

§ 5.04. SERVICE ON CORPORATION

~~(a) The corporation's registered agent shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the corporation may be served.~~

~~(b) Whenever a corporation shall fail to appoint or maintain a registered agent in this State, or whenever its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the registered office, then the Secretary of State shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any such process, notice or demand may be served. Service on the Secretary of State of any such process, notice, or demand shall be made by delivering to and leaving with him or her, or with any clerk having charge of the corporation department of his or her office, duplicate copies of such process, notice, or demand. In the event any such process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, he or she shall immediately cause one of the copies thereof to be forwarded by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the corporation at its registered office.~~

~~(c) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served upon the Secretary under this section, and shall record therein the time of such service and the Secretary's action with reference thereto.~~

~~(d) Nothing herein contained shall limit or affect the right to serve any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon a corporation in any other manner now or hereafter permitted by law, or by rule. A corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. 1656.~~

Sec. 12. 11A V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. DISSOLUTION

* * *

§ 14.05. EFFECT OF DISSOLUTION

* * *

(b) Dissolution of a corporation does not:

- (1) transfer title to the corporation's property;
- (2) prevent transfer of its shares or securities, although the authorization to dissolve may provide for closing the corporation's share transfer records;
- (3) subject its directors or officers to standards of conduct different from those prescribed in chapter 8 of this title;

(4) change quorum or voting requirements for its board of directors or shareholders; change provisions for selection, resignation, or removal of its directors or officers or both; or change provisions for amending its bylaws;

(5) prevent commencement of a proceeding by or against the corporation in its corporate name;

(6) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of dissolution; or

(7) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

* * *

§ 14.20. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

* * *

(d) Involuntary termination of a corporation does not:

(1) prevent commencement of a proceeding against the corporation in its corporate name;

(2) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of involuntary termination; or

(3) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

* * *

Sec. 13. 11A V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. FOREIGN CORPORATIONS

* * *

§ 15.03. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign corporation may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application and the applicable filing fee to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation or, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, a corporate name that satisfies the requirements of section 15.06 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(3) its date of incorporation and period of duration;

(4) the street address of its principal office;

(5) the address of its registered office in this State and the name of its registered agent for service of process at that office, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655; and

(6) the names and usual business addresses of its current directors and officers, and of any other principals the corporation provides.

(b) The foreign corporation shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of good standing (or a document of similar import) duly authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporate records in the state or country under whose law it is incorporated.

* * *

§ 15.06. CORPORATE NAME OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) If the corporate name of a foreign corporation does not satisfy the requirements of section 4.01 of this title, the foreign corporation to obtain or maintain a certificate of authority to transact business in this State:

(1) may add the word “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” or “limited,” or the abbreviation “corp.,” “inc.,” “co.,” or “Ltd.,” to its corporate name for use in this State; or

(2) ~~may use an available trade~~ adopt an alternate name to transact business in this State if its corporate name is unavailable and it delivers to the Secretary of State for filing a copy of the resolution of its board of directors, certified by its secretary, adopting the ~~trade~~ alternate name.

(b) Except as authorized by subsections (c) and (d) of this section, the corporate name, including a ~~trade~~ an alternate name, of a foreign corporation shall be distinguishable in the records of the Secretary of State from any name granted, registered, or reserved under this chapter, or the name of any other entity, whether domestic or foreign, that is reserved, registered, or granted by or with the Secretary of State.

(c) A foreign corporation may apply to the Secretary of State for authorization to use in this State the name of another corporation incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State that is not distinguishable in the records from one or more of the names described in subsection (b) of this section, by submitting to the Secretary of State a satisfactory written form indicating the other corporation’s consent and change of name.

(d) A foreign corporation may use in this State the name, including the ~~trade~~ alternate name, of another domestic or foreign corporation that is used in this State if the other corporation is incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State and the foreign corporation:

- (1) has merged with the other corporation;
- (2) has been formed by reorganization of the other corporation; or
- (3) has acquired all or substantially all of the assets, including the corporate name, of the other corporation.

* * *

§ 15.07. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

Each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State must continuously maintain in this State:

- (1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and
- (2) a registered agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, who may be:

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose business office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic corporation or domestic not-for-profit corporation whose business office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign corporation or foreign not-for-profit corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose business office is identical with the registered office.~~

§ 15.08. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change ~~that sets forth:~~

- ~~(1) its name;~~
- ~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~
- ~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of its new registered office;~~
- ~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~
- ~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of its new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~

~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the business office of its registered agent will be identical.~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of his or her business office, he or she may change the street address of the registered office of any foreign corporation for which he or she is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.09. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation may resign his or her agency as agent by filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 appointment by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of resignation. The statement of resignation may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall attach the filing receipt to one copy and mail the copy and receipt to the registered office if not discontinued. The Secretary of State shall mail the other copy to the foreign corporation at its principal office address shown in its most recent annual report.~~

~~(c) The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement was filed.~~

§ 15.10. SERVICE OF PROCESS ON FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~Service of process on a foreign corporation is governed by 12 V.S.A. subchapter 6, chapter 25 and by the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure. A foreign corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

* * *

§ 15.30. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall terminate the certificate of authority of a foreign corporation if:

(1) the foreign corporation fails to deliver its annual report to the Secretary of State as required by section 16.22 of this title;

(2) the foreign corporation does not pay any franchise taxes or penalties imposed by this title or other law;

(3) the foreign corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State;

(4) the foreign corporation fails to inform the Secretary of State under section 15.08 or 15.09 of this title that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has changed;

(5) a material misrepresentation is knowingly made in a signed document delivered to the Secretary of State for filing;

(6) the Secretary of State receives a duly authenticated certificate from the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporation records in the state or country under whose law the foreign corporation is incorporated stating that it has been dissolved or terminated or disappeared as the result of a merger;

(7) the foreign corporation has failed to comply with subdivision 11.07(a)(3) of this title requiring it to file articles of merger where it is the survivor of a merger with a domestic corporation; or

(8) the Commissioner of Taxes notifies the Secretary of State that a foreign corporation has failed to make a return, to pay a tax, to file a bond, or to do any other act required to be done under the provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 211.

(b) The Secretary of State shall serve the foreign corporation with written notice of termination of its certificate of authority under section 15.10 of this title, setting out each deficiency.

(c) The authority of a foreign corporation to transact business in this State ceases on the date shown on the notice terminating its certificate of authority. Termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority does not terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

(d) The Secretary of State's termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority appoints the Secretary of State the foreign corporation's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the foreign corporation was authorized to transact or was transacting without authorization business in this State. Service of process on the Secretary of State under this subsection is service on the foreign corporation. Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of the process to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its most recent annual report or in any subsequent communication

received from the corporation stating the current mailing address of its principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for a certificate of authority, or otherwise perfect service under section 15.10 of this title.

(e) If the foreign corporation corrects each ground for termination and demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the Secretary of State that each ground cited in the notice of termination does not exist, and pays to the Secretary of State a reinstatement fee of \$25.00 for each year it is delinquent, the secretary may cancel the termination and prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the corporation under section 15.10 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 14. 11A V.S.A. chapter 16 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 16. RECORDS AND REPORTS

* * *

§ 16.22. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic corporation, and each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State, shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an annual report that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation and the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) the address of its registered office and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at that office in this State;

* * *

~~(e) Listing the name of the registered agent and the address of the registered office does not effectuate a change in such agent or office unless the report also contains the requirements of section 5.02 of this title. The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.~~

* * * Updates to Title 11B language * * *

Sec. 15. 11B V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 1.21. FORMS

(a) The Secretary of State may prescribe the form or electronic format of and furnish on request, forms or specifications for formats for:

- (1) an application for a certificate of ~~existence~~ good standing;
- (2) a foreign corporation's application for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State;
- (3) a foreign corporation's application for a certificate of withdrawal; and
- (4) the biennial report.

(b) The Secretary of State may prescribe and furnish on request forms for other documents required or permitted to be filed by this title but their use is not mandatory.

* * *

Sec. 16. 11B V.S.A. chapter 2 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 2. INCORPORATION

* * *

§ 2.02. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(a) The articles of incorporation must set forth:

(1) a A corporate name for the corporation that satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title;

(2) ~~one~~ One of the following statements:

(A) This corporation is a public benefit corporation.

(B) This corporation is a mutual benefit corporation.

(3) ~~the~~ The street address of the corporation's initial registered office and the name and email of its initial registered agent for service of process at that office, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655;

(4) ~~the~~ The name and address of each incorporator;

(5) ~~whether~~ Whether or not the corporation will have members; ~~and~~;

(6) ~~provisions~~ Provisions not inconsistent with law regarding the distribution of assets on dissolution.

(b) The articles of incorporation may set forth:

(1) the purpose or purposes for which the corporation is organized, which may be, either alone or in combination with other purposes, the transaction of any lawful activity;

(2) the names and addresses of the individuals who are to serve as the initial directors, and of any other principals the corporation provides;

(3) provisions not inconsistent with law regarding:

(A) managing and regulating the affairs of the corporation;

(B) defining, limiting, and regulating the powers of the corporation, its board of directors, and members (or any class of members);

(C) the characteristics, qualifications, rights, limitations, and obligations attaching to each or any class of members; and

(4) any provision that under this title is required or permitted to be set forth in the bylaws.

* * *

Sec. 17. 11B V.S.A. chapter 4 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 4. NAME

* * *

§ 4.02. RESERVED NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of a corporate name, including a fictitious name for a foreign corporation whose corporate name is not available, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. Upon finding that the corporate name applied for is available, the Secretary of State shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for a 120-day period. Such 120-day period may be renewed no more than twice.~~

~~(b) The owner of a reserved corporate name may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer that states the name and address of the transferee. A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.~~

§ 4.03. REGISTERED NAME

(a) A foreign corporation may register its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, if the name is distinguishable upon the records of the Secretary of State from:

(1) the corporate name of a nonprofit or business corporation incorporated or authorized to do business in this State; and

(2) a corporate name reserved under section 4.02 of this title or 11A V.S.A. § 4.02 or registered under this section.

(b) A foreign corporation registers its corporate name, or its alternate name corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, by delivering to the Secretary of State an application:

(1) setting forth its corporate name, or its alternate name or corporate name with any addition required by section 15.06 of this title, the state or country and date of its incorporation, and a brief description of the nature of the activities in which it is engaged; and

(2) accompanied by a certificate of existence (or a document of similar import) from the state or country of incorporation.

* * *

Sec. 18. 11B V.S.A. chapter 5 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 5. OFFICE AND AGENT

§ 5.01. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

Each corporation must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office that may be the same as any of its places of business; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, whose business office is identical with the registered office.

§ 5.02. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) A corporation may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation;

(2) the street address of its current registered office;

(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of the new registered office;

(4) the name of its current registered agent;

(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of the new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and

(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the office of its registered agent will be identical

~~(b) If the street address of a registered agent's office is changed, the registered agent may change the street address of the registered office of any corporation for which the registered agent is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and by signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change.~~

§ 5.03. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) A registered agent may resign as registered agent by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of resignation. The statement may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall mail one copy to the registered office (if not discontinued) and the other copy to the corporation at its principal office as shown in the most recent biennial report filed pursuant to section 16.22 of this title.~~

~~(c) The agency appointment is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement is filed.~~

§ 5.04. SERVICE ON CORPORATION

~~(a) The corporation's registered agent shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the corporation may be served~~

~~(b) Whenever a corporation shall fail to appoint or maintain a registered agent in this State, or whenever its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the registered office, then the Secretary of State shall be an agent of such corporation upon whom any such process, notice, or demand may be served. Service on the Secretary of State of any such process, notice, or demand shall be made by delivering to and leaving with him or her, or with any clerk having charge of the corporation department of his or her office, duplicate copies of such process, notice, or demand. In the event any such process, notice, or demand is served on the Secretary of State, he or she shall immediately cause one of the copies thereof to be forwarded by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the corporation at its registered office.~~

~~(e) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of all processes, notices, and demands served upon the Secretary under this section, and shall record therein the time of such service and the Secretary's action with reference thereto.~~

~~(d) Nothing herein contained shall limit or affect the right to serve any process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served upon a corporation in any other manner now or hereafter permitted by law, or by rule. A corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

Sec. 19. 11B V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. DISSOLUTION

* * *

§ 14.05. EFFECT OF DISSOLUTION

* * *

(b) Dissolution of a corporation does not:

- (1) transfer title to the corporation's property;
- (2) subject its directors or officers to standards of conduct different from those prescribed in chapter 8 of this title;
- (3) change quorum or voting requirements for its board or members; change provisions for selection, resignation, or removal of its directors or officers or both; or change provisions for amending its bylaws;
- (4) prevent commencement of a proceeding by or against the corporation in its corporate name;
- (5) abate or suspend a proceeding pending by or against the corporation on the effective date of dissolution; or
- (6) terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process.

* * *

§ 14.20. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

The Secretary of State may commence a proceeding under section 14.21 of this title to administratively dissolve a corporation if:

- (1) the corporation does not pay within 60 days after they are due fees imposed by this title;
- (2) the corporation does not deliver its biennial report to the Secretary of State within 60 days after it is due;

(3) the corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State for 60 days or more; or

(4) the corporation does not notify the Secretary of State within 120 days that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has been changed, that its registered agent for service of process has resigned, or that its registered office has been discontinued.

§ 14.21. PROCEDURE FOR AND EFFECT OF INVOLUNTARY
TERMINATION

* * *

(d) The ~~involuntarily~~ involuntary dissolution of a corporation does not terminate the authority of its registered agent for service of process.

§ 14.22. REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING INVOLUNTARY
DISSOLUTION

(a) A corporation involuntarily dissolved that has not distributed its assets under section 14.21 of this title may apply to the Secretary of State for reinstatement upon payment of \$25.00 for each year the corporation is delinquent. The application must:

(1) recite the name of the corporation and the effective date of its involuntary dissolution;

(2) state that the ground or grounds for dissolution either did not exist or have been eliminated; and

(3) state that the corporation's name satisfies the requirements of section 4.01 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 20. 11B V.S.A. chapter 15 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 15. FOREIGN CORPORATIONS

* * *

§ 15.03. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign corporation may apply for a certificate of authority to transact business in this State by delivering an application to the Secretary of State. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation or, if its name is unavailable for use in this State, a corporate name that satisfies the requirements of section 15.06 of this title;

- (2) the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;
- (3) the date of incorporation and period of duration;
- (4) the street address of its principal office;
- (5) the address of its registered office in this State and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at that office;
- (6) the names and usual business or home addresses of its current directors and officers and of any other principals the corporation provides;
- (7) whether the foreign corporation has members; and
- (8) whether the corporation, if it had been incorporated in this State, would be a public benefit or mutual benefit corporation.

(b) The foreign corporation shall deliver with the completed application a certificate of existence, (or a document of similar import), duly authenticated by the Secretary of State or other official having custody of corporate records in the state or country under whose law it is incorporated.

* * *

§ 15.06. CORPORATE NAME OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

(a) If the corporate name of a foreign corporation does not satisfy the requirements of section 4.01 of this title, the foreign corporation to obtain or maintain a certificate of authority to transact business in this State:

(1) may add the word “corporation,” “incorporated,” “company,” or “limited,” or the abbreviation “corp.,” “inc.,” “co.,” or “ltd.,” to its corporate name for use in this State; or

(2) may ~~use an available trade~~ adopt an alternate name to transact business in this State if its corporate name is unavailable and it delivers to the Secretary of State for filing a copy of the resolution of its board of directors, certified by its secretary, adopting the ~~trade~~ alternate name.

(b) Except as authorized by subsections (c) and (d) of this section, the corporate name, (including a ~~trade~~ an alternate name,) of a foreign corporation must be distinguishable upon the records of the Secretary of State from reserved or registered trade names or corporate names.

(c) A foreign corporation may apply to the Secretary of State for authorization to use in this State the name of another corporation incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State that is not distinguishable upon the records from the name applied for by submitting to the Secretary of State a satisfactory written form indicating the other corporation’s consent and change of name.

(d) A foreign corporation may use in this State the name, (including the ~~trade alternate name,~~) of another domestic or foreign corporation that is used in this State if the other corporation is incorporated or authorized to transact business in this State and the foreign corporation:

* * *

§ 15.07. REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT FOR
SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

Each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State must continuously maintain in this State:

(1) a registered office with the same address as that of its registered agent for service of process; and

(2) a registered agent for service of process, ~~who may be:~~

~~(A) an individual who resides in this State and whose office is identical with the registered office;~~

~~(B) a domestic business or nonprofit corporation whose office is identical with the registered office; or~~

~~(C) a foreign business or nonprofit corporation authorized to transact business in this State whose office is identical with the registered office pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.08. CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR REGISTERED AGENT
FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a)~~ A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may change its registered office or registered agent for service of process by delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change ~~that sets forth:~~

~~(1) its name;~~

~~(2) the street address of its current registered office;~~

~~(3) if the current registered office is to be changed, the street address of its new registered office;~~

~~(4) the name of its current registered agent;~~

~~(5) if the current registered agent is to be changed, the name of its new registered agent and the new agent's written consent (either on the statement or attached to it) to the appointment; and~~

~~(6) that after the change or changes are made, the street addresses of its registered office and the office of its registered agent will be identical.~~

~~(b) If a registered agent changes the street address of its business office, the agent may change the address of the registered office of any foreign corporation for which the agent is the registered agent by notifying the corporation in writing of the change and signing (either manually or in facsimile) and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change that complies with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section and recites that the corporation has been notified of the change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 15.09. RESIGNATION OF REGISTERED AGENT OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation may resign as agent by signing and delivering to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655 the original and two exact or conformed copies of a statement of resignation. The statement of resignation may include a statement that the registered office is also discontinued.~~

~~(b) After filing the statement, the Secretary of State shall attach the filing receipt to one copy and mail the copy and receipt to the registered office if not discontinued. The Secretary of State shall mail the other copy to the foreign corporation at its principal office address shown in its most recent biennial report.~~

~~(c) The agency is terminated, and the registered office discontinued if so provided, on the 31st day after the date on which the statement was filed.~~

§ 15.10. SERVICE ON FOREIGN CORPORATION

~~(a) The registered agent of a foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State is the corporation's agent for service of process, notice, or demand required or permitted by law to be served on the foreign corporation.~~

~~(b) A foreign corporation may be served by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its application for a certificate of authority or in its most recent biennial report filed under section 16.22 of this title if the foreign corporation:~~

~~(1) has no registered agent or its registered agent cannot with reasonable diligence be served;~~

~~(2) has withdrawn from transacting business in this State under section 15.20 of this title; or~~

~~(3) has had its certificate of authority revoked under section 15.31 of this title.~~

~~(c) Service is perfected under subsection (b) of this section at the earliest of:~~

~~(1) the date the foreign corporation receives the mail;~~

~~(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the foreign corporation; or~~

~~(3) five days after its deposit in the U.S. mail, as evidenced by the postmark if mailed postpaid and correctly addressed.~~

~~(d) This section does not prescribe the only means, or necessarily the required means, of serving a foreign corporation A foreign corporation is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

§ 15.20. WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN CORPORATION

* * *

(b) A foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State may apply for a certificate of withdrawal by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application must set forth:

(1) the name of the foreign corporation and the name of the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) that it is not transacting business in this State and that it surrenders its authority to transact business in this State;

(3) that it revokes the authority of its registered agent for service of process to accept service on its behalf and appoints the Secretary of State as its agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action arising during the time it was authorized to do business in this State;

(4) a mailing address to which the Secretary of State may mail a copy of any process served on him or her under subdivision (3) of this subsection; and

(5) a commitment to notify the Secretary of State in the future of any change in the mailing address.

* * *

§ 15.30. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

(a) The Secretary of State shall terminate the certificate of authority of a foreign corporation if:

(1) the foreign corporation fails to deliver its biennial report to the Secretary of State as required by section 16.22 of this title;

(2) the foreign corporation does not pay any penalties imposed by this title or other law;

(3) the foreign corporation is without a registered agent for service of process or registered office in this State;

(4) the foreign corporation fails to inform the Secretary of State under section 15.08 or 15.09 of this title that its registered agent for service of process or registered office has changed;

(5) a material misrepresentation is knowingly made in a signed document delivered to the Secretary of State for filing;

(6) the Secretary of State receives a duly authenticated certificate from the secretary of state or other official having custody of corporation records in the state or country under whose law the foreign corporation is incorporated stating that it has been dissolved or terminated or disappeared as the result of a merger; or

(7) the foreign corporation has failed to comply with subdivision 11.07(a) of this title requiring it to file articles of merger where it is the survivor of a merger with a domestic corporation.

(b) The Secretary of State shall serve the foreign corporation with written notice of termination of its certificate of authority under section 15.10 of this title, setting out each deficiency.

(c) The authority of a foreign corporation to transact business in this State ceases on the date shown on the notice terminating its certificate of authority. Termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority does not terminate the authority of the registered agent for service of process of the corporation.

(d) The Secretary of State's termination of a foreign corporation's certificate of authority appoints the Secretary of State the foreign corporation's agent for service of process in any proceeding based on a cause of action that arose during the time the foreign corporation was authorized to transact or was transacting without authorization business in this State. Service of process on the Secretary of State under this subsection is service on the foreign corporation. Upon receipt of process, the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of the process to the secretary of the foreign corporation at its principal office shown in its most recent biennial report or in any subsequent communication received from the corporation stating the current mailing address of its

principal office, or, if none is on file, in its application for a certificate of authority, or otherwise perfect service under section 15.10 of this title.

(e) If the foreign corporation corrects each ground for termination and demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the Secretary of State that each ground cited in the notice of termination does not exist, and pays to the Secretary of State a fee of \$25.00 for each year it is delinquent, the Secretary may cancel the termination and prepare a certificate of reinstatement, file the original of the certificate, and serve a copy on the corporation under section 15.10 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 21. 11B V.S.A. chapter 16 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 16. RECORDS AND REPORTS

* * *

§ 16.22. BIENNIAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) Each domestic corporation, and each foreign corporation authorized to transact business in this State, shall deliver to the Secretary of State a biennial report on a form prescribed and furnished by the Secretary of State that sets forth:

(1) the name of the corporation and the state or country under whose law it is incorporated;

(2) the address of its registered office and the name and email of its registered agent for service of process at the office in this State;

(3) the address of its principal office;

(4) the names and business or residence addresses of its directors and principal officers; and

(5) a brief description of the nature of its activities.

(b) The information in the biennial report must be current on the date the biennial report is executed on behalf of the corporation.

(c) The first biennial report must be delivered to the Secretary of State between January 1 and April 1 of the year following the calendar year in which a domestic corporation was incorporated or a foreign corporation was authorized to transact business. Subsequent biennial reports must be delivered to the Secretary of State between January 1 and April 1 following each succeeding two calendar years.

(d) If a biennial report does not contain the information required by this section, the Secretary of State shall promptly notify the reporting domestic or

foreign corporation in writing and return the report to it for correction. If the report is corrected to contain the information required by this section and delivered to the Secretary of State within 30 days after the effective date of notice, it is deemed to be timely filed.

(e) The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * * Updates to Title 11C language * * *

Sec. 22. 11C V.S.A. chapter 1 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

§ 112. RESERVATION OF NAME

~~(a) A person may reserve the exclusive use of the name of a mutual benefit enterprise, including a fictitious name for a foreign enterprise whose name is not available under section 111 of this title, by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall set forth the name and address of the applicant and the name proposed to be reserved. If the Secretary of State finds that the name applied for is available under section 111 of this title, the Secretary of State shall reserve the name for the applicant's exclusive use for a nonrenewable period of 120 days.~~

~~(b) A person who has reserved a name for a mutual benefit enterprise may transfer the reservation to another person by delivering to the Secretary of State a signed notice of the transfer which states the name, street address, and, if different, the mailing address of the transferee. If the person is an organizer of the enterprise and the name of the enterprise is the same as the reserved name, the delivery of articles of organization for filing by the Secretary of State is a transfer by the person to the enterprise~~ A person may reserve the exclusive use of a business name by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1652.

* * *

§ 117. DESIGNATED OFFICE AND AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

(a) A mutual benefit enterprise or a foreign enterprise that has a certificate of authority under section 1404 of this title shall designate and continuously maintain in this State:

(1) an office, as its designated office, which need not be a place of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's activity in this State; and

(2) an agent for service of process, pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655, at the designated office.

~~(b) An agent for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise shall be an individual who is a resident of this State or an entity that is authorized to do business in this State.~~

§ 118. CHANGE OF DESIGNATED OFFICE OR AGENT FOR SERVICE
OF PROCESS

~~(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 207(e) of this title, to change its designated office, its agent for service of process, or the street address or, if different, mailing address of its principal office, a mutual benefit enterprise shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change containing:~~

~~(1) the name of the mutual benefit enterprise;~~

~~(2) the street address and, if different, mailing address of its designated office;~~

~~(3) if the designated office is to be changed, the street address and, if different, mailing address of the new designated office;~~

~~(4) the name of its agent for service of process; and~~

~~(5) if the agent for service of process is to be changed, the name of the new agent.~~

~~(b) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 207(e) of this title, to change its agent for service of process, the address of its designated office, or the street address or, if different, mailing address of its principal office, a foreign enterprise shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change containing:~~

~~(1) the name of the foreign enterprise;~~

~~(2) the name, street address, and, if different, mailing address of its designated office;~~

~~(3) if the current agent for service of process or an address of the designated office is to be changed, the new information;~~

~~(4) the street address and, if different, the mailing address of its principal office; and~~

~~(5) if the street address or, if different, the mailing address of its principal office is to be changed, the street address and, if different, the mailing address of the new principal office.~~

~~(e) Except as otherwise provided in section 204 of this title, a statement of change is effective when filed by the Secretary of State. A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise shall change its designated office or agent for service of process information by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of change pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 119. RESIGNATION OF AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) To resign as an agent for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise, the agent shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation containing the name of the agent and the name of the enterprise or foreign enterprise.~~

~~(b) After receiving a statement of resignation under subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary of State shall file it and mail or otherwise provide or deliver a copy to the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise at its principal office.~~

~~(c) An agency for service of process of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise terminates on the earlier of:~~

~~(1) the 31st day after the Secretary of State files a statement of resignation under subsection (b) of this section; or~~

~~(2) when a record designating a new agent for service of process is delivered to the Secretary of State for filing on behalf of the enterprise or foreign enterprise and becomes effective. An agent for service of process may resign as agent by submitting to the Secretary of State for filing a statement of resignation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1655.~~

§ 120. SERVICE OF PROCESS

~~(a) An agent for service of process appointed by a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is an agent of the enterprise or foreign enterprise for service of process, notice, or a demand required or permitted by law to be served upon the enterprise or foreign enterprise.~~

~~(b) If a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise does not appoint or maintain an agent for service of process in this State or the agent for service of process cannot with reasonable diligence be found at the address of the designated office on file with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State is an agent of the enterprise or foreign enterprise upon which process, notice, or a demand may be served.~~

~~(c) Service of process, notice, or a demand on the Secretary of State as agent of a mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise may be made by delivering to the Secretary of State two copies of the process, notice, or demand. The Secretary of State shall forward one copy by registered or~~

certified mail, return receipt requested, to the enterprise or foreign enterprise at its principal office.

~~(d) Service is effected under subsection (c) of this section on the earliest of:~~

~~(1) the date the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise receives the process, notice, or demand;~~

~~(2) the date shown on the return receipt, if signed on behalf of the enterprise or foreign enterprise; or~~

~~(3) five days after the process, notice, or demand is deposited by the Secretary of State for delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, if postage is prepaid to the address of the principal office on file with the Secretary of State.~~

~~(e) The Secretary of State shall keep a record of each process, notice, and demand served pursuant to this section and record the time of and the action taken regarding the service.~~

~~(f) This section does not affect the right to serve process, notice, or a demand in any other manner provided by law. A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

Sec. 23. 11C V.S.A. chapter 2 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 2. FILING AND ANNUAL REPORTS

* * *

§ 202. SIGNING AND FILING OF RECORDS PURSUANT TO JUDICIAL ORDER

(a) If a person required by this title to sign or deliver a record to the Secretary of State for filing does not do so, the Superior Court of the county of the mutual benefit enterprise's principal office or the foreign enterprise's registered designated office, upon petition of an aggrieved person, may order:

(1) the person to sign the record and deliver it to the Secretary of State for filing; or

(2) delivery of the unsigned record to the Secretary of State for filing.

* * *

§ 206. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING OR AUTHORIZATION

(a) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish any person that requests it a certificate of good standing for a mutual benefit enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the enterprise's articles of

organization, that the enterprise is in good standing, and that the Secretary of State has not filed a statement of termination.

(b) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish to any person that requests it a certificate of ~~authority~~ authorization for a foreign enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the foreign enterprise's certificate of authority, has not revoked nor has reason to revoke the certificate of authority, and has not filed a notice of cancellation.

(c) Subject to any exceptions stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing or ~~authority~~ authorization issued by the Secretary of State establishes conclusively that the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is in good standing or is authorized to transact business in this State.

§ 207. ANNUAL REPORT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(a) A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise authorized to transact business in this State shall deliver to the Secretary of State for filing an annual report that states:

(1) the name of the enterprise or foreign enterprise;

(2) ~~the street address and, if different, mailing~~ address of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's designated office and the name of its agent for service of process at the designated office;

(3) ~~the street address and, if different, mailing~~ address of the enterprise's or foreign enterprise's principal office;

(4) the name and business address of any director or officer; and

(5) in the case of a foreign enterprise, the state or other jurisdiction under whose law the foreign enterprise is formed and any alternative name adopted under section 1405 of this title.

(b) Information in an annual report shall be current as of the date the report is delivered to the Secretary of State.

(c) A mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise authorized to transact business in this State shall deliver its annual report to the Secretary for filing between January 1 and April 1 of each year, beginning in the year following the calendar year in which the mutual benefit enterprise is formed or the foreign enterprise is authorized to transact business in this State.

(d) If an annual report does not contain the information required by subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary of State shall promptly notify the reporting mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise and return the report for correction. If the report is corrected to contain the information required by

subsection (a) of this section and delivered to the Secretary of State not later than 30 days after the date of the notice from the Secretary of State, it is timely delivered.

~~(e) If a filed annual report contains an address of the designated office, the name or business address of a director or officer, or address of the principal office which differs from the information shown in the records of the Secretary of State immediately before the filing, the differing information in the annual report is considered a statement of change~~ The Secretary of State shall amend its records to reflect a change, if specified in the report, to the business's purpose, email, address, or principal information.

* * *

Sec. 24. 11C V.S.A. chapter 14 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 14. FOREIGN ENTERPRISES

* * *

§ 1402. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

(a) A foreign enterprise may apply for a certificate of authority by delivering an application to the Secretary of State for filing. The application shall state:

(1) the name of the foreign enterprise and, if the name does not comply with section 111 of this title, an alternative name adopted pursuant to section 1405 of this title;

(2) the name of the state or other jurisdiction under whose law the foreign enterprise is organized;

(3) the street address and, if different, mailing address of the principal office and, if the law of the jurisdiction under which the foreign enterprise is organized requires the foreign enterprise to maintain another office in that jurisdiction, the street address and, if different, mailing address of the required office;

(4) the street address and, if different, mailing address of the foreign enterprise's designated office in this State, and the name of the foreign enterprise's agent for service of process at the designated office; and

(5) the name, street address and, if different, mailing address of each of the foreign enterprise's current directors and officers, and of any other principal the enterprise provides.

* * *

* * * Updates to Title 12 language * * *

Sec. 25. 12 V.S.A. chapter 25, subchapter 6 is amended to read:

Subchapter 6. ~~Foreign Corporations~~ Business Organizations

§ 851. SERVICE ON SECRETARY OF STATE

~~When a foreign corporation has appointed the Secretary of State as its process agent pursuant to the statutes relating to such corporations, service of process made upon the Secretary by delivering to him or her duplicate copies thereof, shall be sufficient. A copy of the stipulation, filed under the provisions of 11 V.S.A. § 3011, 11A V.S.A. § 15.10, and 11B V.S.A. § 15.10, certified by the Secretary, with his or her certificate that process has been served on him or her, shall be sufficient evidence thereof. A business organization is subject to the service of process provisions in 11 V.S.A. § 1656.~~

§ 852. FEES; MAILING OF COPY TO CORPORATION BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

When process is served on the Secretary of State under the provisions of ~~section 851 of this title~~ 11 V.S.A. § 1656, there shall be paid to the Secretary by the officer at the time of such service the sum of \$35.00. ~~The Secretary shall forthwith forward by mail prepaid one of the duplicate copies to the corporation at its home office or to a person whom it designates.~~

§ 853. DOING BUSINESS BY PARTICULAR COMPANIES WITHOUT DESIGNATING PROCESS AGENT; PENALTY

A person or agent for a foreign insurance, express, shipping car, telephone or telegraph company, or other foreign company doing like business, which has not designated the Secretary of State as its process agent, ~~as required by 11 V.S.A. § 692~~ who solicits or receives a risk or application for insurance, or receives money or value for such insurance by such company, or receives money or value for the transportation of a package or property by such express or shipping car company, or for the transmission of a message or dispatch by such telegraph company, or receives money, rent, royalty, or income for such telephone company for the use of its instruments or lines or for the sending of any message, shall be fined not more than \$500.00 nor less than \$100.00.

* * *

§ 855. DOING BUSINESS AS APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS AGENT

If the contact with the State or the activity in the state of a foreign ~~corporation~~ business organization, or the contact or activity imputable to it, is sufficient to support a Vermont personal judgment against it, the contact or

activity shall be deemed to be doing business in Vermont by that foreign ~~corporation~~ organization and shall be equivalent to the appointment by it of the Secretary of the State of Vermont and ~~his or her~~ the Secretary's successors to be its true and lawful attorney upon whom may be served all lawful process in any action or proceedings against it arising or growing out of that contact or activity, and also shall be deemed to be its agreement that any process against it ~~which~~ that is so served upon the Secretary of State shall be of the same legal force and effect as if served on the foreign corporation at its principal place of business in the state or country where it is incorporated according to the law of that state or country.

§ 856. SERVICE OF PROCESS

Service of process by virtue of section 855 of this title shall be made pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1656 by delivering to the Secretary of State duplicate copies of the process, ~~with the officer's return of service thereon,~~ and a fee of \$25.00, to be taxed in the plaintiff's costs if he or she prevails. The Secretary shall forthwith forward one of the duplicate copies by registered mail prepaid to the corporation at its principal place of business in the state or country where it is incorporated, which principal place of business shall be stated in the process. The service shall be sufficient if a copy of the process, with the officer's return thereon showing the service upon the Secretary of State, is sent by the plaintiff to the foreign corporation by registered mail, and if the plaintiff's affidavit of compliance herewith is filed with the process in court. The Secretary shall file one of the copies and endorse upon each copy the day and hour of service.

§ 857. CONTINUANCE; COSTS

The court in which the action is pending may order such continuances as may be necessary to afford the defendant reasonable opportunity to appear and defend. The fee provided in section 856 of this title shall be taxed in the plaintiff's costs if he or she prevails. [Repealed.]

§ 858. ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SERVICE

As an alternative to service of process under this subchapter or when a stipulation appointing the Secretary of State as process agent is not filed with the Commissioner of Foreign Corporations, process may be served upon a foreign corporation in accordance with sections 912 and 913 of this title or by any method that the Supreme Court shall by rule provide for service upon a domestic corporation. [Repealed.]

* * * Updates to Title 30 language * * *

Sec. 26. 30 V.S.A. chapter 81 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 81. ELECTRIC UTILITY COOPERATIVES

* * *

§ 3001a. PURPOSE

~~Cooperatives~~ A cooperative may be organized under this chapter for the purpose of creating or supplying energy, cable television, telecommunications, interactive media, and internet access and facilitating and extending the use thereof, and in addition, any other lawful business not inconsistent with this chapter that utilizes the electric distribution facilities of the cooperative.

§ 3002. POWERS

A cooperative shall have power:

- (1) To sue and be sued in its corporate name.
- (2) To have perpetual existence.
- (3) To adopt a corporate seal and alter the same.

(4) To generate, manufacture, purchase, acquire, accumulate, and transmit electric energy; and to distribute, sell, supply, and dispose of energy, cable television, telecommunications, interactive media, and internet access to its members, to governmental agencies, and to political subdivisions; provided, however, that in the generation of electric energy by water power, a cooperative shall comply with the provisions of 10 V.S.A. §§ 1081–1099, relating to the construction and maintenance of dams and, provided further, that a cooperative doing any activity governed by this title shall be regulated for that activity.

* * *

§ 3003. NAME

The name of a cooperative governed by this chapter shall include the words “utility” or “energy” or a word designating any specific form of energy such as “electric,” “propane,” or “natural gas” and “cooperative” and the abbreviation “inc.” unless, in an affidavit made by its president or vice president and filed with the Secretary of State, or in an affidavit made by a person signing articles of incorporation, consolidation, merger, or conversion, which relate to the cooperative and filed, together with the articles, with the Secretary of State, it shall appear that the cooperative desires to do business in another state and is or would be precluded by reason of the inclusion of the words in its name. The name of a cooperative shall be distinct from the name of any other

cooperative or corporation organized under the laws of, or authorized to do business in, this State.

* * *

§ 3037. FOREIGN COMPANIES; SERVICE OF PROCESS

A foreign nonprofit or cooperative corporation supplying or authorized to supply electric energy and owning or operating electric transmission or distribution lines in an adjacent state, prior to March 26, 1943, may construct or acquire extensions of lines in this State within an area no point of which is more than 25 miles from the boundary line of this State and may operate those extensions without qualifying as a foreign corporation to do business in this State. Before constructing or operating such extensions, by an instrument executed and acknowledged on its behalf by its president or vice president, under its seal attested by its clerk or secretary, and filed with the Secretary of State, a corporation shall designate the Secretary of State its agent to accept service of process on its behalf. Thereafter, the corporation shall have all the rights, powers, privileges, and immunities of a cooperative. Service of process shall be made upon the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of ~~12 V.S.A. §§ 851 and 852 and shall forward one copy of the same by registered mail to such corporation at the address of its principal office~~ 11 V.S.A. § 1656.

* * *

* * * Business Organizations Study * * *

Sec. 27. BUSINESS SERVICES AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS;
STUDY

(a) Task. The Secretary of State shall conduct a public engagement process with interested partners to study, consider, and address the following issues:

(1) technical, procedural, and substantive issues concerning the online business filing system;

(2) statutory revisions to:

(A) adopt provisions of the Uniform Business Organizations Code or other provisions to further harmonize the laws governing business organizations in this State, including provisions governing commercial registered agents and updates to the Titles of the Vermont Statutes Annotated related to business organizations;

(B) the laws governing trademarks and possible expansion to include service marks;

(C) the dual framework governing partnerships in 11 V.S.A. chapters 15 and 22 and the mandatory registration of assumed business names and unincorporated nonprofit associations; and

(D) the fees collected for various business organization filings;

(3) assessment of the need for any updates to current model laws or the addition of new model legislation; and

(4) assessment of the administrative oversight authority and substantive provisions governing data brokers, telemarketers, utility cooperatives, and amusement ride operators.

(b) Reporting. The Secretary of State shall, based on the task set forth in subsection (a) of this section, submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, an interim report on or before November 15, 2025 and a final report on or before December 1, 2026 including its findings and any proposed legislation for the General Assembly's consideration. The interim report shall provide the General Assembly with any recommended actions to pursue in the 2026 legislative session.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 28. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, **Reps. Burkhardt of South Burlington and Cooper of Pownal** moved that the report of the Committee on Ways and Means be amended in Sec. 4, 11 V.S.A. chapter 15, in subchapter 3, by striking out section 1655 with the section heading of SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT FOR SERVICE OF PROCESS in its entirety.

Which was agreed to.

Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development was amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended. Thereafter, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 222**

Rep. Arsenaault of Williston, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to participation in a domestic violence accountability program as a condition of a final relief from abuse prevention order

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. § 5131 is amended to read:

§ 5131. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1)(A) “Course of conduct” means:

(i) two or more acts over a period of time, however short, in which a person follows, monitors, surveils, threatens, or makes threats about another person, or interferes with another person’s property; or

(ii) use of any electronic, digital, or precise geolocation device or software or application to surveil a specific person or a specific person’s internet or wireless activity continuously for 12 hours or more or on two or more occasions over a period of time, however short, without authorization.

(B) This definition shall apply to acts conducted by the person directly or indirectly, and by any action, method, device, or means. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of “course of conduct.”

~~(B)~~(C) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1), threaten shall not be construed to require an express or overt threat.

* * *

(4) “Reasonable person” means a reasonable person in the victim’s circumstances.

(5) “Sexually assaulted the plaintiff” means that the defendant engaged in conduct that meets elements of lewd and lascivious conduct as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2601, lewd and lascivious conduct with a child as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2602, sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3252, aggravated sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3253, use of a child in a sexual performance as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2822, or consenting to a sexual performance as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2823, and that the plaintiff was the victim of the offense.

(6) “Stalk” means to engage purposefully in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that the person engaging in the conduct knows or should know would cause a reasonable person to:

(A) fear for ~~his or her~~ the person’s safety or the safety of a family member; or

(B) suffer substantial emotional distress as evidenced by:

(i) a fear of unlawful sexual conduct, unlawful restraint, bodily injury, or death; or

(ii) significant modifications in the person’s actions or routines, including moving from an established residence, changes to established daily routes to and from work that cause a serious disruption in the person’s life, changes to the person’s employment or work schedule, or the loss of a job or time from work.

* * *

Sec. 2. 15 V.S.A. § 1103 is amended to read:

§ 1103. REQUESTS FOR RELIEF

(a) Any family or household member may seek relief from abuse by another family or household member on behalf of ~~himself or herself~~ themselves or ~~his or her~~ their children by filing a complaint under this chapter. A minor 16 years of age or older, or a minor of any age who is in a dating relationship as defined in subdivision 1101(2) of this chapter, may file a complaint under this chapter seeking relief on ~~his or her~~ the minor’s own behalf. The plaintiff shall submit an affidavit in support of the order.

(b) Except as provided in section 1104 of this title, the court shall grant relief only after notice to the defendant and a hearing. The plaintiff shall have the burden of proving abuse by a preponderance of the evidence.

(c)(1) The court shall make such orders as it deems necessary to protect the plaintiff or the children, or both, if the court finds that the defendant has abused the plaintiff, and:

(A) there is a danger of further abuse; or

(B) the defendant is currently incarcerated and has been convicted of one of the following: murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, domestic assault, aggravated domestic assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, stalking, aggravated stalking, lewd or lascivious conduct with a child, use of a child in a sexual performance, or consenting to a sexual performance.

(2) The court order may include the following:

(A) An order that the defendant refrain from abusing the plaintiff or ~~his or her~~ the plaintiff's children, or both, and from interfering with their personal liberty, including restrictions on the defendant's ability to contact the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both, in any way, whether directly, indirectly, or through a third party, with the purpose of making contact with the plaintiff, including in writing or by telephone, ~~e-mail~~ email, or other electronic communication, and restrictions prohibiting the defendant from coming within a fixed distance of the plaintiff, the children, the plaintiff's residence, or other designated locations where the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children are likely to spend time.

(B) An order that the defendant immediately vacate the household and that the plaintiff be awarded sole possession of a residence.

(C) A temporary award of parental rights and responsibilities in accordance with the criteria in section 665 of this title.

(D) An order for parent-child contact under such conditions as are necessary to protect the child or the plaintiff, or both, from abuse in accordance with section 665a of this title. An order for parent-child contact may, if necessary, include conditions under which the plaintiff may deny parent-child contact pending further order of the court.

(E) If the court finds that the defendant has a duty to support the plaintiff, an order that the defendant pay the plaintiff's living expenses for a fixed period of time not to exceed three months.

(F) If the court finds that the defendant has a duty to support the child or children, a temporary order of child support pursuant to chapter 5 of this title, for a period not to exceed three months. A support order granted under this section may be extended if the relief from abuse proceeding is consolidated with an action for legal separation, divorce, or parentage.

(G) An order concerning the possession, care, and control of any animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held as a pet by either party or a minor child residing in the household.

(H) An order that the defendant return any personal documentation in ~~his or her~~ the defendant's possession, including immigration documentation, birth certificates, and identification cards:

(i) pertaining to the plaintiff; or

(ii) pertaining to the plaintiff's children if relief is sought for the children or for good cause shown.

(I) An order awarding possession of a vehicle to the plaintiff for a set period of time, provided that the plaintiff:

- (i) is the owner or joint owner of the vehicle;
- (ii) is the primary payor on the vehicle loan;
- (iii) has primary possession or control of the vehicle; or
- (iv) has been restricted from using the vehicle by the defendant.

(J) An order requiring the defendant to complete a domestic violence accountability program approved by the Council on Domestic Violence. Failure to complete the program shall not be considered a crime for any purpose, including 13 V.S.A. § 1030, but may subject the defendant to civil contempt proceedings. Successful completion of the program shall be considered a substantial change in circumstances for purposes of requests to modify an order. A court may consider a defendant's failure to successfully complete the program when determining whether to extend an order.

* * *

Sec. 3. 15 V.S.A. § 1104 is amended to read:

§ 1104. EMERGENCY RELIEF

(a) In accordance with the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure, temporary orders under this chapter may be issued ex parte, without notice to the defendant, upon motion and findings by the court that the defendant has abused the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both. The plaintiff shall submit an affidavit in support of the order, which may be sworn to or affirmed by administration of the oath over the telephone to the applicant by an employee of the Judiciary authorized to administer oaths and shall conclude with the following statement: "I declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to the laws of the State of Vermont that the foregoing is true and accurate. I understand that making false statements is a crime subject to a term of imprisonment or a fine, or both, as provided by 13 V.S.A. § 2904." The authorized person shall note on the affidavit the date and time that the oath was administered. A minor 16 years of age or older, or a minor of any age who is in a dating relationship as defined in subdivision 1101(2) of this chapter, may seek relief on the minor's own behalf. Relief under this section shall be limited as follows:

(1) Upon a finding that there is an immediate danger of further abuse, an order may be granted requiring the defendant:

(A) to refrain from abusing the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both, or from cruelly treating as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 352 or 352a or killing

any animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held as a pet by either party or by a minor child residing in the household;

(B) to refrain from interfering with the plaintiff's personal liberty or the personal liberty of the plaintiff's children, or both;

(C) to refrain from coming within a fixed distance of the plaintiff, the plaintiff's children, the plaintiff's residence, or the plaintiff's place of employment;

(D) to refrain from contacting the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both, in any way, whether directly, indirectly, or through a third party, with the purpose of making contact with the plaintiff, including in writing or by telephone, ~~e-mail~~ email, or other electronic communication; or

(E) to immediately relinquish, until the expiration of the order, all firearms that are in the defendant's possession, ownership, or control and to refrain from acquiring or possessing any firearms while the order is in effect.

(2) Upon a finding that the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both, have been forced from the household and will be without shelter unless the defendant is ordered to vacate the premises, the court may order the defendant to vacate immediately the household and may order sole possession of the premises to the plaintiff.

(3) Upon a finding that there is immediate danger of physical or emotional harm to minor children, the court may award temporary custody of these minor children to the plaintiff or to other persons.

(4) Upon a finding that the plaintiff's possession of a vehicle is necessary to escape abuse or prevent further abuse, the court may award the possession of a vehicle to the plaintiff for a set period of time, provided that the plaintiff:

(A) is the owner or joint owner of the vehicle;

(B) is the primary payor on the vehicle loan;

(C) has primary possession or control of the vehicle; or

(D) has been restricted from using the vehicle by the defendant.

(b) Every order issued under this section shall contain the name of the court, the names of the parties, the date of the petition, and the date and time of the order and shall be signed by the judge. Every order issued under this section shall inform the defendant that if ~~he or she~~ the defendant fails to appear at the final hearing, the temporary order will remain in effect until the final order is served on the defendant unless the temporary order is dismissed by the court. Every order issued under this section shall state upon its face a date,

time, and place when the defendant may appear to petition the court for modification or discharge of the order. This opportunity to contest shall be scheduled as soon as reasonably possible, which in no event shall be more than 14 days from the date of issuance of the order. At such hearings, the plaintiff shall have the burden of proving abuse by a preponderance of the evidence. If the court finds that the plaintiff has met ~~his or her~~ the burden, it shall continue the order in effect and make such other order as it deems necessary to protect the plaintiff.

* * *

Sec. 4. 15 V.S.A. § 1140 is amended to read:

§ 1140. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW COMMISSION

* * *

(g) The Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, and the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence not later than the third Tuesday in January of the first year of the biennial session. The report shall be available to the public through the Office of the Attorney General. The Commission may issue data or other information periodically, in addition to the biennial report. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the report to be made under this subsection.

(h) In the findings and recommendations required by subsection (g) of this section, the Commission shall report the number of defendants ordered to complete a domestic violence accountability program approved by the Council on Domestic Violence pursuant to 15 V.S.A. § 1103(c)(2)(J) and the number of those defendants who completed the program.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to civil orders of protection”

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 125

House bill, entitled

An act relating to reporting on the energy transition

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 231

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections to fish and wildlife statutes

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Satcowitz of Randolph, Sheldon of Middlebury, Austin of Colchester, Bartholomew of Hartland, Chapin of East Montpelier, Labor of Morgan, Logan of Burlington, Morris of Springfield, North of Ferrisburgh, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Tagliavia of Corinth** moved that the bill be amended by striking out Sec. 4, 10 V.S.A. § 4705, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 4. [Deleted.]

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 259

House bill, entitled

An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Cordes of Bristol** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 18 V.S.A. § 1911b, in subdivision (a)(4)(B), by inserting the phrase “to the extent permitted under State and federal law” before the period

Second: In Sec. 1, 18 V.S.A. § 1911b, in subdivision (a)(6), in the first sentence, by striking “pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 1883”

Third: In Sec. 1, 18 V.S.A. § 1911b, by adding a subsection (f) to read as follows:

(f) Nothing in this section shall require a hospital to make capital investments to implement its security plan.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 396**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the creation of the Mollie Beattie Distinguished Service Award

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 474**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

Was taken up and, on motion of **Rep. Birong of Vergennes**, action on the bill was postponed until March 20, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 80**

Rep. Critchlow of Colchester, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

Reported in favor of its passage when amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 8 V.S.A. § 4062, by striking out subdivision (c)(3)(A) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (c)(3)(A) to read as follows:

(3)(A) In addition to the public comment provisions set forth in this subsection (c), the Office of the Health Care Advocate established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 229, acting on behalf of health insurance consumers in this State, may, within 30 calendar days after the Board receives an insurer's rate request pursuant to this section, submit to the Board, in writing, ~~suggested~~ questions ~~regarding with an articulable nexus to the filing for that the Board to provide to~~ shall ask the insurer, either directly or through its contracting actuary, if any.

Second: In Sec. 3, 18 V.S.A. chapter 229, in section 9604, by striking out subdivision (b)(1) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (b)(1) to read as follows:

(1) When appropriate, State agencies shall allow the Office to access confidential or proprietary information that is otherwise exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and to participate in

meetings, deliberations, and proceedings in which confidential or proprietary information is discussed; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall require a State agency to provide or disclose information that is prohibited from disclosure by State or federal law or that would cause the provider or discloser to violate any statutory or common law privilege.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Health Care?, **Reps. Black of Essex, Berbeco of Winooski, Cina of Burlington, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Goldman of Rockingham, Houghton of Essex Junction, McFaun of Barre Town, Page of Newport City, and Powers of Waterford** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Health Care by striking out the first instance of amendment in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new first instance of amendment as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 1, 8 V.S.A. § 4062, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 1 to read as follows:

Sec. 1. 8 V.S.A. § 4062 is amended to read:

§ 4062. FILING AND APPROVAL OF POLICY FORMS AND PREMIUMS

* * *

(c)(1) The Board shall provide information to the public on the Board's website about the public availability of the filings and summaries required under this section.

* * *

(3)(A) In addition to the public comment provisions set forth in this subsection (c), the Office of the Health Care Advocate established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 229, acting on behalf of health insurance consumers in this State, may, within 30 calendar days after the Board receives an insurer's rate request pursuant to this section, submit to the Board, in writing, ~~suggested~~ questions regarding with a substantial relationship to the rate filing for and review criteria that the Board to provide to shall ask the insurer, either directly or through its contracting actuary, if any.

(B) The Office of the Health Care Advocate may also submit to the Board written comments on an insurer's rate request. The Board shall post the comments on its website and shall consider the comments prior to issuing its decision.

~~(d)(1) No later than 60 calendar days after receiving an insurer's rate request pursuant to this section, the Green Mountain Care Board shall make available to the public the insurer's rate filing, the Department's analysis and opinion of the effect of the proposed rate on the insurer's solvency, and the analysis and opinion of the rate filing by the Board's contracting actuary, if any.~~

~~(2) The Board shall post on its website, after redacting any confidential or proprietary information relating to the insurer or to the insurer's rate filing:~~

~~(A) all questions the Board poses to its contracting actuary, if any, and the actuary's responses to the Board's questions; and~~

~~(B) all questions the Board, the Board's contracting actuary, if any, or the Department poses to the insurer and the insurer's responses to those questions The Green Mountain Care Board shall post on its website or otherwise make available to the public through a file-sharing platform all materials in the record of a rate review proceeding after redacting any information or other material that the Board determines to be confidential or otherwise subject to protection from disclosure by law.~~

* * *

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Health Care, as amended, was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 209

Rep. Harple of Glover, for the Committee on Education, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to intranasal epinephrine in schools

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 1388 is amended to read:

§ 1388. STOCK SUPPLY AND EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATION OF EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Designated personnel" means a school employee, agent, or volunteer, or practical nurse licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 28 who has been authorized by the school administrator nurse to provide and administer epinephrine auto-injectors and intranasal epinephrine under this section and who has completed the training required by State Board policy.

(2) “Epinephrine auto-injector” means a single-use device that delivers a premeasured dose of epinephrine.

(3) “Health care professional” means a physician licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 23 or 33, an advanced practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe drugs and medical devices pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 28, or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe drugs and medical devices pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 31.

(4) “Intranasal epinephrine” means a nasal spray delivering a dose of epinephrine.

(5) “School” means a public or approved independent school and extends to school grounds, school-sponsored activities, school-provided transportation, and school-related programs.

(5)(6) “School administrator” means a school’s principal or headmaster.

(7) “School nurse” means a school nurse endorsed by the Agency of Education pursuant to the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals rule (CVR 22-000-010).

(b)(1) A health care professional may prescribe an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine, or both, in a school’s name, which may be maintained by the school for use as described in subsection (d) of this section. The health care professional, in consultation with the school nurse, shall issue to the school a standing order for the use of ~~an epinephrine auto-injector~~ prescribed under this section, including protocols for:

(A) assessing whether an individual is experiencing a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction;

(B) administering an epinephrine auto-injector and intranasal epinephrine to an individual experiencing a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction;

(C) caring for an individual after administering an epinephrine auto-injector ~~to him or her~~ or intranasal epinephrine, including contacting emergency services personnel and documenting the incident; and

(D) disposing of used or expired epinephrine auto-injectors and intranasal epinephrine.

(2) A pharmacist licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 36 or a health care professional may dispense prescribed epinephrine auto-injectors ~~prescribed or intranasal epinephrine, or both,~~ to a school.

(c) A school may maintain a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors or intranasal epinephrine, or both. A school may enter into arrangements with

~~epinephrine auto-injector~~ manufacturers or suppliers of epinephrine auto-injectors or intranasal epinephrine, or both, to acquire ~~epinephrine auto-injectors~~ these products for free or at reduced or fair market prices.

(d) The school administrator may authorize a school nurse ~~or, who in turn may authorize designated personnel, or both~~, to:

(1) provide an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine to a student for self-administration according to a plan of action for managing the student's life-threatening allergy maintained in the student's school health records pursuant to section 1387 of this title;

(2) administer a prescribed epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine to a student according to a plan of action maintained in the student's school health records; and

(3) administer an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine, in accordance with the protocol issued under subsection (b) of this section, to a student or other individual at a school if the nurse or designated personnel believe in good faith that the student or individual is experiencing anaphylaxis, regardless of whether the student or individual has a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine.

(e) Designated personnel, a school, and a health care professional prescribing an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine, or both, to a school shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability arising from the administration or self-administration of an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine under this section, unless the person's conduct constituted intentional misconduct. Providing or administering an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine under this section does not constitute the practice of medicine.

(f) ~~On or before January 1, 2014, the~~ The State Board, in consultation with the Department of Health, shall adopt policies for managing students with life-threatening allergies and other individuals with life-threatening allergies who may be present at a school. The policies shall:

(1) establish protocols to prevent exposure to allergens in schools;

(2) establish procedures for responding to life-threatening allergic reactions in schools, including postemergency procedures;

(3) implement a process for ~~schools~~ school nurses and the parents or guardians of students with a life-threatening allergy to jointly develop a written individualized allergy management plan of action that:

(A) incorporates instructions from a student's physician health care professional regarding the student's life-threatening allergy and prescribed treatment;

(B) includes the requirements of section 1387 of this title, if a student is authorized to possess and self-administer emergency medication at school;

(C) becomes part of the student's health records maintained by the school; and

(D) is updated each school year;

(4) require education and training for school nurses and designated personnel, including training related to storing and administering an epinephrine auto-injector or intranasal epinephrine and recognizing and responding to a life-threatening allergic reaction; and

(5) require each school to make publicly available protocols and procedures developed in accordance with the policies adopted by the State Board under this section.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Education agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 219

Rep. Sweeney of Shelburne, for the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a family support pilot program for incarcerated parents and guardians

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Department of Corrections ensures gender parity in the access to services and programs that strengthen family connections.

(b) It is the further intent of the General Assembly that the Department of Corrections develop a phased plan to expand the application of 28 V.S.A. § 128 to all Vermont correctional facilities by 2028.

Sec. 2. 28 V.S.A. § 102(c) is amended to read:

(c) The Commissioner is charged with the following responsibilities:

* * *

(24) To include funding to sufficiently provide and sustain trauma-informed family support services and programming pursuant to section 128 of this title in the Department's annual proposed budget for the next subsequent fiscal year for the purposes of developing the State budget required to be submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 306.

Sec. 3. 28 V.S.A. § 128 is added to read:

§ 128. INCARCERATED PARENTS AND GUARDIANS; FAMILY
SUPPORT PROGRAM

(a) Family Support Program. The Department of Corrections shall establish the Family Support Program to provide free parenting and family support to all incarcerated individuals who are parents and guardians. The Program shall include individualized services and programming intended to provide:

(1) increased knowledge and skill for incarcerated parents and guardians to address the specific needs of their children;

(2) resources to incarcerated parents and guardians to engage in needs-specific planning and communication strategies with their children and their children's caregivers;

(3) child-friendly visitation spaces, in consultation with the Department, for in-person and virtual visits between parents or guardians and their children, including establishing safety protocol;

(4) outreach and coordination with appropriate services for the children of incarcerated parents and guardians and the children's caregivers;

(5) improved cross-system coordination and collaboration to deliver necessary services to the families of incarcerated parents and guardians; and

(6) reentry support and preparation for incarcerated parents and guardians.

(b) Program support. The Department may support the operation of the Family Support Program established pursuant to this section through grants of financial assistance to, or contracts for services with, any nonprofit entity that meets the Department's requirements.

(c) Contingent on funding. The Family Support Program established pursuant this section shall operate only to the extent funds are appropriated for its operation.

(d) Annual report. Annually, on or before July 1, the Department shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Judiciary and the Senate Committees on Institutions and on Judiciary, concerning:

(1) the funding, participation, and outcomes of the services and programming established pursuant to this section; and

(2) considerations and any progress towards sustained statewide programming and gender parity.

Sec. 4. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; FAMILY SUPPORT

PROGRAM; IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of Corrections shall first implement the Family Support Program established under 28 V.S.A. § 128 at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility and Northern State Correctional Facility.

Sec. 5. APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$115,424.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of supporting the Family Support Program at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in accordance with 28 V.S.A. § 128.

(b) The sum of \$268,155.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of establishing and supporting the Family Support Program at the Northern State Correctional Facility in accordance with 28 V.S.A. § 128.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to establishing the Department of Corrections’ Family Support Program”

Rep. Squirrell of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions be amended by striking out Sec. 5, appropriation, in its entirety and inserting a new Sec. 5 in lieu thereof to read as follows:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. The report of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 244

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

Was taken up and, on motion of **Rep. Birong of Vergennes**, action on the bill was postponed until March 20, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 342

Rep. Priestley of Bradford, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) The General Assembly finds that Vermont's judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and other public servants play an essential role in the functioning of the government of the State of Vermont and that the nature of their official duties regularly places them in danger of death, serious physical injury, and other reprisals from members of the public.

(b) Violence to and intimidation of such public servants and their families is on the rise and public access to the personal information of these individuals can be and has been used to facilitate violence and intimidation. The personal information of these individuals is of negligible value to the public interest or public discourse.

(c) Accordingly, the provisions of this act are both necessary and appropriate to protect the privacy, safety, and security of public servants and to prevent interference in the administration of justice and the operation of government in the State of Vermont.

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. chapter 62 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 62. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

* * *

Subchapter 5. Data Brokers

* * *

§ 2448. NONDISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVANT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Assignee” means a person or entity to whom a covered person’s right to bring a civil action for a violation of this section has been assigned by the covered person or their authorized agent.

(2) “Authorized agent” means any of the following persons or entities authorized to submit or revoke a request for the redaction or nondisclosure of protected information on behalf of a covered person and to engage in communications and enforcement related to the request:

(A) a designated trustee or other agent pursuant to a written power of attorney or other legal instrument on behalf of any covered person who is physically or mentally incapacitated;

(B) a parent or legal guardian on behalf of any child who is a minor and who is otherwise entitled to address redaction or nondisclosure pursuant to this section; and

(C) a person or entity who has been appointed pursuant to a notarized document by a covered person to act for the covered person for the submission or revocation of requests for redaction or nondisclosure of protected information.

(3) “Covered person” means any of the following individuals:

(A) active or former judges, law enforcement officers, federal law enforcement officers, prosecutors, public defenders, parole and probation officers, and members of the Vermont Parole Board;

(B) employees of:

(i) the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families;

(ii) the Vermont Human Rights Commission;

(iii) the Department of Corrections;

(iv) the Department of Public Safety, including the Vermont State Police;

(v) the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs; and

(vi) all courts in the State;

(C) investigators, victim advocates, mental health crisis workers, and embedded crisis specialists that are employed or work on a contract basis for any of the entities listed in subdivision (3)(B) of this subsection; and

(D) the immediate family of individuals identified in subdivisions (A)–(C) of this subdivision (3).

(4) "Data broker" has the same meaning as set forth in section 2430 of this title. As used in this section, "data broker" shall exclude governmental agencies and their representatives acting in their official capacities.

(5) "Disclose," "disclosing," or "disclosure" means to solicit, sell, manufacture, give, provide, lend, trade, mail, deliver, transfer, post, publish, distribute, circulate, disseminate, present, exhibit, advertise, offer, or include within a searchable list or database, regardless of whether any person has actually searched the list or database. "Disclose" does not include an organization maintaining protected information completely inaccessible and unviewable to any person outside of the organization.

(6) "Federal law enforcement officer" has the same meaning as in 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(1) but is limited to those individuals who work or reside in Vermont.

(7) "Home address" means a partial or complete street address or other information that reveals a home's location, including tax parcel ID, legal property description, or geographic coordinates.

(8) "Home telephone number" means any telephone number used primarily for personal communications, including a landline or cellular telephone number.

(9) "Immediate family" has the same meaning as in 3 V.S.A. § 1201.

(10) "Judge" means any justice, judge, or magistrate of a State court or of a federal court located in Vermont, or any person who serves as a judge, justice, or magistrate in another state who maintains a home address in Vermont.

(11) "Law enforcement officer" has the same meaning as in 20 V.S.A. § 2351a.

(12) "Parole and probation officer" means:

(A) a corrections services specialist employed by the Department of Corrections; or

(B) a parole or probation officer employed by a Vermont county or municipality.

(13) “Prosecutor” means a Vermont State’s Attorney or Deputy State’s Attorney, the Attorney General or an Assistant Attorney General, or a U.S. Attorney or an Assistant U.S. Attorney who works in Vermont.

(14) “Protected information” means a covered person’s:

(A) home address, including primary residence and any secondary residences;

(B) home telephone number;

(C) personal email address;

(D) Social Security number or driver’s license number; and

(E) license plate number or other unique identifiers of a vehicle owned, leased, or regularly used by a covered person.

(15) “Public defender” means the Defender General, Deputy Defender General, public defenders, or deputy public defenders who provide legal services to persons in need as set forth in 13 V.S.A. chapter 163.

(b) Nondisclosure of protected information.

(1) A covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person has the right through this section to send a notice to a data broker requesting that the data broker cease disclosure or redisclosure of the covered person’s protected information.

(2) Upon a data broker receiving physical or electronic notice from a covered person, or an authorized agent of the covered person, requesting that the data broker cease disclosing or redisclosing protected information of the covered person, the data broker shall cease disclosing the protected information not later than 15 days after receipt of the notice and shall not disclose or redisclose the protected information after that time.

(3) The notice as set forth in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be in a form provided by the Secretary of State, except that no prior verification of a covered person’s or authorized agent’s status shall be required for the notice. The Secretary of State shall publish the form of notice not later than 90 days after July 1, 2025, provided that until such form is published, covered persons and their authorized agents may use their own form of written notice that references this section, identifies the sender as a covered person or an

authorized agent acting on behalf of a covered person, and requests that the data broker cease disclosure of the covered person's protected information.

(c) Remedies.

(1) A data broker that receives a notice from a covered person or the authorized agent of the covered person pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section that discloses or rediscloses the covered person's protected information more than:

(A) 15 days after receiving the notice is in violation of this section and shall be subject to an injunction in a civil action brought in Superior Court by the covered person or the covered person's assignee; or

(B) 30 days after receiving the notice is in violation of this section and shall be subject to the following remedies in a civil action brought in Superior Court by the covered person or the covered person's assignee:

(i) damages, calculated as the greater of actual damages or liquidated damages computed at the rate of \$1,000.00 for each violation of this section;

(ii) punitive damages upon proof of willful or reckless disregard of the law;

(iii) reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred; and

(iv) any other preliminary and equitable relief as the court determines to be appropriate.

(2) In any judicial proceeding pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the standard of fault shall be ordinary negligence. It shall not be a defense to liability in a judicial proceeding that the covered person's protected information is or was available to the public from other sources, on the internet or otherwise, or available by inspection of public records.

(d) Accessing information. A covered person or an authorized agent accessing a data broker's website or other public application for the purpose of determining whether the covered person's protected information is being disclosed shall not, as a result of such access, be deemed to have agreed on behalf of the covered person to any website terms and conditions with respect to the covered person's rights under this section.

(e) Limitations.

(1) A disclosure of protected information shall not constitute a violation of this section if the disclosure is:

(A) made with the express authorization of the covered person, provided that the authorization is provided subsequent to the relevant nondisclosure request; or

(B) for the sole purpose of facilitating a transaction initiated by the covered person.

(2) This section does not apply to a data broker in a disclosure pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting an employer from providing employee information to the Vermont Labor Relations Board or to employee organizations that is required under Vermont law.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a data broker to delete protected information.

Sec. 3. DELAYED START FOR CERTAIN REMEDIES

The remedies provided to a covered person pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 2448(c)(1)(B) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development?, **Rep. Headrick of Burlington** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 99. Nays, 45.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston *	Goldman of Rockingham	Morrow of Weston
Austin of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Mrowicki of Putney
Bartholomew of Hartland	Graning of Jericho *	Nelson of Derby
Bartley of Fairfax	Greer of Bennington	Nigro of Bennington
Birong of Vergennes	Gregoire of Fairfield	Noyes of Wolcott
Bishop of Colchester	Hango of Berkshire *	Nugent of South Burlington
Black of Essex	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bluemle of Burlington	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Boyden of Cambridge	Hooper of Randolph	Pezzo of Colchester
Brady of Williston	Hooper of Burlington	Pouch of Hinesburg
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction	Priestley of Bradford *

Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Quimby of Lyndon
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Rachelson of Burlington
Burrows of West Windsor	James of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Keyser of Rutland City	Scheu of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sheldon of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington *	Sibilia of Dover
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Southworth of Walden
Cina of Burlington	Krasnow of South Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Stevens of Waterbury
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cordes of Bristol	Lipsky of Stowe	Taylor of Milton
Critchlow of Colchester	Logan of Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dodge of Essex	Long of Newfane	Torre of Moretown
Dolan of Essex Junction	Marcotte of Coventry	Waszazak of Barre City
Donahue of Northfield	Masland of Thetford	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Duke of Burlington	McFaun of Barre Town	White of Waitsfield
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McGill of Bridport	White of Bethel
Eastes of Guilford	Mihaly of Calais	Winter of Ludlow
Emmons of Springfield	Minier of South Burlington	Wood of Waterbury
Garofano of Essex	Morris of Springfield	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Galfetti of Barre Town *	Morrissey of Bennington
Bosch of Clarendon	Goslant of Northfield	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City *	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh *
Branagan of Georgia	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Canfield of Fair Haven	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Casey of Hubbardton	Kascenska of Burke	Pinsonault of Dorset
Charlton of Chester	Labor of Morgan	Powers of Waterford
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Pritchard of Pawlet
Cooper of Pownal	Luneau of St. Albans City	Steady of Milton
Demar of Enosburgh	Maguire of Rutland City	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Malay of Pittsford	Toof of St. Albans Town
Dobrovich of Williamstown	McCoy of Poultney	Walker of Swanton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Micklus of Milton *	Wells of Brownington
Feltus of Lyndon	Morgan, L. of Milton	
	Morgan, M. of Milton	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Berbeco of Winooski	Christie of Hartford	Surprenant of Barnard
Burt of Cabot	McCann of Montpelier	

Rep. Arsenault of Williston provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted in support of H.342. House Judiciary heard testimony regarding the relative necessity of this law in our State. That testimony included a former deputy State’s Attorney who detailed for us the experience of having her home checked for vulnerabilities after she received credible threats related to her work on behalf of the State. She described a surreal experience that included considerations ranging from a basic escape route all the way to specific strategies for staying alive as long as possible after an attack if there is no other living person in the house with her. No person should ever be put in a position that requires this particular type of education.”

Rep. Boutin of Barre City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted no today because of the outstanding concerns I expressed in committee regarding legitimate business to business transactions. I am concerned with the private right of action. I believe with additional testimony and minor changes, I could easily support this bill.”

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While this bill may be a step in the right direction, it is not comprehensive and was hastily crafted. As is true of much of the legislation I have seen in my short time here. We cannot leave this up to the other body to fix. We must and can craft fine legislation in this Chamber. I look forward to the member from Castleton’s amendment and hope I can vote yes tomorrow!”

Rep. Graning of Jericho provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

H.342 is a first step in protecting our public servants. We have to start to create a way to allow our public officials to protect themselves. They should be allowed to simply ask that their sensitive information be kept private.”

Rep. Hango of Berkshire provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes because I am willing to wait until third reading to make a final determination on the merits of this bill.”

Rep. Kleppner of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I look forward to hearing future amendments that both expand the covered services of data and expand the classes of protected Vermonters.”

Rep. Micklus of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

This bill provides inadequate protection for our public servants. More time must be taken to create a bill that offers more complete protection and is fair to all parties involved.”

Rep. North of Ferrisburgh provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While I agree this type of legislation is absolutely necessary, I am very disappointed that our committee could not and would not come together to compromise to achieve full agreement. I truly hope that all those who voted yes today, because this is the 1st small step, will also vote yes tomorrow for the amendment to expand and complete it as desired.”

Rep. Priestley of Bradford provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes today because we must ensure that those who serve and protect us are not forced to sacrifice their personal safety or that of their families.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

Joint Resolution Adopted

J.R.H. 3

Joint resolution authorizing the Green Mountain Boys State and Green Mountain Girls State educational programs to use the State House facilities on June 26, 2025

Was taken up and adopted on the part of the House.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 141

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the bill pass, notwithstanding the Governor's refusal to approve the bill?, on motion of **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction**, action on the bill was postponed until March 21, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 27

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 15. Joint resolution supporting Vermont's transgender and non-binary community and declaring Vermont's commitment to fighting discrimination and treating all citizens with respect and dignity.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At four o'clock and three minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, March 20, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Rey Garofano of Essex.

Message from the Senate No. 28

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 45. An act relating to protection from nuisance suits for agricultural activities.

S. 66. An act relating to motor vehicle noise, exhaust modifications, and engine compression brakes.

S. 87. An act relating to extradition procedures.

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

House Bill Introduced

H. 490

By Reps. Bos-Lun of Westminster, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Casey of Montpelier, Cole of Hartford, Eastes of Guilford, Headrick of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Morrow of Weston, Rachelson of Burlington, and Sweeney of Shelburne,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to incentivizing community service sentencing in certain cases

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Bills Referred to Committee on Appropriations

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, carrying appropriations, under House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 481

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stormwater management

H. 488

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Joint Senate Resolution Referred to Committee

J.R.S. 15

Offered by Senators Hardy, Baruth, Beck, Bongartz, Brennan, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Douglass, Gulick, Harrison, Hashim, Lyons, Major, Mattos, Perchlik, Plunkett, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Watson, White and Williams,

J.R.S. 15. Joint resolution supporting Vermont's transgender and non-binary community and declaring Vermont's commitment to fighting discrimination and treating all citizens with respect and dignity.

Whereas, Vermont is deeply committed to the principles of equity and inclusion and values the transgender and non-binary individuals in our community, and

Whereas, Vermont has been a leader in establishing policies that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, enacting broad protections in law in the areas of employment, housing, education, banking, and public accommodations, and

Whereas, Vermont enacted legislation permitting individuals to amend their vital records to accurately reflect and affirm their gender identities, and

Whereas, Vermont recently enacted comprehensive legislation to affirm the right of individuals to obtain essential gender-affirming medical care and to protect those individuals, their families, and their health care providers from legal attacks initiated outside our State, and

Whereas, Vermont unequivocally rejects any attempt to stigmatize, devalue, and discriminate against individuals based on their gender identity and is committed to ensuring that transgender and non-binary individuals living in, working in, or visiting our State receive equal protection under the laws of our State, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recommits to the principle that all individuals are welcome here and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and that Vermont will continue to stand with our transgender and non-binary family, friends, and neighbors against discrimination, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Pride Center of Vermont, Outright Vermont, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Was read by title, treated as a bill, and referred to the Committee on Judiciary pursuant to House Rule 52.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 474**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Birong of Vergennes**, action on the bill was postponed until March 25, 2025.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 244**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Birong of Vergennes**, action on the bill was postponed until March 26, 2025.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 80

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

H. 209

House bill, entitled

An act relating to intranasal epinephrine in schools

H. 219

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a family support pilot program for incarcerated parents and guardians

H. 222

House bill, entitled

An act relating to participation in a domestic violence accountability program as a condition of a final relief from abuse prevention order

H. 243

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 342**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Was taken up and, pending third reading, on motion of **Rep. Marcotte of Coventry**, action on the bill was postponed until March 21, 2025.

**Committee Bill; Second Reading; Amendment Offered;
Third Reading Ordered****H. 480**

Rep. Conlon of Cornwall spoke for the Committee on Education.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to education law

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Boutin of Barre City** moved to amend the bill by adding a reader assistance heading and one new section to be Sec. 8a to read as follows:

* * * Retirement Allowance for Interim Educators * * *

Sec. 8a. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 173, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

Sec. 1. FY 2023; RESTORATION OF SERVICE; VERMONT STATE

TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

(a) Authority. Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 1939 or any other provision of law, in fiscal year 2023, a beneficiary who retired from the System as a Group A or a Group C member may resume service, as that term is defined in 16 V.S.A. § 1931, to serve as an interim school educator for a period not to exceed one school year and receive the beneficiary's retirement allowance for the entire period that service is resumed, provided that:

(1) the beneficiary has received a retirement allowance for six months or more immediately preceding the resumption of service;

(2) the employer of the beneficiary is subject to the assessment set forth in 16 V.S.A. § 1944d on behalf of the beneficiary and remits payment to the Benefits Fund; and

(3) the employer of the beneficiary remits payment to the Vermont Teachers' Retirement Fund, established in 16 V.S.A. § 1944, in an amount equal to the contribution rate established for members of the beneficiary's group for any period that service is resumed.

(b) Period of service. A person who resumes service under subsection (a) of this section shall not make any contributions to the System during the person's period of service and shall not be entitled to a retirement allowance separately computed for the period that service was resumed.

(c) Employment certification. Each superintendent who hires an interim school educator pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall certify to the Board that the district exhausted all reasonable options to employ a qualified active educator prior to employing a beneficiary as an interim school educator.

(d) Renewal.

(1) In fiscal years 2024 ~~and 2025~~ through 2027, the State Treasurer is authorized to grant not more than ~~two~~ four renewals for a one-fiscal-year period to the authority described in subsection (a) of this section. The State Treasurer shall make the determination to renew the authority not earlier than ~~June~~ May 1 but not later than ~~June 30~~ May 31 in each fiscal year and shall notify the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and Senate ~~Committees~~ Committee on Government Operations of the determination.

(2) ~~In the event the State Treasurer makes a determination to renew the authority pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, a beneficiary may only resume service during each one-year renewal period if service is performed in a different interim school educator position. [Repealed.]~~

(e) Repeal. This section shall be repealed on June 30, 2026 2028.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Boutin of Barre City?, **Rep. Boutin of Barre City** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Boutin of Barre City?, was decided in the negative. Yeas, 49. Nays, 91.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nelson of Derby
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Canfield of Fair Haven	Hooper of Randolph	Parsons of Newbury
Casey of Hubbardton	Howland of Rutland Town	Pinsonault of Dorset
Charlton of Chester	Kascenska of Burke	Powers of Waterford
Coffin of Cavendish	Keyser of Rutland City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Demar of Enosburgh	Labor of Morgan	Quimby of Lyndon
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Laroche of Franklin	Southworth of Walden
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Malay of Pittsford	Steady of Milton
Donahue of Northfield	Marcotte of Coventry	Toof of St. Albans Town
Feltus of Lyndon	McCoy of Poultney	Walker of Swanton
Galfetti of Barre Town	McFaun of Barre Town	Wells of Brownington
Goslant of Northfield	Micklus of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
	Morgan, M. of Milton	

Those who voted in the negative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Minier of South Burlington
Austin of Colchester	Eastes of Guilford	Morgan, L. of Milton
Bartholomew of Hartland	Emmons of Springfield	Morrow of Weston
Berbeco of Winooski	Garofano of Essex	Mrowicki of Putney
Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Nigro of Bennington
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Noyes of Wolcott
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Nugent of South Burlington
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harple of Glover	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Pouech of Hinesburg
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction	Rachelson of Burlington
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Satcowitz of Randolph
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	James of Manchester	Sheldon of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kornheiser of Brattleboro*	Stevens of Waterbury
Cina of Burlington	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cooper of Pownal	Lipsky of Stowe	Tagliavia of Corinth
Corcoran of Bennington	Long of Newfane	Taylor of Milton
Cordes of Bristol	Luneau of St. Albans City	Tomlinson of Winooski
Critchlow of Colchester	Masland of Thetford	Torre of Moretown
Dobrovich of Williamstown	McCann of Montpelier	Waszazak of Barre City
		Waters Evans of Charlotte
		White of Waitsfield

Dodge of Essex
Dolan of Essex Junction
Duke of Burlington

McGill of Bridport
Mihaly of Calais

White of Bethel
Wood of Waterbury
Yacovone of Morristown

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burrows of West Windsor
Burt of Cabot
Christie of Hartford

LaMont of Morristown
Logan of Burlington
Maguire of Rutland City

Morris of Springfield
Nielsen of Brandon
Olson of Starksboro

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote no to protect the integrity and solvency of our pension fund for our hard-working school staff now and into the future.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 482

Rep. Black of Essex spoke for the Committee on Health Care.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Green Mountain Care Board authority to adjust a hospital’s reimbursement rates and to appoint a hospital observer

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 483

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the expansion of existing income tax credits

Was taken up and, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock**, action on the bill was postponed until March 25, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 398

Rep. Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. chapter 12 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 12. VERMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

* * *

§ 212. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(6) “Eligible facility” or “eligible project” means any industrial, commercial, or agricultural enterprise or endeavor approved by the Authority ~~that meets the criteria established in the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Strategy adopted by the Governor under section 280b of this title~~ used in a trade or business whether or not such business is operated for profit, including land and rights in land, air, or water; buildings; structures; machinery; and equipment of such eligible facilities or eligible projects, except that an eligible facility or project shall not include the portion of an enterprise or endeavor relating to the sale of goods at retail where such goods are manufactured primarily out of State, and except further that an eligible facility or project shall not include the portion of an enterprise or endeavor relating to housing unless otherwise authorized in this chapter. Such enterprises or endeavors may include:

* * *

(T) Any capital improvement; purchase of receivables, property, assets, commodities, bonds, or other revenue streams or related assets; working capital program or liability; or other insurance program.

* * *

~~(9) “Insurance contract” means a contract insuring mortgage payments under subchapter 2 of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

~~(11) “Maturity date,” as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter, means the date upon which the note or other evidence of indebtedness secured by a mortgage would be extinguished if paid in accordance with the mortgage payments. [Repealed.]~~

~~(12) “Mortgage,” as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter, means a first mortgage upon an eligible facility given by a mortgagor, as herein defined, to secure the repayment of amounts borrowed to pay costs of a project. [Repealed.]~~

(13) ~~“Mortgage payments,” as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter, means the periodic payments called for by a mortgage that shall cover lease land rentals, if any, mortgage insurance premiums, interest, installments of principal, taxes and assessments, hazard insurance payments, and any other payments called for in the mortgage. [Repealed.]~~

(14) ~~“Mortgagee,” as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter, means the original lender under a mortgage and its successors and assigns, if approved by the Authority. [Repealed.]~~

(15) ~~“Mortgagor,” as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter, means the original borrower under a mortgage or a security agreement and its successors and assigns, if approved by the Authority. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 213. AUTHORITY; ORGANIZATION

* * *

(c) The Authority shall elect a chair from among its appointed members, and a vice chair and ~~treasurer~~ other officers from among its members and shall employ a manager who shall hold office at the Authority's pleasure and who, unless ~~he or she~~ the individual is a member of the classified service under 3 V.S.A. chapter 13, shall receive such compensation as may be fixed by the Authority ~~with the approval of the Governor~~. A quorum shall consist of eight members. Members disqualified from voting under section 214 of this title shall be considered present for purposes of determining a quorum. No action of the Authority shall be considered valid unless the action is supported by a majority vote of the members present and voting and then only if at least five members vote in favor of the action.

* * *

(i) ~~The Authority shall study and report back to the Legislature no later than January 15, 1989 on the feasibility of hiring full-time counsel in lieu of retaining outside counsel. [Repealed.]~~

§ 214. MEMBERS; DISQUALIFICATION

A member of the Authority may not participate in any decision:

* * *

(2) ~~Upon any insurance contract under subchapter 2 of this chapter or loan under subchapter 5 of this chapter, if the member is a member, director, trustee, employee, or officer of; or has any interest direct or indirect in; or owns any stock, bonds, or other liabilities issued by or authorized by the prospective mortgagor, mortgagee, or tenant;~~

* * *

§ 215. MANAGER; DUTIES

The manager shall be the chief administrative officer of the Authority and shall direct and supervise the administrative affairs and technical activities of the Authority in accordance with any rules, ~~regulations,~~ and policies, and procedures set forth by the Authority. In addition to any other duties, the manager shall:

* * *

(4) work closely with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and provide assistance to the various divisions of that Agency when requested to facilitate the planning and financing of projects; and

(5) ~~make recommendations and reports, in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, to the Authority on the merits of any proposed project, on the status of local development corporations, and on suitable industrial sites; [Repealed.]~~

(6) perform such other duties as may be directed by the Authority in the carrying out of the purposes of this chapter.

§ 216. AUTHORITY; GENERAL POWERS

The Authority is hereby authorized:

(1) To sue and be sued in its own name and plead and be impleaded; service of process upon it in any action shall be made by service upon the Secretary of State either in hand or by leaving a copy of the process at ~~his or her~~ the Secretary's office.

* * *

(3) To adopt and from time to time amend bylaws, and rules, ~~and regulations~~ for the calling and conduct of its meetings and for the conduct of its affairs, including ~~regulations~~ rules, policies, and procedures relating to applications for financial assistance and disclosure of information supplied to it.

* * *

(10) To administer its own funds and to invest or deposit funds ~~which~~ that are not needed currently to meet the obligations of the Authority.

* * *

(13) To cause to be incorporated in Vermont a nonprofit corporation that will qualify as a State development company under ~~Title 15 of the U.S. Code~~ 15 U.S.C. § 695 and ~~rules and regulations adopted~~ promulgated pursuant

thereto. The voting members of the Authority shall be members of the company and shall constitute the board of directors of the company. ~~The company shall have at least 14 other members selected by the members of the Authority.~~ The company shall be organized and operate under the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Vermont to the extent not inconsistent herewith. The Authority shall have the power to contract with the company to provide staff and management needs of the company. The Authority is authorized to contribute to the capital of the company in an amount the Authority determines is necessary and appropriate.

* * *

(15) To delegate to loan officers the power to review, approve, and make loans under this chapter, ~~subject to the approval of the manager, and to disburse funds on such loans, subject to the approval of the manager as set forth in the policies and procedures of the Authority.~~

* * *

§ 217. RECORDS; ANNUAL REPORT; AUDIT

(a) The Authority shall keep an accurate account of all its activities and of all its receipts and expenditures. ~~Information and records in connection with an application for an insurance contract under subchapter 2 of this chapter shall be preserved for three years after the application has been denied or, if the application is accepted, for three years after the mortgage has been discharged and thereafter until the Authority orders them destroyed.~~

* * *

(c) The Auditor of Accounts of the State and ~~his or her~~ the Auditor's authorized representatives may at any time examine the accounts and books of the Authority, including its receipts, disbursements, contracts, funds, investments, and any other matters relating to its financial statements.

* * *

§ 217a. APPLICATION

Among such other things as may be required by the Authority, any application for financing ~~or for mortgage insurance~~ under this chapter shall state in detail on the application the nature and purpose of the business and its products for which the loan, or revenue bonds ~~or mortgage insurance is~~ are intended to benefit.

* * *

§ 231. ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Upon application of a local development corporation, the Authority may loan money to that local development corporation, upon such terms and conditions as it may prescribe, for the purpose of industrial park planning and development, for constructing or improving a speculative building or small business incubator facility on land owned or held under lease by the local development corporation, for purchase or improvement of existing buildings suitable for or which can be made suitable for industrial or small business incubation facility purposes and for the purchase of land in connection with any of the foregoing. Before the local development corporation receives such funds for such purposes from the Authority, it shall give to the Authority security for the repayment of the funds. The security shall be in such form and amounts as the Authority may determine and shall, in each instance, include a first mortgage on the land, or the leasehold, building, and appurtenances financed by such funds. Loans by the Authority to local development corporations for the construction of speculative buildings or improvements to those buildings shall be repaid in full, including interest and other charges, within 90 days after the building is occupied if the building is being sold, or within five years after the property is occupied if the building is being leased, or within such period of time deemed reasonable by the Authority. Loans by the Authority to local development corporations for the construction, purchase, or improvement of small business incubator facilities shall be repaid in full, including interest and other charges, within ~~ten~~ 20 years after the property is occupied.

* * *

§ 244. BONDS

* * *

(b) Bonds shall bear the manual or electronic signature of the treasurer of the municipality and the manual, electronic, or facsimile signature or signatures of the mayor or a majority of the selectboard or trustees as the case may be. Interest coupons, if any, shall bear the facsimile signature of the treasurer. If the municipality has a corporate seal, bonds shall bear the seal or a facsimile of the seal. Bonds executed in accordance with this subchapter shall be valid notwithstanding that before the delivery thereof and payment therefor any or all of the persons whose signatures appear thereon shall have ceased to hold office.

* * *

§ 253. STATE AUTHORITY PROJECTS

(a) The ~~State of Vermont~~ Authority may engage in projects within the ~~state~~ State in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter. For the purposes of this section and section 254 of this title:

(1) The word “municipality” as used in the sections of this subchapter other than this section shall mean the ~~“State of Vermont”~~ “Authority”;

* * *

(b) For the purposes of engaging in a project, the Authority shall act ~~in the name of the State and on its behalf~~ on behalf of the State as its agent and instrumentality for the execution of financing documents, security documents, bonds, and other appropriate instruments or for the taking of any action with respect to a project financed in whole or in part by the issue of bonds under section 254 of this title.

(c) Title to or possessory interest in any eligible facility that is financed in whole or in part by the issue of bonds pursuant to section 254 of this title may be taken and held in the name of the ~~State~~ Authority. In performing its functions under this section, the Authority may exercise any and all powers conferred upon municipalities by this subchapter, but the Authority shall not execute any financing document, security document, or bond with respect to a project until the Authority has made the findings required by section 246 of this title.

* * *

§ 254. STATE BONDS

* * *

(c) Bonds issued under this section shall bear the manual, electronic, or facsimile signature of the manager or treasurer of the Authority ~~and the manual or facsimile signature of the Chair or Vice Chair of the Authority, or authorized designee and agent~~; provided, however, that ~~at least one of the foregoing~~ such signatures shall be manual unless the bonds are to be manually authenticated by a bank or trust company serving as trustee for the bonds. The details of the bonds shall be fixed by the signing officers in accordance with section 244 of this title. Bonds shall be sold by the signing officers at public or private sale, and the proceeds thereof shall be paid to the trustee, lender, or disbursing agent under the security document that secures the bonds.

(d) No financing or security document, ~~or bond, or other instrument~~ issued or entered into ~~in the name and on behalf of the State~~ under this subchapter shall in any way obligate the State to raise any money by taxation or use other funds for any purpose to pay any debt or meet any financial obligation to any

person at any time in relation to an eligible facility financed in whole or in part by the issue of the Authority's bonds under this subchapter, except from monies received or to be received under a financing or security document entered into under this subchapter or except as may be required by any other provision of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, the State may accept and expend with respect to an eligible facility any gifts or grants received from any source in accordance with the terms of the gifts or grants.

* * *

(f) Bonds may be issued by the Authority under this subchapter for the purpose of making loans to local development corporations for industrial park planning and development, constructing, or improving a speculative building or small business incubator facility on land owned or held under lease by the local development corporation, purchase or improvement of existing buildings suitable or that can be made suitable for industrial or business incubation purposes, and purchase of land in connection with any of the foregoing.

(1) Before issuing bonds for construction of a speculative building or small business incubator facility and the purchase of land in connection therewith, the Authority shall make the determinations and incorporate in its minutes the findings that:

~~(A) the project is within the scope of this chapter, will be of public use and benefit, and may reasonably be expected to create new employment opportunities;~~

~~(B) the proposed site for the speculative building or small business incubator facility will be located on adequate land owned or to be acquired by the local development corporation or leased by the local development corporation on terms satisfactory to the Authority;~~

~~(C) an adequate access road from a public highway is provided to the proposed site and that such utilities as water, sewer, and power facilities are available, or will be available when the speculative building or small business incubator facility is completed;~~

~~(D) the project plans comply with all applicable environmental, zoning, planning, and sanitary laws and regulations of the municipality where it is to be located and of the State of Vermont;~~

~~(E) the local development corporation is responsible and has presented evidence to demonstrate its ability to carry out the project as planned;~~

~~(F) evidence has been presented demonstrating the feasibility of the site as a location for business, and additional evidence has been presented that~~

~~an adequate supply of labor is available within the labor market area to serve a business located on the site;~~

~~(G) the local development corporation has made adequate provisions for insurance protection of the building while it is unoccupied and suitable arrangements have been made for fire protection and maintenance while it is unoccupied;~~

~~(H) the project will be without unreasonable risk of loss to the Authority, and the local development corporation is unable to secure on reasonable terms the funds required for the project without the assistance of the Authority;~~

~~(I) the financing and security documents contain provisions such that under no circumstances is the State obligated directly or indirectly to pay project costs; debt service; or expenses of operation, maintenance, and upkeep of the facility except from bond proceeds or from funds received under the financing or security documents, exclusive of funds received thereunder by the State for its own use;~~

~~(J) neither the financing document nor the security document purports to create any debt of the State with respect to the eligible facility, other than a special obligation of the State under this chapter required by section 232 of this title.~~

(2) Before issuing bonds for industrial park planning and development and the purchase of land in connection therewith, the Authority shall make the determinations and incorporate in its minutes the findings ~~that:~~

~~(A) the proposed industrial park is on adequate land owned or to be owned by the local development corporation or leased by the local development corporation on terms satisfactory to the Authority;~~

~~(B) an adequate access road from a public highway is provided to the proposed site, and utilities, including water, sewer, and power facilities, are available or will be available for any future tenant located in the park;~~

~~(C) the total industrial park will be planned by architects and engineers acceptable to the Authority;~~

~~(D) no more than 80 percent of the fair market value of the industrial park, as shown by appraisal by an appraiser acceptable to the Authority, is to be financed under the loan;~~

~~(E) the park project is within the scope of this chapter, will be of public use and benefit, and may reasonably be expected to create new employment opportunities;~~

~~(F) the park project complies with all applicable environmental, zoning, planning, and sanitary laws and regulations of the municipality in which it is to be located and of the State of Vermont;~~

~~(G) the local development corporation is responsible and has presented evidence to demonstrate its ability to carry out the park project as planned;~~

~~(H) evidence has been presented demonstrating the feasibility of the site as a location for industry, and additional evidence has been presented that an adequate supply of labor is available within the labor market area to serve an industry located on the site;~~

~~(I) the park project will be without unreasonable risk of loss to the Authority, and the local development corporation is unable to secure on reasonable terms the funds required for the project without the assistance of the Authority;~~

~~(J) the financing and security documents contain provisions such that under no circumstances is the State obligated directly or indirectly to pay project costs; debt service; or expenses of operation, maintenance, and upkeep of the facility except from bond proceeds or from funds received under the financing or security documents, exclusive of funds received thereunder by the State for its own use;~~

~~(K) neither the financing document nor the security document purports to create any debt of the State with respect to the eligible facility, other than a special obligation of the State under this chapter required by section 237 of this title.~~

~~(3) All determinations and findings made by the Authority pursuant to this section shall be conclusive Financing and security documents shall contain provisions such that under no circumstances is the State obligated directly or indirectly to pay project costs; debt service; or expenses of operation, maintenance, and upkeep of the facility except from bond proceeds or from funds received under the financing or security documents, exclusive of funds received thereunder by the State for its own use.~~

~~(4) Financing and security documents shall not create any debt of the State with respect to the eligible facility, other than a special obligation of the State under this chapter.~~

~~(g) Bonds issued by the Authority under this subchapter may be secured, in whole or in part, by mortgage insurance under subchapter 2 of this chapter upon the terms and conditions set forth in subchapter 2 and in this subsection. Such insurance may be in the form of reinsurance or may be for the purpose of creating a loan loss reserve, in a case where the bonds are also secured by the~~

~~mortgage insurance from another source. The principal amount of bonds so secured outstanding at any time with respect to facilities of any one user, or any related person, in any one municipality, shall not exceed \$2,500,000.00. For purposes of this subsection, the term "mortgagee" as used in subchapter 2 of this chapter shall mean the purchasers of the bonds, or where appropriate the trustee under the security document; the mortgage payments to be insured shall be those required to be made by the user under the financing document; and bond proceeds, instead of being used to pay project costs directly, may be used to purchase participation in loans originated by local banks or other responsible financial institutions where the proceeds of such loans have been used to pay project costs. In authorizing mortgage insurance to secure bonds, the Authority shall make all of the findings and determinations set forth in subsection 221(a) of this title, except that the principal of the mortgage cannot exceed \$2,500,000.00. In authorizing any bonds that are to be secured by mortgage insurance, the Authority shall make all of the findings and determinations set forth in section 246 of this title, and may make the findings set forth in subdivisions 246(5) and (7) of this title, notwithstanding the fact that the mortgage insurance will create a contingent liability of the Authority. The creation of such contingent liability shall not be deemed to violate the prohibition contained in subsection (d), and the statement required on each bond that it does not constitute an indebtedness of the State may be modified to refer to the mortgage insurance. Separate series of bonds all of which are secured by mortgage insurance may be combined pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, and the proceeds of any payment of such mortgage insurance may be allocated and applied by the trustee for the benefit of the bondholders in accordance with the terms of the security document providing for the combined financing. All determinations and findings made by the Authority pursuant to this section shall be conclusive.~~

(h) The Authority is authorized to pledge security and to enter into security, insurance, or other forms of credit enhancement. A pledge in any agreement shall be valid and binding from the time such pledge shall be made without any physical delivery or further act, and the lien of such pledge shall be valid and binding as against all parties having claims of any kind in tort, contract, or otherwise, irrespective of whether such parties have notice thereof. Any such pledge shall be perfected by filing of the agreement in the records of the Authority and no filing need be made under any other provision of law.

(i) The Authority may purchase any bond issued under this subchapter 4. Subject to the terms of any agreement with the bondholders, the Authority may hold, pledge, resell, or cancel any bond purchased under this paragraph, expect that a purchase under this paragraph shall not cause the extinguishment

of such bond unless the Authority cancels the bond or otherwise certifies its intention that the bond be extinguished.

(j) No designated member, director, officer, employee, or agent of the Authority shall be liable personally on the bonds or any contract entered into by the Authority or subject to any personal liability or accountability by reason of the issuance of the bonds unless the personal liability or accountability is the result of intentional misconduct.

Subchapter 5. Direct Mortgage Loans

§ 261. ADDITIONAL POWERS

In addition to powers enumerated elsewhere in this chapter, the Authority may:

(1) Make loans secured by mortgages or other assets, which may be subordinate to one or more prior mortgages or liens, upon application by the proposed ~~mortgagor~~ obligor, who may be a private corporation, nonprofit organization, partnership, person, or municipality financing an eligible project described in subdivision 212(6) of this title, upon such terms as the Authority may prescribe, for the purpose of financing the establishment or expansion of eligible facilities. Such loans shall be made from the Vermont Jobs Fund established under ~~subchapter 3~~ of this chapter. The Authority may provide for the repayment and redeposit of such loans as provided in this subchapter.

* * *

(3) Purchase prior ~~mortgages~~ secured loans and make payments on prior ~~mortgages~~ secured loans on any eligible facility where the purchase or payment is necessary to protect any loan previously made by the Authority. In addition, the Authority may sell, transfer, convey, and assign any such prior mortgage or security. Monies used by the Authority in the purchase of any prior ~~mortgages~~ mortgage or security, or any payments thereon, shall be withdrawn from the Vermont Jobs Fund, and any monies derived from the sale of any prior ~~mortgages~~ mortgage or security shall be deposited by the Authority in the Vermont Jobs Fund.

* * *

§ 262. FINDINGS

Before making any loan, the Authority shall receive from an applicant a loan application in such form as the Authority may by ~~regulation~~ rule prescribe, and the Authority, or the Authority's loan officer pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 216(15) of this title, shall determine and incorporate findings in its minutes that:

(1) The project is within the scope of this chapter and will increase or maintain employment and expand the economy of the State.

(2) The project plans comply with all applicable environmental, zoning, planning, and sanitary laws and regulations of the municipality where it is to be located and of the State of Vermont.

* * *

(5) The principal obligation of the Authority's mortgage loan does not exceed \$5,000,000.00, which may be secured by land and buildings or by machinery and equipment, or both, unless:

(A) an integral element of the project consists of the generation of heat or electricity employing biomass, geothermal, methane, solar, or wind energy resources to be primarily consumed at the project, in which case the principal obligation of the Authority's mortgage loan does not exceed \$6,000,000.00, which may be secured by land and by buildings or machinery and equipment, or both; such principal obligation does not exceed 40 percent of the cost of the project; and the mortgagor obligor is able to obtain financing for the balance of the cost of the project from other sources as provided in the following section; or

* * *

(6) The mortgagor obligor is responsible and able to manage its responsibilities as mortgagor obligor and owner of the project.

(7) The mortgage loan has a satisfactory maturity date, ~~in no case later than 20 years from the date of the mortgage.~~

(8) The mortgagor obligor is unable to finance the project upon reasonable terms without the assistance of the requested loan from the Authority, or in the alternative, the granting of the loan will serve as a substantial inducement for the establishment or expansion of an eligible project within the State.

(9) The mortgagor obligor has made adequate provision for insurance protection of the project while the loan is outstanding.

* * *

§ 263. ~~MORTGAGE~~ LOAN; LIMITATIONS

(a) When it has been determined by the Authority that the establishment or expansion of a particular eligible facility will accomplish the public purposes of this act, the Authority may contract to loan to the mortgagor obligor an amount not in excess of 40 percent of the cost of such eligible facility. In addition, the Authority shall have determined that the mortgagor obligor has

obtained from other independent and responsible sources, such as ~~banks and insurance companies~~ financial institutions or otherwise, a firm commitment for all other funds, over and above the loan of the Authority and such funds or property as the local development corporation may hold, necessary for payment of all of the cost of the project, and that the sum of all these funds, together with any funds, machinery, and equipment to be provided by the ~~mortgagor~~ obligor is adequate for the completion and operation of the project.

(b) Any loan of the Authority under this subchapter shall be for a period of time and shall bear interest at such rate as determined by the Authority and shall be secured by a mortgage on the eligible facility or a lien on its assets for which the loan was made or upon the assets of a municipal communications plant, including the net revenues derived from the operation thereof, or both. The ~~mortgage secured loan~~ may be subordinate to one or more prior ~~mortgages loans~~, including the ~~mortgage liens~~ securing the obligation issued to secure the commitment of funds from the independent and responsible sources and used in the financing of the economic development project. Monies loaned by the Authority shall be withdrawn from the Vermont Jobs Fund and paid over to the ~~mortgagor~~ obligor in such manner as provided and prescribed by the rules ~~and regulations~~ of the Authority. All payments of principal and interest on the loans shall be deposited by the Authority in the Vermont Jobs Fund.

(c) Loans by the Authority for an eligible facility under this subchapter shall be made only in the manner and to the extent provided in this section, except, however, in those instances where an agency of the federal government participates in the financing of an eligible facility by loan, grant, or otherwise. When any federal agency participates, the Authority may adjust the required ratio of financial participation by the local development corporation, independent sources of funds, and the Authority in such manner as to ensure the maximum benefit available by the participation of the federal agency. Where any federal agency participating in the financing of an eligible facility is not permitted to take as security a mortgage, the lien of which is junior to the mortgage of the Authority, the Authority shall be authorized to take as security for its loan a mortgage junior in lien to that of the federal agency.

* * *

§ 264. ACCELERATED REPAYMENT PROVISIONS

Any direct ~~mortgage~~ loan made on or after July 1, 1988 under this subchapter shall be conditioned upon the maintenance of a reasonable level of employment at the facility or facilities owned by the ~~mortgagor~~ obligor and pledged as security for the loan. For the purposes of this section, a reasonable level of employment shall be deemed not to have been maintained whenever a ~~mortgagor~~ an obligor employing 50 or more employees at such facility or

facilities permanently transfers, within any three-year period, 50 percent or more of those employees or employment positions to any out-of-state facility. Upon breach of this condition, the Authority may declare all principal and interest of the ~~mortgage~~ loan immediately due and payable and may commence foreclosure on any property held as security for the ~~mortgage~~ loan or take any other lawful steps to obtain payment.

* * *

§ 279c. VERMONT EXPORT FINANCE PROGRAM

* * *

(e) Any excess of revenues over expenses derived from this program shall be deposited in the ~~development fund~~ Vermont Jobs Fund.

* * *

§ 280a. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS; AUTHORIZED FINANCING PROGRAMS

(a) The Authority may develop, modify, and implement any existing or new financing program, provided that any specific project that benefits from such program shall meet the criteria contained in the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Strategy ~~adopted under~~ outlined in section 280b of this title, ~~and provided further that the program shall meet the criteria contained in the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Strategy adopted under section 280b of this title.~~ These programs may include:

(1) ~~the Mortgage Insurance Program, administered under chapter 12, subchapter 2 of this title; [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(11) a program that would award grants made to eligible and qualified recipients as directed by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets or the Agency of Natural Resources for the purpose of funding water quality initiatives approved by the agencies, provided that the maximum amount of grants awarded by the Authority pursuant to the program shall not exceed \$1,340,238.00 in the aggregate; or

(12) loans to agricultural enterprises or endeavors administered by the Authority under chapter 16A of this title and any programs created thereunder.

(b) ~~This section shall not apply to the Job Start Program authorized by chapter 12, subchapter 7 of this title, and the agricultural finance programs authorized by chapter 16 of this title. [Repealed.]~~

§ 280b. THE VERMONT SUSTAINABLE JOBS STRATEGY

(a)(1) The Governor, with the advice of the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development and the Authority, shall adopt a Vermont sustainable jobs strategy for the State, in accordance with the provisions of this section. Before issuing any funds to an eligible facility or eligible project under section 280a of this title, the Authority shall make a determination that the facility or project materially supports one of the following objectives:

(A) creating or sustaining employment opportunities for Vermonters in proportion to the amount of financial assistance requested;

(B) providing quality employment at wage and benefit levels sufficient to permit a reasonable standard of living by community standards, and at levels that may contribute to bringing Vermont's average wage up to or above 100 percent of the national average wage rate;

(C) promoting employment opportunities in economically disadvantaged areas and communities in the State;

(D) advancing the overall growth of wealth in the Vermont economy by promoting the production and sale of goods and services with a substantial Vermont content and those that utilize Vermont's unique human and natural resource base to markets outside of the State and nation, including visitors to, and travelers through, the State;

(E) assisting the development of a business infrastructure that will contribute to sustainable economic development, to include the provision of necessary services, including shipping, warehousing, communications, repair and maintenance, technical services, distribution, and dependent care, particularly when intrastate capability in these areas can replace services currently provided by out-of-state suppliers;

(F) encouraging economic development projects that reduce, mitigate, or eliminate the effects of climate change, the pollution of land, air, or water, or those that will interdict material within the State that, having served its intended purpose, would otherwise enter the solid waste disposal stream and that will cause the diversion of such material to useful purposes, or that will reuse or recycle any such post-consumer material;

(G) encouraging commercial activity in the traditional downtown areas of the State and promoting through appropriate commercial adaptation the preservation of suitable buildings or structures that are historically or aesthetically significant;

(H) encouraging economic development projects that are consistent with and sensitive to the needs of the communities in which such projects are located;

(I) promoting entrepreneurial activity, recognizing that some of those that are the small businesses of today will be the large employers of tomorrow; and

(J) aiding in the achievement of the economic development and business growth strategies adopted by the Vermont Economic Progress Council and the Vermont Department of Economic Development, wherever possible providing assistance to those categories of enterprise that may be designated as especially desirable for Vermont.

(2) All determinations and findings made by the Authority pursuant to this section shall be conclusive.

~~(b)(1) The Vermont sustainable jobs strategy shall contain the criteria upon which the Authority shall develop, modify, and implement its public financing programs, and the criteria for determining whether investments should be made in an eligible project. Such criteria shall include a requirement that, before making any investment or other financial commitment, the Authority shall determine that the proposed project is of public use and benefit and is without unreasonable risk of loss to the Authority.~~

~~(2) In adopting the Vermont sustainable jobs strategy, the Governor shall consider:~~

~~(A) the policies established in section 280 of this title; and~~

~~(B) the economic policy and economic development plan of the State, as developed by the Economic Progress Council under subchapter 3 of chapter 29 of this title. The Authority may adopt such policies and procedures necessary to define further any term or criterion used in this section or to set specific standards by which to measure the extent to which any proposed project meets the requirements of this section.~~

~~(c)(1) Before adopting the Vermont sustainable jobs strategy, the Governor shall direct the Authority and the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development to solicit information and recommendations from the people and businesses of the State.~~

~~(2) After soliciting information and recommendations, the Authority and the Secretary shall jointly develop a proposed Vermont sustainable jobs strategy. In developing a proposed strategy, the Authority and the Secretary shall consider how best to integrate Vermont's economic, social, and environmental values into a Vermont sustainable jobs strategy. The Authority~~

~~and the Secretary shall jointly present their proposed strategy to the House Committee on Commerce and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs meeting in joint hearing.~~

~~(3) After legislative presentation, the Authority and the Secretary may amend the proposed strategy, and shall present the proposed strategy as amended to the Governor. The Governor may adopt the proposed strategy, or may return the proposed strategy to the Authority and the Secretary for further development and legislative presentation. After adoption of the Vermont sustainable jobs strategy, any amendments to the strategy may be adopted by the Governor in accordance with the process established by this section. In deciding whether to provide financial assistance to an applicant, the Authority, after determining that a project meets its credit underwriting standards, shall take into account the criteria outlined in this section, the overall benefits of the project to the State and to the community in which it is proposed to be located, the amount of assistance requested, and the availability of Authority resources to fund the request.~~

* * *

Subchapter 15. Disaster Recovery Loan Fund

§ 280gg. DISASTER RECOVERY LOAN FUND

(a)(1) There is established within the Authority the Vermont Disaster Recovery Loan Fund, referred to in this subchapter as “the Fund,” the purpose of which is to enable the Authority to provide loans and other forms of financial assistance to businesses and agricultural enterprises after disasters.

(2) The Authority shall consult with the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development and the Secretary of Agriculture in determining whether funds shall be made available following a disaster event impacting areas of the State. A consultation shall not be required in the event of a disaster declaration declared by the Governor or the President of the United States.

(b) The Authority shall establish:

(1) policies and procedures for the Fund that the Authority determines are necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter; and

(2) financing programs necessary to ensure timely delivery of financial assistance after a disaster.

(c) The Authority shall limit the interest rates charged for loans provided utilizing funds from the Disaster Recovery Loan Fund to rates necessary to cover the costs of administering the Fund.

(d) This is a revolving loan program and any excess of revenues over expenses derived from this program shall be deposited in the Fund.

Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 234 is redesignated and amended to read:

§ ~~234~~ 220a. THE VERMONT JOBS FUND

(a) There is hereby created the Vermont Jobs Fund, hereinafter called the Fund, which shall be used by the Authority as a nonlapsing fund for the purposes of ~~subchapters 3, 5, 9, and 10 of this chapter~~. To it shall be charged all operating expenses of the Authority not otherwise provided for and all payments of interest and principal required to be made by the Authority under this subchapter. To it shall be credited any appropriations made by the General Assembly for the purposes of ~~subchapters 3, 5, 9, and 10 of this chapter~~ and all payments required to be made to the Authority under ~~subchapters 3, 5, 9, and 10 of this chapter~~, it being the intent of this section that the Fund shall operate as a revolving fund whereby all appropriations and payments made thereto, ~~unless required to repay notes under the following section~~, may be applied and reapplied for the purposes of ~~subchapters 3, 5, 9, and 10 of this chapter~~. Monies in the Fund may be loaned at interest rates to be set by the Authority for the following:

(1) ~~Loans to local development corporations under this subchapter, provided that if the funds for any such loan are derived from the issue of notes to the State Treasurer under section 235 of this chapter, the loan shall bear interest at a rate not less than the rate on the notes~~ chapter.

(2) Direct mortgage loans as described in subchapter 5 of this chapter.

(3) Loans for the financing of export activities under subchapter 9 of this chapter.

(4) Other loans as the Authority may prescribe under subchapter 10 of this chapter.

~~(b) In order to provide monies in the Fund for loans under this chapter, the Authority may issue notes for purchase by the State Treasurer as provided in section 235 of this chapter.~~

~~(e)~~ Monies in the Fund may be loaned to the Vermont Agricultural Credit Program to support its lending operations as established in chapter 16A of this title at interest rates and on terms and conditions to be set by the Authority to establish a line of credit in an amount not to exceed \$100,000,000.00 to be advanced to the Vermont Agricultural Credit Program to support its lending operations as established in chapter 16A of this title.

~~(d)~~(c) Monies in the Fund may be loaned to the Vermont Small Business Development Corporation to support its lending operations as established pursuant to subdivision 216(14) of this title at interest rates and on terms and conditions to be set by the Authority.

~~(e)~~(d) Monies in the Fund may be loaned to the Vermont 504 Corporation to support its lending operations as established pursuant to subdivision 216(13) of this title at interest rates and on terms and conditions to be set by the Authority.

~~(f)~~(e) The Authority may loan money from the Fund to the Vermont Sustainable Energy Loan Fund established under subchapter 13 of this chapter at interest rates and on terms and conditions set by the Authority.

Sec. 3. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100 is amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2025 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

* * *

(h) Department of Economic Development. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$150,000 General Fund for continued funding of the International Business Office previously funded by 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. G.300(b)(1); and

(2) \$2,000,000 General Fund for a grant to the Vermont Economic Development Authority to establish a disaster relief fund for use by businesses and agricultural enterprises following a natural disaster.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Stevens of Waterbury, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be amended by striking out Sec. 3, 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100, in its entirety and by renumbering the remaining sections to be numerically correct.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

**Second Reading; Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 461

Rep. Bartley of Fairfax, for the Committee on General and Housing, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding employee access to unpaid leave

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to align Vermont's family leave policies with inclusive and equitable standards, ensuring that LGBTQ+ families, workers with low income, and individuals in nontraditional family structures have equal access to caregiving leave without undue burden.

Sec. 2. 21 V.S.A. § 471 is amended to read:

§ 471. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Bereavement leave" means a leave of absence from employment or self-employment by an individual due to the death of the individual's family member that occurs not more than one year after the family member's death. Bereavement leave includes leave taken in relation to the administration or settlement of the deceased family member's estate. Leave taken in relation to the administration or settlement of the deceased family member's estate shall not occur more than one year after the family member's death.

(2) "Domestic partner" means an individual with whom the employee has an enduring domestic relationship of a spousal nature, provided the employee and the domestic partner:

(A) have shared a residence for at least six consecutive months;

(B) are at least 18 years of age;

(C) are not married to or considered a domestic partner of another individual;

(D) are not related by blood closer than would bar marriage under State law; and

(E) have agreed between themselves to be responsible for each other's welfare.

(3) "Domestic violence" has the same meaning as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151.

~~(4) “Employer” means an individual, organization, or governmental body, partnership, association, corporation, legal representative, trustee, receiver, trustee in bankruptcy, and any common carrier by rail, motor, water, air, or express company doing business in or operating within this State that a person who for the purposes of parental leave, bereavement leave, safe leave, and leave for a qualifying exigency employs 10 or more individuals who are employed for an average of at least 30 hours per week during a year and for the purposes of family leave employs 15 or more individuals for an average of at least 30 hours per week during a year.~~

~~(2)(5) “Employee” means a person who, in consideration of direct or indirect gain or profit, has been continuously employed by the same employer for a period of one year for an average of at least 30 hours per week.~~

~~(3)(6) “Family leave” means a leave of absence from employment by an employee who works for an employer that employs 15 or more individuals who are employed for an average of at least 30 hours per week during the year for one of the following reasons:~~

~~(A) the serious health condition of the employee; or~~

~~(B) the serious health condition of the employee’s child, stepchild or ward who lives with the employee, foster child, parent, spouse, or parent of the employee’s spouse family member.~~

~~(7) “Family member” means:~~

~~(A) regardless of age, an employee’s biological, adopted, or foster child; an employee’s stepchild or legal ward; a child of the employee’s spouse or civil union or domestic partner; or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis, regardless of legal documentation; an individual to whom the employee stood in loco parentis when the individual was under 18 years of age; or any individual for whom the employee provides caregiving responsibilities similar to those of a parent-child relationship;~~

~~(B)(i) a parent of an employee or an employee’s spouse or civil union or domestic partner, regardless of whether the relationship to the employee or the employee’s spouse or civil union or domestic partner is a biological, foster, adoptive, or step relationship;~~

~~(ii) a legal guardian of an employee or employee’s spouse or civil union or domestic partner; or~~

~~(iii) a person who stands in loco parentis for the employee or who stood in loco parentis when the employee or employee’s spouse or civil union or domestic partner was under 18 years of age;~~

(C) a person to whom the employee is legally married under the laws of any state or a civil union or domestic partner of an employee; or

(D) a grandparent, grandchild, or sibling of the employee or the employee's spouse or civil union or domestic partner, regardless of whether the relationship to the employee or the employee's spouse or civil union or domestic partner is a biological, foster, adoptive, or step relationship.

(4)(8) "Health care provider" means a licensed health care provider or a health care provider as defined pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 825.125.

(9) "In loco parentis" means a relationship in which an individual has day-to-day responsibilities to care for and support a child, regardless of biological or legal ties. Financial support is not a requirement for this relationship, recognizing caregiving roles beyond traditional definitions.

(5)(10) "Parental leave" means a leave of absence from employment by an employee who works for an employer that employs 10 or more individuals who are employed for an average of at least 30 hours per week during the year for one of the following reasons:

(A) the birth of the employee's child pregnancy;

(B) the employee's recovery from childbirth or miscarriage;

(C) the birth of the employee's child and to care for or bond with the child within one year after the child's birth; or

(B)(D) the initial placement of a child 16 18 years of age or younger with the employee for the purpose of adoption or foster care and to care for or bond with the child within one year after the placement for adoption or foster care.

(11) "Qualifying exigency" means a qualifying exigency identified pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 825.126 that is related to active duty service by a family member in the U.S. Armed Forces.

(12) "Safe leave" means a leave of absence from employment by an employee because:

(A) the employee or the employee's family member is a victim or alleged victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

(B) the employee is using leave for one of the following reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking:

(i) to seek or obtain medical care, counseling, or social or legal services, either for themselves or for a family member;

(ii) to recover from injuries;

(iii) to participate in safety planning, either for themselves or for a family member;

(iv) to relocate or secure safe housing, either for themselves or for a family member;

(v) to meet with a State's Attorney or law enforcement officer; or

(vi) to attend a hearing concerning an order against stalking or sexual assault pursuant to 12 V.S.A. § 5133, when the employee seeks the order as a plaintiff; and

(C) the employee is not the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of the domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

~~(6)~~(13) "Serious health condition" means:

(A) an accident, illness, injury, disease, or physical or mental condition that:

(i) poses imminent danger of death;

(ii) requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or

(iii) requires continuing treatment by a health care provider; or

(B) rehabilitation from an accident, illness, injury, disease, or physical or mental condition described in subdivision (A) of this subdivision ~~(6)~~(13), including treatment for substance use disorder.

(14) "Sexual assault" has the same meaning as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151.

(15) "Stalking" has the same meaning as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151.

(16) "U.S. Armed Forces" means:

(A) the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard;

(B) a reserve component of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard; or

(C) the National Guard of any state.

Sec. 3. 21 V.S.A. § 472 is amended to read:

§ 472. LEAVE

(a)(1) During any 12-month period, an employee shall be entitled to take unpaid leave for a period not to exceed 12 weeks:

~~(1)(A) for parental leave, during the employee's pregnancy and following the birth of an employee's child or within a year following the initial placement of a child 16 years of age or younger with the employee for the purpose of adoption;~~

~~(2)(B) for family leave, for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's child, stepchild or ward of the employee who lives with the employee, foster child, parent, spouse, or parent of the employee's spouse;~~

(C) for safe leave; or

(D) for a qualifying exigency.

(2) During any 12-month period, an employee may use up to two out of the 12 weeks of leave available pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection for bereavement leave.

(b) During the leave, at the employee's option, the employee may use accrued sick leave or, vacation leave or, any other accrued paid leave, ~~not to exceed six weeks~~ or short-term disability insurance. Utilization of accrued paid leave or short-term disability insurance shall not extend the leave provided pursuant to this section.

* * *

(e)(1) An employee shall give the employer reasonable written notice of intent to take leave under this ~~subchapter~~ section. Notice shall include the date the leave is expected to commence and the estimated duration of the leave.

(2) In the case of the adoption or birth of a child, an employer shall not require that notice be given more than six weeks prior to the anticipated commencement of the leave.

(3) In the case of an unanticipated serious health condition, a miscarriage, an unanticipated need for safe leave, a premature birth, the death of a family member, or a short-notice qualifying exigency, the employee shall give the employer notice of the commencement of the leave as soon as practicable.

(4)(A) In the case of a serious health condition of the employee or a member of the employee's family, an employer may require certification from a health care provider to verify the condition and the amount and necessity for the leave requested.

(B) An employer may require an employee to provide documentation of the need for safe leave. An employee may provide documentation from any one of the following sources:

(i) a court or a law enforcement or other government agency;

(ii) a domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking assistance program;

(iii) a legal, clerical, medical, or other professional from whom the employee, or the employee's family member, received counseling or other assistance concerning domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

(iv) a self-attestation by the employee describing the circumstances supporting the need for safe leave; no further corroboration shall be required unless otherwise mandated by law.

(C) An employer may require an employee to provide documentation of the need for bereavement leave. An employee may provide any of the following forms of documentation:

(i) a death certificate;

(ii) a published obituary; or

(iii) a written notice or verification of death, burial, or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral home, burial society, crematorium, religious organization, or governmental agency.

(D) An employer may require an employee to provide documentation of the need for leave for a qualifying exigency as set forth in 29 C.F.R. § 825.309.

(E) An employer shall not disclose any private medical information or information relating to a safe leave that the employer receives pursuant to this subdivision (4) except to the extent the disclosure is permitted by law and:

(i) consented to by the employee in writing;

(ii) required pursuant to a court order; or

(iii) required pursuant to State or federal law.

~~(4)~~(5) An employee may return from leave earlier than estimated upon approval of the employer.

~~(5)~~(6) An employee shall provide reasonable notice to the employer of the need to extend leave to the extent provided by this subchapter.

(f) Upon return from leave taken under this subchapter, an employee shall be offered the same or comparable job at the same level of compensation, employment benefits, seniority, or any other term or condition of the employment existing on the day leave began. This ~~subchapter~~ subsection shall not apply if, prior to requesting leave, the employee had been given notice or had given notice that the employment would terminate. This subsection shall

not apply if the employer can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that:

(1) during the period of leave the employee's job would have been terminated or the employee laid off for reasons unrelated to the leave or the condition for which the leave was granted; or

(2) the employee performed unique services and hiring a permanent replacement during the leave, after giving reasonable notice to the employee of intent to do so, was the only alternative available to the employer to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the employer's operation.

(g)(1) An employer may adopt a leave policy more generous than the leave policy provided by this subchapter.

(2)(A) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to diminish an employer's obligation to comply with any collective bargaining agreement or any employment benefit program or plan that provides greater leave rights than the rights provided by this subchapter.

(B) A collective bargaining agreement or employment benefit program or plan may not diminish rights provided by this subchapter.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subchapter, an employee may, at the time a need for parental or family leave arises, waive some or all the rights under this subchapter provided the waiver is informed and voluntary and any changes in conditions of employment related to any waiver shall be mutually agreed upon between employer and employee.

(h) Except for the serious health condition of the employee or safe leave when the employee is the victim or alleged victim, an employee who does not return to employment with the employer who provided the leave shall return to the employer the value of any compensation that the employer paid to or on behalf of the employee during the leave, except payments for accrued ~~sick leave or vacation~~ leave.

Sec. 4. 21 V.S.A. § 472a is amended to read:

§ 472a. SHORT-TERM FAMILY LEAVE

(a) In addition to the leave provided in section 472 of this title, an employee shall be entitled to take unpaid leave not to exceed four hours in any 30-day period and not to exceed 24 hours in any 12-month period. An employer may require that leave be taken in a minimum of two-hour segments and may be taken for any of the following purposes:

(1) To participate in preschool or school activities directly related to the academic educational advancement of the employee's ~~child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee~~ family member, such as a parent-teacher conference.

(2) To attend or to accompany the employee's ~~child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law~~ family member to routine medical or dental appointments.

(3) To accompany the employee's ~~parent, spouse, or parent-in-law~~ family member to other appointments for professional services related to their care and well-being.

(4) To respond to a medical emergency involving the employee's ~~child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law~~ family member.

* * *

Sec. 5. 21 V.S.A. § 472c is amended to read:

§ 472c. LEAVE; ALLEGED CRIME VICTIMS; RELIEF FROM
STALKING OR ABUSE

* * *

(b) In addition to the leave provided in section 472 of this title, an employee shall be entitled to take unpaid leave from employment for the purpose of attending a deposition or court proceeding related to:

* * *

(2) a relief from abuse hearing pursuant to 15 V.S.A. § 1103, when the employee seeks the order as a plaintiff; or

(3) ~~a hearing concerning an order against stalking or sexual assault pursuant to 12 V.S.A. § 5133, when the employee seeks the order as plaintiff; or~~

(4) a relief from abuse, neglect, or exploitation hearing pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapter 69, when the employee is the plaintiff.

* * *

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on General and Housing?, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** moved that the report of the Committee on General and Housing be amended in Sec. 3, 21 V.S.A. § 472, by striking out subsection (f) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (f) to read as follows:

(f) Upon return from leave taken under this subchapter, an employee shall be offered the same or comparable job at the same level of compensation, employment benefits, seniority, or any other term or condition of the employment existing on the day leave began. This subchapter subsection shall not apply if, prior to requesting leave, the employee had been given notice or had given notice that the employment would terminate. This subsection shall not apply if the employer can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that:

(1) during the period of leave the employee's job would have been terminated or the employee laid off for reasons unrelated to the leave or the condition for which the leave was granted; ~~or~~

(2) the employee performed unique services and hiring a permanent replacement during the leave, after giving reasonable notice to the employee of intent to do so, was the only alternative available to the employer to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the employer's operation; or

(3) the employer was unable to find an employee willing to take the position on a time-limited basis and hiring a permanent replacement, after giving reasonable notice to the employee of intent to do so, was the only option available to enable the employer to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the employer's operations.

Thereupon, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Thereafter, the report of the Committee on General and Housing was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar
Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**

H. 91

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Adjournment

At two o'clock and fifty-one minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, March 21, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Jared Hamilton, Pastor, United Church of Hinesburg.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 45

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to protection from nuisance suits for agricultural activities

To the Committee on Judiciary.

S. 66

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to motor vehicle noise, exhaust modifications, and engine compression brakes

To the Committee on Transportation.

S. 87

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to extradition procedures

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 49**

Offered by Representative Greer of Bennington

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 21, 2025 as World Day for Glaciers in Vermont

Whereas, according to United Nations Resolution 77/158, which the United Nations General Assembly adopted on December 14, 2022, “glaciers are a critical component of the hydrological cycle and . . . the current accelerated melting and retreat of glaciers have severe impacts on the climate, the environment, the maintenance of human well-being and health and sustainable development,” and

Whereas, the resolution further stated that “in many high mountain areas, glacier retreat and permafrost thaw are projected to further decrease the stability of slopes, and that the incidences of floods owing to glacier lake outburst or rain-on-snow, landslides and snow avalanches are projected to increase and occur in new locations or different seasons,” and

Whereas, the United Nations General Assembly also expressed “the urgent need to raise awareness of and to promote and facilitate actions and sustainable measures towards preserving glaciers,” and

Whereas, the proponents of the resolution believed that the best way for the international community to focus on these concerns was to “declare 2025 the International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation and to proclaim 21 March of each year the World Day for Glaciers,” and

Whereas, the first World Day for Glaciers will be observed on March 21, 2025 and will include official events at United Nations headquarters in New York City and at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, featuring glaciologists, policymakers, and the media, designed to bring public attention to this climate situation, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes March 21, 2025 as World Day for Glaciers in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the United Nations Secretary-General.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 14, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 342**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Was taken up and, pending third reading, on motion of **Rep. Marcotte of Coventry**, action on the bill was postponed until March 25, 2025.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 141**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the bill pass, notwithstanding the Governor's refusal to approve the bill?, on motion of **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction**, action on the bill was postponed until March 25, 2025.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 398

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

H. 461

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding employee access to unpaid leave

H. 480

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to education law

**Third Reading; Bill Passed; Rules Suspended,
Messaged to the Senate Forthwith****H. 482**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Green Mountain Care Board authority to adjust a hospital's reimbursement rates and to appoint a hospital observer

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House action on the bill was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 10

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

Reported in favor of its passage when amended in Sec. 2, 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 1, City of Barre, following section 206, vacancies, by inserting the following before the ellipses:

§ 207. VOTING ON REQUEST OF THE CITY MANAGER

(a) Annually, on the ~~first~~ second Tuesday in ~~March~~ May, the legal voters of the City shall meet to vote on the requests of the City Manager.

(b) If, at the annual ~~March~~ meeting, the voters disapprove the request of the City Manager, the Mayor, or in his or her absence or disability, the City Clerk, shall warn a general meeting of the legal voters to consider the article disapproved by the voters and to authorize a specific sum of money therefor. The meeting shall be in accordance with 17 V.S.A. §§ 2630–2689 and shall be held at the same location as the previous meeting with the polls open for the same hours as the previous meeting. If the voters continue to disapprove any portion of the request, similar meetings shall be held in the same manner.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 319

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph, for the Committee on Environment, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous environmental subjects

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Battery Extended Producer Responsibility * * *

Sec. 1. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 152, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

Sec. 3. ANR BATTERY ASSESSMENT

(a) On or before July 1, ~~2026, the Secretary of Natural Resources~~ 2027, the stewardship organization formed pursuant to 10 V.S.A. chapter 168 shall complete an assessment of the opportunities, challenges, and feasibility of establishing mandatory end-of-life management programs for the following battery types:

- (1) batteries used in hybrid and electric vehicles;
- (2) battery energy storage systems; and
- (3) batteries that are not easily removable from the products they power.

(b) The assessment required by this section shall include:

(1) a summary of the work and progress other states have made in establishing end-of-life management programs for the three battery types listed under subsection (a) of this section; and

(2) policy recommendations on whether mandatory end-of-life management programs are necessary for the battery types listed under subsection (a) of this section.

(c) The assessment required by this section shall be provided to the Secretary of Natural Resources, the House Committee on Environment and Energy, and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

* * * Fuel Storage Tanks * * *

Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 1927(d) is amended to read:

(d) No person shall deliver a regulated substance to a category one tank that is ~~visibly~~ designated by the Agency as not having a valid permit or not meeting standards adopted by the Secretary related to corrosion protection, spill prevention, leak detection, financial responsibility, or overfill protection that may result in the tank releasing a regulated substance to the environment.

* * * Household Hazardous Waste Extended Producer Responsibility * * *

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 7181 is amended to read:

§ 7181. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(4)(A) “Covered household hazardous product” means a consumer product offered for retail sale that is contained in the receptacle in which the product is offered for retail sale, if the product has any of the following characteristics:

(i) the product or a component of the product is a hazardous waste under subchapter 2 of the Vermont Hazardous Waste Management Regulations, regardless of the status of the generator of the hazardous waste; or

(ii) the product is a gas cylinder.

(B) “Covered household hazardous product” does not mean any of the following:

* * *

(iv) architectural paint as that term is defined in section 6672 of this title;

* * *

Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 7182 is amended to read:

§ 7182. SALE OF COVERED HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS;
STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION;
MANUFACTURER REGISTRATION

(a) Sale prohibited.

(1) A manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall not sell, offer for sale, or deliver to a retailer for subsequent sale a covered household hazardous product without registering with the stewardship organization pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

(2) Beginning six months after a final decision on the adequacy of a collection plan by the Secretary, a manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall not sell, offer for sale, or deliver to a retailer for subsequent sale a covered household hazardous product unless all the following have been met:

~~(1)~~(A) The manufacturer is participating in a stewardship organization implementing an approved collection plan.

~~(2)~~(B) The name of the manufacturer, the manufacturer’s brand, and the name of the covered household hazardous product are submitted to the Agency of Natural Resources by a stewardship organization and listed on the stewardship organization’s website as covered by an approved collection plan.

~~(3)(C)~~ The stewardship organization in which the manufacturer participates has submitted an annual report consistent with the requirements of section 7185 of this title.

~~(4)(D)~~ The stewardship organization in which the manufacturer participates has conducted a plan audit consistent with the requirements of subsection 7185(b) of this title.

(b) Stewardship organization registration requirements.

(1) On or before July 1, 2025 ~~and annually thereafter~~, a stewardship organization shall file a registration form with the Secretary. The Secretary shall provide the registration form to the stewardship organization. The registration form shall include:

~~(A) a list of the manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;~~

~~(B) a list of the brands of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;~~

~~(C) a list of the covered household hazardous products of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;~~

~~(D) the name, address, and contact information of a person responsible for ensuring compliance with this chapter;~~

~~(E) a description of how the stewardship organization meets the requirements of subsection 7184(b) of this title, including any reasonable requirements for participation in the stewardship organization; and~~

~~(F)(B)~~ the name, address, and contact information of a person for a nonmember manufacturer to contact regarding how to participate in the stewardship organization to satisfy the requirements of this chapter.

(2) ~~A renewal of a registration without changes may be accomplished through notifying the Agency of Natural Resources on a form provided by the Agency~~ Beginning July 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, a stewardship organization shall renew its registration with the Secretary. A renewal registration shall include the following:

(A) a list of the manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;

(B) a list of the brands of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;

(C) a list of the covered household hazardous products of each manufacturer participating in the stewardship organization;

(D) the name, address, and contact information of a person responsible for ensuring compliance with this chapter;

(E) a description of how the stewardship organization meets the requirements of subsection 7184(b) of this title, including any reasonable requirements for participation in the stewardship organization; and

(F) the name, address, and contact information of a person for a nonmember manufacturer to contact regarding how to participate in the stewardship organization to satisfy the requirements of this chapter.

(c) Manufacturer registration. On or before November 1, 2025, a manufacturer of a covered household hazardous product shall register with the stewardship organization in a manner proscribed by the stewardship organization.

Sec. 5. 10 V.S.A. § 7183 is amended to read:

§ 7183. COLLECTION PLANS

(a) Collection plan required. ~~Prior to July 1, 2025~~ On or before July 1, 2026, any stewardship organization registered with the Secretary as representing manufacturers of covered household hazardous products shall coordinate and submit to the Secretary for review one collection plan for all manufacturers.

(b) Collection plan; minimum requirements. ~~Each collection plan shall include, at a minimum, all of the following requirements:~~

(1) Initial plan. The initial plan shall last for a period not to exceed three years and contain, at a minimum, the following requirements:

(A) List of participants. A list of the manufacturers, brands, and products participating in the collection plan and a methodology for adding and removing manufacturers and notifying the Agency of new participants.

~~(2)(B) Free statewide collection of covered household hazardous products. The collection program shall provide for reimburse municipalities when a municipality provides for free, convenient, and accessible statewide opportunities for the collection from covered entities of covered household hazardous products, including orphan covered products. A stewardship organization shall accept all covered household hazardous products collected from a covered entity and shall not refuse the collection of a covered household hazardous product, including orphan covered household products, based on the brand or manufacturer of the covered household hazardous product unless specifically exempt from this requirement. The collection program shall also provide for the payment of collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous products. Collection~~

costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials.

~~(3) Convenient collection location. The stewardship organization shall develop a collection program that allows all municipal household hazardous waste collection programs to opt to be a part of the collection plan, including collection events and facilities offered by solid waste planning entities. The plan shall make efforts to site points of collection equitably across all regions of the State to allow for convenient and reasonable access of all Vermonters to collection facilities or collection events.~~

~~(4) Public education and outreach. The collection plan shall include an education and outreach program that shall include a website and may include media advertising, retail displays, articles and publications, and other public educational efforts. Outreach and education shall be suitable for the State's diverse ethnic populations, through translated and culturally appropriate materials, including in-language and targeted outreach. Public education and outreach should include content to increase meaningful participation by environmental justice focus populations as required by 3 V.S.A. chapter 72. During the first year of program implementation and two years after adoption of the collection plan, each stewardship organization shall carry out a survey of public awareness regarding the requirements of the program established under this chapter that can identify communities that have disparities in awareness and need more outreach. Each stewardship organization shall share the results of the public awareness surveys with the Secretary. If multiple stewardship organizations are implementing plans approved by the Secretary, the stewardship organizations shall coordinate in carrying out their education and outreach responsibilities under this subdivision and shall include in their annual reports to the Secretary a summary of their coordinated education and outreach efforts. The education and outreach program and website shall notify the public of the following:~~

~~(A) that there is a free collection program for covered household hazardous products;~~

~~(B) the location and hours of operation of collection points and how a covered entity can access this collection program;~~

~~(C) the special handling considerations associated with covered household hazardous products; and~~

~~(D) source reduction information for consumers to reduce leftover covered household products.~~

(5) ~~Compliance with appropriate environmental standards. In implementing a collection plan, a stewardship organization shall comply with all applicable laws related to the collection, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste. A stewardship organization shall comply with any special handling or disposal standards established by the Secretary for covered household hazardous products or for the collection plan of the manufacturer.~~

(6) ~~Method of disposition. The collection plan shall describe how covered household hazardous products will be managed in the most environmentally and economically sound manner, including following the waste-management hierarchy. The management of covered household hazardous products under the collection plan shall use management activities in the following priority order: source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal. Collected covered household hazardous products shall be recycled when technically and economically feasible.~~

(7) ~~Performance goals. A collection plan shall include:~~

(A) ~~A performance goal for covered household hazardous products determined by the number of total participants at collection events and facilities listed in the collection plan during a program year divided by the total number of households. The number of households shall include seasonal households. The calculation methodology for the number of households shall be included in the plan.~~

(B) ~~At a minimum, the collection performance goal for the first approved plan shall be an annual participation rate of five percent of the households for every collection program based on the number of households the collection program serves. After the initial approved program plan, the stewardship organization shall propose performance goals for subsequent program plans. The Secretary shall approve the performance goals for the plan at least every five years. The stewardship organization shall use the results of the most recent waste composition study required under 6604 of this title and other relevant factors to propose the performance goals of the collection plan. If a stewardship organization does not meet its performance goals, the Secretary may require the stewardship organization to revise the collection plan to provide for one or more of the following: additional public education and outreach, additional collection events, or additional hours of operation for collection sites. A stewardship organization is not authorized to reduce or cease collection, education and outreach, or other activities implemented under an approved plan on the basis of achievement of program performance goals.~~

~~(8)(C)~~ Collection plan funding. The collection plan shall describe how the stewardship organization will fund the implementation of ~~the collection plan and collection activities under the plan, including the costs for education and outreach, collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous product~~ all municipal collection offered to the public in a base program year. A base program year shall be based on the services provided in calendar year 2024 and any other collection facilities or events approved by the Secretary. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials. The collection plan shall include how municipalities will be compensated for all costs attributed to collection of covered household hazardous products. The Secretary shall resolve disputes relating to compensation.

(2) Subsequent plans. After the expiration of the initial plan approved by the Secretary, the collection plan shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(A) List of participants. A list of the manufacturers, brands, and products participating in the collection plan and a methodology for adding and removing manufacturers and notifying the Agency of new participants.

(B) Free statewide collection of covered household hazardous products. The collection program shall provide for free, convenient, and accessible statewide opportunities for the collection from covered entities of covered household hazardous products, including orphan covered products. A stewardship organization shall accept all covered household hazardous products collected from a covered entity and shall not refuse the collection of a covered household hazardous product, including orphan covered household products, based on the brand or manufacturer of the covered household hazardous product unless specifically exempt from this requirement. The collection program shall also provide for the payment of collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous products. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials.

(C) Convenient collection location. The stewardship organization shall develop a collection program that allows all municipal household hazardous waste collection programs to opt to be a part of the collection plan, including collection events and facilities offered by solid waste planning entities. The plan shall make efforts to site points of collection equitably

across all regions of the State to allow for convenient and reasonable access of all Vermonters to collection facilities or collection events.

(D) Public education and outreach. The collection plan shall include an education and outreach program that shall include a website and may include media advertising, retail displays, articles and publications, and other public educational efforts. Outreach and education shall be suitable for the State's diverse ethnic populations, through translated and culturally appropriate materials, including in-language and targeted outreach. Public education and outreach should include content to increase meaningful participation by environmental justice focus populations as required by 3 V.S.A. chapter 72. During the second approved plan, each stewardship organization shall carry out a survey of public awareness regarding the requirements of the program established under this chapter that can identify communities that have disparities in awareness and need more outreach. Each stewardship organization shall share the results of the public awareness surveys with the Secretary. If multiple stewardship organizations are implementing plans approved by the Secretary, the stewardship organizations shall coordinate in carrying out their education and outreach responsibilities under this subdivision (D) and shall include in their annual reports to the Secretary a summary of their coordinated education and outreach efforts. The education and outreach program and website shall notify the public of the following:

(i) that there is a free collection program for covered household hazardous products;

(ii) the location and hours of operation of collection points and how a covered entity can access this collection program;

(iii) the special handling considerations associated with covered household hazardous products; and

(iv) source reduction information for consumers to reduce leftover covered household products.

(E) Compliance with appropriate environmental standards. In implementing a collection plan, a stewardship organization shall comply with all applicable laws related to the collection, transportation, and disposal of hazardous waste. A stewardship organization shall comply with any special handling or disposal standards established by the Secretary for covered household hazardous products or for the collection plan of the manufacturer.

(F) Method of disposition. The collection plan shall describe how covered household hazardous products will be managed in the most environmentally and economically sound manner, including following the

waste-management hierarchy. The management of covered household hazardous products under the collection plan shall use management activities in the following priority order: source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and disposal. Collected covered household hazardous products shall be recycled when technically and economically feasible.

(G) Performance goals. A collection plan shall include:

(i) A performance goal for covered household hazardous products determined by the number of total participants at collection events and facilities listed in the collection plan during a program year divided by the total number of households. The number of households shall include seasonal households. The calculation methodology for the number of households shall be included in the plan.

(ii) At a minimum, the collection performance goal for the initial plan approved pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section shall be an annual participation rate of five percent of the households for every collection program based on the number of households the collection program serves. After the initial approved program plan, the stewardship organization shall propose performance goals for subsequent program plans. The Secretary shall approve the performance goals for the plan at least every five years. The stewardship organization shall use the results of the most recent waste composition study required under 6604 of this title and other relevant factors to propose the performance goals of the collection plan. If a stewardship organization does not meet its performance goals, the Secretary may require the stewardship organization to revise the collection plan to provide for one or more of the following: additional public education and outreach, additional collection events, or additional hours of operation for collection sites. A stewardship organization is not authorized to reduce or cease collection, education and outreach, or other activities implemented under an approved plan on the basis of achievement of program performance goals.

(H) Collection plan funding. The collection plan shall describe how the stewardship organization will fund the implementation of the collection plan and collection activities under the plan, including the costs for education and outreach, collection, processing, and end-of-life management of the covered household hazardous product. Collection costs include facility costs, equipment costs, labor, supplies, maintenance, events costs, and event contractor costs, including collection event set-up fees, environmental service fees, insurance fees, and shipping containers and materials. The collection plan shall include how municipalities will be compensated for all costs attributed to collection of covered household hazardous products. The Secretary shall resolve disputes relating to compensation.

(c) Term of collection plan. A collection plan approved by the Secretary under section 7187 of this title shall have a term not to exceed five years, provided that the stewardship organization remains in compliance with the requirements of this chapter and the terms of the approved collection plan.

(d) Collection plan implementation. Stewardship organizations shall implement the collection plan on or before six months after the date of a final decision by the Secretary on the adequacy of the collection plan.

Sec. 6. 10 V.S.A. § 7184 is amended to read:

§ 7184. STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

(a) Participation in a stewardship organization. A manufacturer shall meet the requirements of this chapter by participating in a stewardship organization that undertakes the responsibilities under sections 7182, 7183, and 7185 of this title.

(b) Qualifications for a stewardship organization. To qualify as a stewardship organization under this chapter, an organization shall:

(1) commit to assume the responsibilities, obligations, and liabilities of all manufacturers participating in the stewardship organization;

(2) not create unreasonable barriers for participation in the stewardship organization; and

(3) maintain a public website that lists all manufacturers and manufacturers' brands and products covered by the stewardship organization's approved collection plan.

(c) A stewardship organization is authorized to charge its members reasonable fees for the organization, administration, and implementation of the programs required by this chapter.

Sec. 7. 10 V.S.A. § 7187 is amended to read:

§ 7187. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) Review and approve collection plans. The Secretary shall review and approve or deny collection plans submitted under section 7183 of this title according to the public notice and comment requirements of section 7714 of this title.

* * *

(g) Agency collection plan. If no stewardship organization is formed on or before July 1, 2025 or the stewardship organization fails to submit a plan or submits a plan that does not meet the requirements of this chapter, the Secretary shall adopt and administer a plan that meets the requirements of

section 7183 of this title. If the Secretary administers the plan adopted under section 7183, the Secretary shall charge each manufacturer the prorated costs of plan administration, the Agency's oversight costs, and a hazardous waste reduction assessment of 10 percent of the plan's total cost to be deposited in the Solid Waste Management Assistance Account of the Waste Management Assistance Fund, for the purpose of providing grants to municipalities and small businesses to prevent pollution and reduce the generation of hazardous waste in the State. When determining a manufacturer's assessment under this section, the Agency may allocate costs to a manufacturer of covered household hazardous products based on the sales of covered household hazardous products nationally prorated to the population of Vermont.

Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 6621a is amended to read:

§ 6621a. LANDFILL DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) In accordance with the following schedule, no person shall knowingly dispose of the following materials in solid waste or in landfills:

* * *

(12) Covered household hazardous products after July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

* * *

Sec. 9. SOLID WASTE PLAN; FLEXIBILITY

(a) Notwithstanding the municipal household hazardous waste (HHW) collection requirements under the State Solid Waste Plan adopted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 6604, the Secretary of Natural Resources may grant a variance from the requirement to conduct at least two household hazardous waste collection events in that municipality. The variance shall allow a municipality to meet its obligations, as follows:

(1) the municipality has partnered with another municipality to allow its residents the ability to access a permanent HHW facility in the same manner as the municipality that operates the permanent HHW facility;

(2) the municipality has partnered with a nearby municipality to offer collection events to members in both municipalities;

(3) the municipality has demonstrated that it has made reasonable efforts to provide alternate collection opportunities identified under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection and was unable and that the cost of a collection event is unreasonable. In such circumstances the Secretary of Natural Resources may reduce the required collection events to one per year.

(b) This section shall be repealed on July 1, 2027.

* * * Healthy Homes Initiative * * *

Sec. 10. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. B.1103 is amended to read:

Sec. B.1103 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT – FISCAL YEAR 2024
ONE-TIME APPROPRIATIONS

* * *

(j)(1) In fiscal year 2024, the amount of \$6,100,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds is appropriated to the Department of Environmental Conservation for the Healthy Homes Initiative. Funds shall be used to make repairs or improvements to drinking water, wastewater, or stormwater systems for Vermonters who have low to moderate income or who live in manufactured housing communities, or both.

(2) All information submitted to or compiled by the Department of Environmental Conservation related to the issuance of individual funding awards under the Healthy Homes Initiative shall be considered confidential unless the person providing the information designates that it is not confidential. This shall include all personal information of applicants that request or receive funding. Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, this subdivision shall take effect on passage and shall apply retroactively to July 1, 2023.

* * *

* * * Flood Safety * * *

Sec. 11. 2024 Act and Resolves No. 121, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

Sec. 3. DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION;
RIVER CORRIDOR BASE MAP; INFILL MAPPING;
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

(a) On or before January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027, the Department of Environmental Conservation, in consultation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the regional planning commissions, shall amend by procedure the statewide River Corridor Base Map to identify areas suitable for development that are located within existing settlements and that will not cause or contribute to increases in fluvial erosion hazards.

(b) Beginning on January 1, 2025 and ending on January 1, ~~2027~~ 2028, the Department of Environmental Conservation shall conduct an education and outreach program to consult with and collect input from municipalities, environmental justice focus populations, the Environmental Justice Advisory Council, businesses, property owners, farmers, and other members of the

public regarding how State permitting of development in mapped river corridors will be implemented, including potential restrictions on the use of land within mapped river corridors. The Department shall develop educational materials for the public as part of its charge under this section. The Department shall collect input from the public regarding the permitting of development in mapped river corridors as proposed by this act. On or before January 15, ~~2027~~ 2028 and until permitting of development in mapped river corridors begins under 10 V.S.A. § 754, the Department shall submit to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, the House Committee on Environment and Energy, and the Environmental Justice Advisory Council a report that shall include:

(1) a summary of the public input it received regarding State permitting of development in mapped river corridors during the public education and outreach required under this section;

(2) recommendations, based on the public input collected, for changes to the requirements for State permitting of development in mapped river corridors;

(3) an analysis and summary of State permitting of development in mapped river corridors on environmental justice populations; and

(4) a summary of the Department's progress in adopting the rules required under 10 V.S.A. § 754 for the regulation of development in mapped river corridors.

Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 754 is amended to read:

§ 754. MAPPED RIVER CORRIDOR RULES

(a) Rulemaking authority.

(1) On or before ~~July 1, 2027~~ July 15, 2028, the Secretary shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 that establish requirements for issuing and enforcing permits for:

(A) all development within a mapped river corridor in the State; and

(B) for development exempt from municipal regulation in flood hazard areas.

(2) The Secretary shall not adopt rules under this subsection that regulate agricultural activities without the consent of the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, provided that the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall not withhold consent under this subdivision when lack of such consent would result in the State's noncompliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

(3) The Secretary shall seek the guidance of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in developing and drafting the rules required by this section in order to ensure that the rules are sufficient to meet eligibility requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program.

* * *

(e) Permit requirement. Beginning on ~~January 1, 2028~~ July 1, 2029, a person shall not commence or conduct development exempt from municipal regulation in a flood hazard area or commence or conduct any development in a mapped river corridor without a permit issued under the rules required under subsection (a) of this section by the Secretary or by a State agency delegated permitting authority under subsection (f) of this section. When an application is filed under this section, the Secretary or delegated State agency shall proceed in accordance with chapter 170 of this title.

* * *

Sec. 13. 2024 Acts and Resolves 121, Sec. 10 is amended to read:

Sec. 10. STUDY COMMITTEE ON STATE ADMINISTRATION OF
THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

* * *

(e) Report. On or before August 15, ~~2025~~ 2026, the Study Committee shall submit a written report to the General Assembly with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action. Any recommendation for legislative action shall be as draft legislation.

* * *

Sec. 14. 2024 Acts and Resolves 121, Sec. 11(a) is amended to read:

(a) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall initiate rulemaking, including pre-rulemaking, for the rules required in Sec. 5 of this act, 10 V.S.A. § 754 (river corridor development), not later than July 1, 2025. The rules shall be adopted on or before July 1, ~~2027~~ 2028.

Sec. 15. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 121, Sec. 29(b) is amended to read:

(b) All other sections shall take effect July 1, 2024, except that:

(1) Secs. 6a, 7, 8, 8a, and 9 (conforming amendments to municipal river corridor planning) shall take effect on January 1, 2028, except that in Sec. 9, 24 V.S.A. § 4424(a)(2)(B)(i) (municipal compliance with the State Flood Hazard Area Standards) shall take effect on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2028;

* * *

* * * Wetlands * * *

Sec. 16. 10 V.S.A. § 918 is amended to read:

§ 918. NET GAIN OF WETLANDS; STATE GOAL; RULEMAKING

(a) On or before ~~July 1~~ December 1, 2025, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall amend the Vermont Wetlands Rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to clarify that the goal of wetlands regulation and management in the State is the net gain of wetlands to be achieved through protection of existing wetlands and restoration of wetlands that were previously adversely affected. This condition shall not apply to wetland, river, and flood plain restoration projects, including dam removals.

* * *

(c) At a minimum, the Wetlands Rules shall be revised to:

(1) Require an applicant for a wetland permit that authorizes adverse impacts to more than 5,000 square feet of wetlands to compensate for those impacts through restoration, enhancement, or creation of wetland resources.

(2) Incorporate the net gain rule into requirements for permits issued after ~~September 1~~ December 1, 2025.

* * *

* * * Dams * * *

Sec. 17. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 121, Sec. 22 is amended to read:

Sec. 22. STUDY COMMITTEE ON DAM EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
PLANNING

(a) Creation. There is created the Study Committee on Dam Emergency Operations Planning to review and recommend how to improve regional emergency action planning for hazards caused by dam failure, including how to shift responsibility for emergency planning from individual municipalities to regional authorities, how to improve regional implementation of dam emergency response plans, and how to fund dam emergency action planning at the regional level.

* * *

(e) Report. On or before December 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, the Study Committee shall submit a written report to the General Assembly with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action. Any recommendation for legislative action shall be submitted as draft legislation.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Secretary of Natural Resources or designee shall call the first meeting of the Study Committee.

(2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership of the Study Committee shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Study Committee shall cease to exist on March 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

* * *

Sec. 18. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 121, Sec. 24(f) is amended to read:

(f) On or before ~~January 15~~ September 1, 2025, the Agency of Natural Resources shall complete its analysis of the capital and ongoing operations and maintenance costs of the Green River Dam, as authorized in 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 46, and shall submit the results of the analysis to the House Committees on Environment and Energy and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Appropriations.

* * * Resilience Implementation Strategy * * *

Sec. 19. 10 V.S.A. § 599a is amended to read:

§ 599a. REPORTS; RULEMAKING

(a) On or before January 15, 2025, the Agency, in consultation with the State Treasurer, shall submit a report to the General Assembly detailing the feasibility and progress of carrying out the requirements of this chapter, including any recommendations for improving the administration of the Program.

(b) The Agency shall adopt rules necessary to implement the requirements of this chapter, including:

(1) adopting methodologies using available science and publicly available data to identify responsible parties and determine their applicable share of covered greenhouse gas emissions; and

(2) requirements for registering entities that are responsible parties and issuing notices of cost recovery demands under the Program; and

~~(3) the Resilience Implementation Strategy, which shall include:~~

~~(A) practices utilizing nature-based solutions intended to stabilize floodplains, riparian zones, lake shoreland, wetlands, and similar lands;~~

~~(B) practices to adapt infrastructure to the impacts of climate change;~~

~~(C) practices needed to build out early warning mechanisms and support fast, effective response to climate-related threats;~~

~~(D) practices that support economic and environmental sustainability in the face of changing climate conditions; and~~

~~(E) criteria and procedures for prioritizing climate change adaptation projects eligible to receive monies from the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program.~~

(c) On or before September 15, 2025, the Secretary shall submit to the House Committee on Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy a report summarizing the Agency of Natural Resources' adoption of the Resilience Implementation Strategy. The Strategy shall include:

(1) practices utilizing nature-based solutions intended to stabilize floodplains, riparian zones, lake shoreland, wetlands, and similar lands;

(2) practices to adapt infrastructure to the impacts of climate change;

(3) practices needed to build out early warning mechanisms and support fast, effective response to climate-related threats;

(4) practices that support economic and environmental sustainability in the face of changing climate conditions; and

(5) criteria and procedures for prioritizing climate change adaptation projects eligible to receive monies from the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program.

~~(e)~~(d) In adopting the Strategy, the Agency shall:

(1) consult with the Environmental Justice Advisory Council;

(2) in consultation with other State agencies and departments, including the Department of Public Safety's Division of Vermont Emergency Management, assess the adaptation needs and vulnerabilities of various areas vital to the State's economy, normal functioning, and the health and well-being of Vermonters;

(3) identify major potential, proposed, and ongoing climate change adaptation projects throughout the State;

(4) identify opportunities for alignment with existing federal, State, and local funding streams;

(5) consult with stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, environmental advocates, relevant subject area experts, and representatives of environmental justice focus populations;

(6) consider components of the Vermont Climate Action Plan required under section 592 of this title that are related to adaptation or resilience, as defined in section 590 of this title; and

(7) conduct public engagement in areas and communities that have the most significant exposure to the impacts of climate change, including disadvantaged, low-income, and rural communities and areas.

~~(d)~~(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the existing authority of a State agency, department, or entity to regulate greenhouse gas emissions or establish strategies or adopt rules to mitigate climate risk and build resilience to climate change.

Sec. 20. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 122, Sec. 3(a) is amended to read:

~~(a) On or before July 1, 2025, the Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 837 shall file with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules the proposed rule for the adoption of the Resilience Implementation Strategy required pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 599a(b)(3). On or before January 1, 2026, the Agency of Natural Resources shall adopt the final rule establishing the Resilience Implementation Strategy required pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 599a(b)(3). [Repealed.]~~

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 21. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

Rep. Ode of Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Environment.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Environment agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 321

Rep. Boyden of Cambridge, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 7 V.S.A. § 832 is amended to read:

§ 832. CANNABIS POSSESSED UNLAWFULLY SUBJECT TO SEIZURE
AND FORFEITURE

Cannabis possessed unlawfully in violation of this title or administrative rules adopted pursuant to this title may be seized by law enforcement and is subject to forfeiture.

Sec. 2. 7 V.S.A. § 844 is amended to read:

§ 844. AUTHORITY FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

(a) The Board shall establish a user agreement with the Vermont Crime Information Center in accordance with 20 V.S.A. chapter 117 for the purpose of obtaining Vermont criminal history records, out-of-state criminal history records, and criminal history records from the Federal Bureau of Investigation as required by chapters 33 (cannabis establishments) and 37 (medical cannabis dispensaries) of this title.

(b) A fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check shall be conducted for each natural person prior to being issued a cannabis establishment identification card pursuant to chapter 33 (cannabis establishments) of this title or a medical cannabis dispensary identification card pursuant to chapter 37 (medical cannabis dispensaries) of this title. The Board may require that such record checks be completed as a condition precedent to license renewal.

Sec. 3. 7 V.S.A. § 861(23) is amended to read:

(23)(A) “Hemp products” or “hemp-infused products” means all products with the federally defined tetrahydrocannabinol concentration level for hemp derived from, or made by, processing hemp plants or plant parts that are prepared in a form available for commercial sale, including cosmetics, personal care products, food intended for animal or human consumption, cloth, cordage, fiber, fuel, paint, paper, construction materials, plastics, and any product containing one or more hemp-derived cannabinoids, such as cannabidiol.

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (A) of this subdivision (23), “hemp products” and “hemp-infused products” do not include any substance, manufacturing intermediary, or product that:

(i) is prohibited or deemed a regulated cannabis product by administrative rule of the Cannabis Control Board; or

(ii) contains more than 0.3 percent total tetrahydrocannabinol on a dry-weight basis.

(C) A hemp-derived product or substance that is excluded from the definition of “hemp products” or “hemp-infused products” pursuant to subdivision (B) of this subdivision (23) shall be considered a cannabis product as defined by subdivision 831(3) of this title; provided, however, that a person duly licensed or registered by the Cannabis Control Board lawfully may possess such products in conformity with the person’s license or hemp processor registration.

Sec. 4. 7 V.S.A. § 881 is amended to read:

§ 881. RULEMAKING; CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENTS

(a) The Board shall adopt rules to implement and administer this chapter in accordance with subdivisions (1)–~~(8)~~(9) of this subsection.

(1) Rules concerning any cannabis establishment shall include:

(A) the form and content of license and renewal applications;

(B) qualifications for licensure that are directly and demonstrably related to the operation of a cannabis establishment, including:

(i) a requirement to submit an operating plan, which shall include information concerning:

(I) the type of business organization, the identity of its controlling owners and principals, and the identity of the controlling owners and principals of its affiliates; and

(II) the sources, amount, and nature of its capital, assets, and financing; the identity of its financiers; and the identity of the controlling owners and principals of its financiers;

(ii) a requirement to file an amendment to its operating plan in the event of a significant change in organization, operation, or financing; and

(iii) the requirement for a fingerprint-based criminal history record check and regulatory record check pursuant to section 883 of this title;

(C) oversight requirements, including provisions to ensure that a licensed establishment complies with State and federal regulatory requirements governing insurance, securities, workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, and occupational health and safety;

(D) inspection requirements;

(E) records to be kept by licensees and the required availability of the records;

(F) employment and training requirements;

(G) security requirements, including any appropriate lighting, physical security, video, and alarm requirements;

(H) health and safety requirements;

(I) regulation of additives to cannabis and cannabis products, including cannabidiol derived from hemp and substances that are toxic or designed to make the product more addictive, more appealing to persons under 21 years of age, or to mislead consumers;

(J) procedures for seed-to-sale traceability of cannabis, including any requirements for tracking software;

(K) regulation of the storage and transportation of cannabis;

(L) sanitary requirements;

(M) procedures for the renewal of a license, which shall allow renewal applications to be submitted up to 90 days prior to the expiration of the cannabis establishment's license;

(N) procedures for suspension and revocation of a license;

(O) requirements for banking and financial transactions, including provisions to ensure that the Board, the Department of Financial Regulation, and financial institutions have access to relevant information concerning licensed establishments to comply with State and federal regulatory requirements;

(P) disclosure or eligibility requirements for a financier, its owners and principals, and its affiliates, which may include:

(i) requirements to disclose information to a licensed establishment, the Board, or the Department of Financial Regulation;

(ii) a minimum age requirement and a requirement to conduct a background check for natural persons;

(iii) requirements to ensure that a financier complies with applicable State and federal laws governing financial institutions, licensed lenders, and other financial service providers; and

(iv) any other requirements, conditions, or limitations on the type or amount of loans or capital investments made by a financier or its affiliates, which the Board, in consultation with the Department of Financial Regulation, determines are necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare;

(Q) policies and procedures for conducting outreach and promoting participation in the regulated cannabis market by diverse groups of individuals, including those who have been disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition;

(R) advertising and marketing; and

(S) requirements for cannabis control testing of hemp, hemp-infused products, cannabis, and cannabis products; and

(T) requirements and criteria governing licensee applications to change ownership, control, or location.

* * *

(5) Rules concerning retailers shall include:

* * *

(F) location or siting requirements that increase the geographic distribution of ~~new~~ cannabis retail establishments based on regional population, and market needs, and community input; and

* * *

(9) Rules concerning trim and harvest services shall include:

(A) requirements for verification of the licenses of clients;

(B) essential content and permissible terms of written service contracts, including provisions for security and diversion prevention;

(C) provisions to ensure safe and lawful transportation and lodging of travelling personnel;

(D) essential content of employee health, safety, and skills training, including first aid and recognition of common pests and pathogens;

(E) requirements appropriate to minimize the risk of pest and pathogen transmission; and

(F) procedures for documenting lawful compensation.

* * *

Sec. 5. 7 V.S.A. § 883 is amended to read:

§ 883. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND RECORD CHECKS; APPLICANTS

(a) The Board shall obtain from the Vermont Crime Information Center a copy of a fingerprint-based Vermont criminal history records, out-of-state criminal history records, and criminal history records from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for each license applicant, principal of an applicant, and

person who controls an applicant who is a natural person. Checks may be repeated for good cause or with prudent frequency as determined by the Board.

(b) The Board shall adopt rules that set forth standards for determining whether an applicant should be denied a cannabis establishment license because of ~~his or her~~ the applicant's criminal history record based on factors that demonstrate whether the applicant presently poses a threat to public safety or the proper functioning of the regulated market. Nonviolent drug offenses shall not automatically disqualify an applicant.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section or subsection 844(b) of this title, if required records are not reasonably available to the Board due to circumstances beyond its control, with the consent of the applicant, the Board may accept third-party criminal background checks submitted by an applicant for a cannabis establishment license or renewal in lieu of obtaining the records from the Vermont Crime Information Center a copy of the person's Vermont fingerprint-based criminal history records, out-of-state criminal history records, and criminal history records from the Federal Bureau of Investigation from a reputable commercial provider. Any such third-party background check shall:

~~(1) be conducted by a third-party consumer reporting agency or background screening company that is in compliance with the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act; and~~

(2) include a multistate and ~~multi-jurisdiction~~ multijurisdiction criminal record locator. Consumer credit scores shall not be a basis for license denial.

Sec. 6. 7 V.S.A. § 884 is amended to read:

§ 884. CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENT IDENTIFICATION CARD

(a) Every owner, principal, and employee of a cannabis establishment shall obtain an identification card issued by the Board. A person may apply for an identification card prior to obtaining employment with a licensee. An employee identification card shall authorize the person to work for any licensee.

(b)(1)(A) Prior to issuing the identification card to an owner or principal of a cannabis establishment, the Board shall obtain from the Vermont Crime Information Center a copy of the person's Vermont fingerprint-based criminal history records, out-of-state criminal history records, and criminal history records from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(B) Prior to issuing the identification card to an employee of a cannabis establishment, the Board shall obtain a copy of a fingerprint-based identity history summary record from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(2) The Board shall adopt rules that set forth standards for determining whether a person should be denied a cannabis establishment identification card because of ~~his or her~~ the person's criminal history record based on factors that demonstrate whether the applicant presently poses a threat to public safety or the proper functioning of the regulated market. Nonviolent drug offenses shall not automatically disqualify an applicant.

(c) Once an identification card application has been submitted, ~~a person the Board, for good cause, may serve~~ issue a temporary permit authorizing the applicant to serve as an employee of a cannabis establishment pending the background check, provided the person is supervised in his or her duties by someone who is a cardholder. The Board shall issue a temporary permit to the person for this purpose, which shall expire upon the issuance of the identification card or disqualification of the person in accordance with this section Good cause exists if, among other reasons, the application is reasonably expected to take more than 12 days to process.

(d) An identification card shall expire one year after its issuance or, in the case of owners and principals, upon the expiration of the cannabis establishment's license, whichever occurs first.

Sec. 7. 7 V.S.A. § 886 is added to read:

§ 886. INCAPACITY OR DISTRESS; SPECIAL PERMITTING;

IMMUNITY

(a) It is the purpose of this section to authorize the Board to effectively oversee cannabis establishments and the persons authorized to operate such establishments in case of incapacity of a principal, dysfunction, operating distress, interruption in licensure, abrupt closure, or judicial intervention including receivership.

(b) The Board may issue a special permit temporarily authorizing a licensed or unlicensed designee of suitable ability and judgment to temporarily operate a cannabis establishment, or to possess, transport, or dispose of cannabis and cannabis products, as specified by the terms of the permit. The permit shall be printed on official Board letterhead, bear the signature of the Chair of the Board, state clearly a means of prompt authentication by law enforcement and licensees, and specify start and end dates and times. A person's eligibility for a permit under this subsection (b) shall not be limited by subdivision 901(d)(3) of this title.

(c) A person acting in conformity with the terms and scope of a special permit issued pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be immune from civil and criminal liability in relation to possession, transportation, or transfer of cannabis within the borders of this State. The Board shall not be liable for

economic losses resulting from forfeiture, seizure, sequestration, sale stoppage, transportation, storage, or destruction of cannabis or cannabis products.

(d) If appropriate to facilitate judicial proceedings involving a cannabis establishment or its principals, including an action for receivership, a State court of competent jurisdiction may request that the Board determine whether a person is suited by background and qualifications to hold a special permit issued pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for a purpose specified by the court. In the alternative, the court may ask that the Board recommend such person.

Sec. 8. 7 V.S.A. § 901 is amended to read:

§ 901. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Except as otherwise permitted by law, a person shall not engage in the cultivation, preparation, processing, packaging, transportation, testing, or sale of cannabis or cannabis products without obtaining a license from the Board.

(b) All licenses shall be valid for one year and expire at midnight on the eve of the anniversary of the date the license was issued. A licensee may apply to renew the license annually.

(c) Applications for licenses and renewals shall be submitted on forms provided by the Board and shall be accompanied by the fees provided for in section 910 of this title.

(d)(1) There shall be ~~seven~~ eight types of licenses available:

- (A) a cultivator license;
- (B) a propagator license;
- (C) a wholesaler license;
- (D) a product manufacturer license;
- (E) a retailer license;
- (F) a testing laboratory license; ~~and~~
- (G) a trim and harvest service license; and
- (H) an integrated license.

(2)(A) The Board shall develop tiers for:

(i) cultivator licenses based on the plant canopy size of the cultivation operation or plant count for breeding stock; and

(ii) retailer licenses.

(B) The Board may develop tiers for other types of licenses.

(3)(A) Except as provided in subdivisions (B) and (C) of this subdivision (3), an applicant and its affiliates may obtain a maximum of one type of each type of license as provided in subdivisions (1)(A)–(F)(G) of this subsection (d). Each license shall permit only one location of the establishment, however a trim and harvest service licensee may provide services at multiple other licensed cannabis establishments.

(B) An applicant and its affiliates that control a dispensary registered on April 1, 2022 may obtain one integrated license provided in subdivision (1)(G)(H) of this subsection (d) or a maximum of one of each type of license provided in subdivisions (1)(A)–(F) of this subsection (d). An integrated licensee may not hold a separate cultivator, propagator, wholesaler, product manufacturer, retailer, or testing laboratory license, and no applicant or its affiliates that control a dispensary shall hold more than one integrated license. An integrated license shall permit only one location for each of the types of activities permitted by the license: cultivation, propagator, wholesale operations, product manufacturing, retail sales, and testing.

(C) An applicant and its affiliates may obtain multiple testing laboratory licenses.

(e) A dispensary that obtains a retailer license or an integrated license pursuant to this chapter shall maintain the dispensary and retail operations in a manner that protects patient and caregiver privacy in accordance with rules adopted by the Board.

(f) Each licensee shall obtain and maintain commercial general liability insurance in accordance with rules adopted by the Board. Failure to provide proof of insurance to the Board, as required, may result in revocation of the license.

(g) All licenses may be renewed according to procedures adopted through rulemaking by the Board.

(h) [Repealed.]

Sec. 9. 7 V.S.A. § 904 is amended to read:

§ 904. CULTIVATOR LICENSE

* * *

(d) Each cultivator shall create packaging for its cannabis.

(1) Packaging shall include:

(A) The name and registration number of the cultivator.

(B) The strain and variety of cannabis contained.

(C) The potency of the cannabis represented by the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol and cannabidiol in milligrams total and per serving.

(D) A ~~“produced on” date reflecting the date that the cultivator finished producing the cannabis~~ “harvested on” date reflecting the date the cultivator harvested the cannabis and a “packed on” date reflecting the date the product was packaged for sale.

(E) Appropriate warnings as prescribed by the Board in rule.

(F) Any additional requirements contained in rules adopted by the Board in accordance with this chapter. Rules shall take into consideration that different labeling requirements may be appropriate depending on whether the cannabis is sold to a wholesaler, product manufacturer, or retailer.

(2) Packaging shall not be designed to appeal to persons under 21 years of age.

* * *

Sec. 10. 7 V.S.A. § 904b is amended to read:

§ 904b. PROPAGATION CULTIVATOR LICENSE

(a) A propagation cultivator licensed under this section may:

(1) cultivate not more than 3,500 square feet of cannabis clones, immature cannabis plants, or mature cannabis plants;

(2) test, transport, and sell cannabis clones and immature cannabis plants to licensed cultivators and retailers; and

(3) test, transport, and sell cannabis seeds that meet the federal definition of hemp to a licensed cultivator or retailer or to the public.

(b) A licensed propagation cultivator shall not cultivate mature cannabis plants for the purpose of producing, harvesting, transferring, or selling cannabis flower for or to any person.

Sec. 11. 7 V.S.A. § 904c is added to read:

§ 904c. TRIM AND HARVEST SERVICE LICENSE

A trim and harvest service licensed under this section may contract with cultivators licensed under section 904 or 904a of this chapter, on a seasonal or temporary basis, to supply specified cannabis maintenance services within the scope of each client-cultivator’s license.

Sec. 12. 7 V.S.A. § 910 is amended to read:

§ 910. CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENT FEE SCHEDULE

The following fees shall apply to each person or product licensed by the Board:

* * *

(8) Trim and harvest services. Trim and harvest services shall be assessed an annual licensing fee of \$500.00.

(9) Employees. Cannabis establishments licensed by the Board shall be assessed an annual licensing fee of \$50.00 for each employee. The Board shall offer one-year and two-year employee licenses.

~~(9)~~(10) Products. Cannabis establishments licensed by the Board shall be assessed an annual product licensing fee of \$50.00 for every type of cannabis and cannabis product that is sold in accordance with this chapter. The Board may issue longer product registrations, prorated at the same cost per year, for products it deems low risk and shelf stable. Such products may be defined and distinguished in readily accessible published guidance.

~~(10)~~(11) Local licensing fees. Cannabis establishments licensed by the Board shall be assessed an annual local licensing fee of \$100.00 in addition to each fee assessed under subdivisions (1)–(7) of this section. Local licensing fees shall be distributed to the municipality in which the cannabis establishment is located pursuant to section 846(c) of this title.

~~(11)~~(12) One-time fees Application fee.

(A) All applicants for a cannabis establishment license shall be assessed an initial one-time application fee of \$1,000.00.

~~(B) An applicant may choose to be assessed an initial one-time intent to apply fee of \$500.00. If the applicant subsequently seeks a license within one year after paying the intent to apply fee, the initial one-time application fee of \$1,000.00 shall be reduced by \$500.00.~~

Sec. 13. 32 V.S.A. § 3260 is amended to read:

§ 3260. BULK SALES

(a) Whenever a person (transferor) required to collect or withhold a trust tax pursuant to chapter 151, 207, 225, or 233 of this title shall make any sale, transfer, long-term lease, or assignment (transfer) in bulk of any part or the whole of the assets of a business, otherwise than in the ordinary course of the business, the purchaser, transferee or assignee (transferee) shall, at least 10 days before taking possession of the subject of the transfer or before payment

therefore if earlier, notify the Commissioner in writing of the proposed sale and of the price, terms, and conditions thereof whether or not the transferor has represented to or informed the transferee that the transferor owes any trust tax pursuant to chapter 151, 207, 225, or 233 and whether or not the transferee has knowledge that such taxes are owed, and whether any taxes are in fact owed.

(b) Whenever the transferee shall fail to give notice to the Commissioner as required by subsection (a) of this section, or whenever the Commissioner shall inform the transferee that a possible claim for tax exists, any sums of money, property, or choses in action, or other consideration, which the transferee is required to transfer over to or for the transferor, shall be subject to a first priority right and lien for any taxes theretofore or thereafter determined to be due from the transferor to the State, and the transferee is forbidden to transfer the consideration to or for the transferor to the extent of the amount of the State's claim.

(c) For failure to comply with this section, the transferee shall be personally liable for the payment to the State of any taxes theretofore or thereafter determined to be due to the State from the transferor and the liability may be assessed and enforced in the same manner as the liability for tax under chapter 151, 207, 225, or 233.

* * *

Sec. 14. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 164, Sec. 6d, as amended by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 90, is further amended to read:

Sec. 6d. [Deleted.]

Sec. 15. CANNABIS CONTROL BOARD; ENFORCEMENT ATTORNEY;
POSITION

One full-time, permanent, exempt position of Enforcement Attorney is authorized in the Cannabis Control Board in fiscal year 2026.

Sec. 16. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Rep. Higley of Lowell, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and when further amended by adding a new section to be Sec. 13a to read as follows:

Sec. 13a. 32 V.S.A. § 7702 is amended to read:

§ 7702. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter unless the context otherwise requires:

* * *

(15) “Other tobacco products” means any product manufactured from, derived from, or containing tobacco or nicotine, whether natural or synthetic, and including nicotine alkaloids and nicotine analogs, that is intended for human consumption by smoking, chewing, or in any other manner, including products sold as a tobacco substitute, as defined in 7 V.S.A. § 1001(8), and including any liquids, whether nicotine based or not, or delivery devices sold separately for use with a tobacco substitute, but shall not include cigarettes, little cigars, roll-your-own tobacco, snuff, new smokeless tobacco as defined in this section, or cannabis products as defined in 7 V.S.A. § 831.

* * *

(20) “New smokeless tobacco” means any tobacco product manufactured from, derived from, or containing tobacco or nicotine, whether natural or synthetic, including nicotine alkaloids and nicotine analogs, that is not intended to be smoked, has a moisture content of less than 45 percent, or is offered in individual single-dose tablets or other discrete single-use units.

* * *

Rep. Nigro of Bennington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and when further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Government Operations Military Affairs agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, **Rep. Higley of Lowell** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Ways and Means in Sec. 13a, 32 V.S.A. § 7702, in subdivision (15), after “synthetic,” by striking “and”

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 484

Rep. Nelson of Derby spoke for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

Rep. Masland of Thetford, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading; Consideration
Interrupted; Third Reading Ordered**

H. 489

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury spoke for the Committee on Appropriations.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

At ten o'clock and fifty-one minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

At eleven o'clock and twenty-five minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 91. Nays, 55.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston
Austin of Colchester
Bartholomew of Hartland
Berbeco of Winooski

Durfee of Shaftsbury
Eastes of Guilford
Emmons of Springfield
Garofano of Essex

Mihaly of Calais
Minier of South Burlington
Morris of Springfield
Morrow of Weston

Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster *	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Pezzo of Colchester
Burke of Brattleboro	Hooper of Burlington	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Houghton of Essex Junction*	Priestley of Bradford
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hunter of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph *
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham *	James of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier *	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sheldon of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Sibilia of Dover
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Squirrell of Underhill
Cole of Hartford	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury *
Conlon of Cornwall	Lalley of Shelburne	Stone of Burlington *
Cooper of Pownal	LaLonde of South Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard *
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown *	Sweeney of Shelburne *
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington *	Tomlinson of Winooski
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	Torre of Moretown
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	Waszazak of Barre City
Dolan of Essex Junction *	McFaun of Barre Town	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Donahue of Northfield *	McGill of Bridport	White of Waitsfield
Duke of Burlington		White of Bethel
		Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nelson of Derby
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nielsen of Brandon
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Branagan of Georgia	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Burditt of West Rutland	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Burt of Cabot	Kascenska of Burke	Pinsonault of Dorset
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Powers of Waterford
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Pritchard of Pawlet
Charlton of Chester	Laroche of Franklin	Quimby of Lyndon
Coffin of Cavendish	Lipsky of Stowe	Southworth of Walden
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Steady of Milton
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Malay of Pittsford	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Marcotte of Coventry	Taylor of Milton *
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney *	Toof of St. Albans Town
Feltus of Lyndon	Micklus of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Galfetti of Barre Town *	Morgan, L. of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, M. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
	Morrissey of Bennington	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Christie of Hartford

Maguire of Rutland City

McCann of Montpelier

Rep. Bos-Lun of Westminster provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Carris-Duncan of Whitingham provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes on this bill because this could be anybody. It could be any of us. Given the current state of our economy, this could be any of us. We could lose our job, our business could dry up, and we could find ourselves without homes.”

Rep. Casey of Montpelier provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Government’s job is to help people – but if we can’t do that, we shouldn’t hurt them. They don’t give grades for a civilized society, but when we toss children and disabled Vermonters on the street, we deserve an ‘F.’ Take the humanity out of it and this is just a cost shift – send the bill to Montpelier, we’ll do our best to make sure people don’t die on our streets.”

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Donahue of Northfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes reluctantly but want to state clearly on the record that this has never been about denying shelter to those in need. It is about who is denied shelter given inadequate capacity – without distinguishing among who is at

greatest need. We need a better path to support all those who find themselves without safe shelter.”

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

With no prioritized qualifications in the program, many of our most vulnerable Vermonters will remain unhoused. This budget adjustment proposal highlights the unwillingness of the majority to embrace true compromise and bodes poorly for this legislative session, addressing the problems Vermonters sent us to solve.”

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. LaMont of Morristown provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Humans are not disposable. I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Logan of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

The Governor’s compromise position would force a thousand vulnerable Vermonters into unsheltered homelessness, by making some groups ineligible for emergency housing. His compromise is untenable and unconscionable.”

Rep. McCoy of Poultney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

The General Assistance Housing Program, as passed last year by the Legislature, does not end on April 1. I am hopeful that when we return to this Chamber on Tuesday, prior to third reading, that there will be an agreement reached on the Budget Adjustment.”

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being—it means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Stevens of Waterbury provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

When does 99.9% agreement not constitute a compromise? Choosing to veto a bill that denies one small segment of our population the privilege of sleeping in a bed within a room of four walls and a roof, especially with no new appropriation, is the utmost in arrogance. Putting numbers above people again is inhumane. Stubbornness in adherence to a principle that puts peoples’ lives at risk is unfortunately a mood and not a policy, and it harms far more than those currently in these hotels.”

Rep. Stone of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being—it means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Surprenant of Barnard provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Sweeney of Shelburne provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to center people over politics. We implore the Governor to join us in doing the same. Fiscal responsibility and strong leadership doesn’t mean making our most vulnerable pay the price with their safety and well-being. It means stepping up when it counts.”

Rep. Taylor of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted no today with the hope that negotiations will continue, and I can be a yes for third reading.”

Message from the Senate No. 29

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 23. An act relating to the use of synthetic media in elections.

S. 27. An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports.

S. 51. An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit.

S. 59. An act relating to amendments to Vermont’s Open Meeting Law.

S. 60. An act relating to establishing the Farm Security Special Fund to provide grants for farm losses due to weather conditions.

S. 109. An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures.

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

The Senate has adopted a proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution entitled:

Prop 3. Declaration of Rights; right to collectively bargain.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate adopted Senate resolution of the following title:

S.R. 10. Senate resolution relating to the disapproval of Executive Order 01-25.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 53. House concurrent resolution honoring Megan Humphrey for her outstanding leadership of HANDS.

H.C.R. 54. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative, Governor, and Interim University of Vermont President Thomas Paul Salmon.

H.C.R. 55. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont.

H.C.R. 56. House concurrent resolution designating April 18, 2025 as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 57. House concurrent resolution recognizing March 25, 2025 as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 58. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 18, 2025 as Electric Utility Lineworker Appreciation Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 59. House concurrent resolution honoring Linda C. Johnson for her outstanding State and national contributions to the prevention of child abuse.

H.C.R. 60. House concurrent resolution designating March 25, 2025 as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 61. House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Athletic Training Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 62. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College.

Adjournment

At twelve o'clock and eight minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 18.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 53

House concurrent resolution honoring Megan Humphrey for her outstanding leadership of HANDS

H.C.R. 54

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative, Governor, and Interim University of Vermont President Thomas Paul Salmon

H.C.R. 55

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont

H.C.R. 56

House concurrent resolution designating April 18, 2025 as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 57

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 25, 2025 as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 58

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 18, 2025 as Electric Utility Lineworker Appreciation Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 59

House concurrent resolution honoring Linda C. Johnson for her outstanding State and national contributions to the prevention of child abuse

H.C.R. 60

House concurrent resolution designating March 25, 2025 as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Day at the State House

H.C.R. 61

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Athletic Training Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 62

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. John O'Brien of Tunbridge.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Heidi S. Thompson of Reading led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 491

By the Committee on Ways and Means,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to setting the homestead property tax yields and the nonhomestead property tax rate

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 492

By Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to animal cruelty crimes and penalties

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 493

By the Committee on Appropriations,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution Referred to Committee**Proposal 3**

Subject: Declaration of Rights; right to collectively bargain

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to provide that the citizens of the State have a right to collectively bargain.

Sec. 2. Article 23 of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is added to read:

Article 23. [Right to collectively bargain]

That employees have a right to organize or join a labor organization for the purpose of collectively bargaining with their employer through an exclusive representative of their choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions and to protect their economic welfare and safety in the workplace. Therefore, no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to collectively bargain with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, or that prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization representing the employer's employees that requires membership in the labor organization as a condition of employment.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

The amendment set forth in this proposal shall become a part of the Constitution of the State of Vermont on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2026 when ratified and adopted by the people of this State in accordance with the provisions of 17 V.S.A. chapter 32.

Was referred to the Committee on General and Housing.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 23

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the use of synthetic media in elections

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

S. 27

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 51

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

S. 59

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to amendments to Vermont's Open Meeting Law

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

S. 60

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Farm Security Special Fund to provide grants for farm losses due to weather conditions

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

S. 109

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

To the Committee on Judiciary.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 27**

Offered by Representative Carris-Duncan of Whitingham

House concurrent resolution honoring Joan W. Coursier for her exemplary community service devising and leading the Halifax senior meal program

Whereas, serving hot and nutritious meals to senior citizens benefits them both physically and emotionally by giving them high-quality nourishment and companionship, even for a brief period of time, and

Whereas, a quarter of a century ago, in the Town of Halifax, Joan Coursier, an outstanding cook and deeply caring human being, identified the need for a senior meal program in the community, and

Whereas, Joan Coursier established a senior meal service that provided the recipients with both food and a sense of belonging to the community, and

Whereas, she has performed multiple roles in this endeavor, including provisioning, preparing, and serving food, and Joan Coursier's superb cooking enhanced the program's quality and reputation, and

Whereas, her devotion to this project has continued unabated, greatly benefiting the appreciative Halifax community, and

Whereas, on March 21, 2025, Joan Coursier is concluding her service in this unique and personally created position, and she will be celebrated at a festive thank-you gathering, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Joan W. Coursier for her exemplary community service devising and leading the Halifax senior meal program, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Joan Coursier.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 50

Offered by Representative Cordes of Bristol

House concurrent resolution recognizing the unique role of certified registered nurse anesthetists in the Vermont health care system

Whereas, nurses have provided anesthesia to patients for over 150 years, and

Whereas, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), also known as nurse anesthetists, were originally designated in 1956, and they are advanced practice registered nurses who are among the nation's most trusted health care professionals, and

Whereas, nationally, nearly 74,000 CRNAs practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered, including traditional hospital surgical suites; obstetrical delivery rooms; ambulatory surgical centers; and at the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, and pain management specialists, and

Whereas, in Pub. L. 99-509 § 9320, Congress extended Medicare coverage to CRNA services, and

Whereas, CRNAs are primary anesthesia providers in rural and underserved communities and for U.S. military personnel, and

Whereas, based on their formal education, field training, board certification, and State licensure, these health care professionals are qualified to make independent judgements regarding a broad scope of anesthesia care, and

Whereas, CRNAs are trusted anesthesia experts, caring for patients safely and compassionately, delivering specialized, cost-effective care to all patients—from newborns to seniors—for every type of procedure in all kinds of facilities, and

Whereas, in addition to anesthesia care, CRNAs are qualified to address the unique health care challenges of some of our sickest patients, including veterans, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes the unique role of certified registered nurse anesthetists in the Vermont health care system, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 14, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 57

Offered by Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs

Offered by Senators Clarkson, Major, and White

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 25, 2025 as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont

Whereas, on December 21, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed Public Resolution 82, the original Medal of Honor legislation, providing for a Navy Medal of Valor, which Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa had introduced, and in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln extended its eligibility to U.S. Army personnel, and

Whereas, the first recipients of the Medal of Honor were a group of soldiers known as Andrews' Raiders, who led a daunting mission to cross Confederate lines and steal a train, and six of those soldiers were honored on March 25, 1863, and

Whereas, during the Civil War, approximately 60 Vermonters were Medal of Honor recipients, and

Whereas, the most unusual recipient was Willie Johnston, a young resident of the Northeast Kingdom community of Salem, now Derby, who, despite being only 11 years of age when he enlisted, was accepted as a drummer in Company D of the 3rd Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and

Whereas, during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, when Union forces failed to invade the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, and were forced to flee down the Virginia peninsula, young Johnston proved to be the only drummer in his division to retain his instrument through the harrowing ordeal, and

Whereas, on September 16, 1863, when Willie Johnston was only 13 years of age, U.S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton presented him with this special medal, and he remains the youngest recipient to this day, and

Whereas, other Vermonters have been awarded the Medal of Honor for their military valor, including during the Indian Wars (1), the Philippines Campaign (1), interim periods (2), World War II (3), and the Vietnam War (1), and

Whereas, Congress established National Medal of Honor Day, which was first observed in 1991, “to foster public appreciation and recognition of Medal of Honor recipients,” *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes March 25, 2025 as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to provide a copy of this resolution to the Green Mountain Base Submarine Veterans; to Robert Burke, Director of the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs; and to Richard Lorenz, the President of the Vermont National Guard Library and Museum.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 60

Offered by All Members of the House

Offered by Senators Lyons and Gulick

House concurrent resolution designating March 25, 2025 as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Day at the State House

Whereas, all Vermonters, regardless of any disability they may have, desire to receive the highest attainable quality of health care, including support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and

Whereas, Sec. 1 of the Developmental Disabilities Act (1996 Acts and Resolves No. 174, codified as 18 V.S.A. § 8721) provides that individuals with a developmental disability are entitled to: a safe living environment; respect and dignity; residency in a home of their choice; the opportunity to make life-affecting decisions; attend neighborhood schools, be employed, and participate in activities, subject to the provisions of federal special education laws; and to have access to broadly available community support and services, and

Whereas, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities seek access to the necessary resources to lead full, independent, and dignified lives within the community, and they expect that all of these services will be delivered with the same degree of expertise and financial support as equivalent services for those who do not live with an intellectual or developmental disability, and

Whereas, today, March 25, 2025, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their advocates are visiting the State House to inform the General Assembly of their concerns regarding the provision of these State services that are critical to their health and well-being, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates March 25, 2025 as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the intellectual and developmental disabilities advocacy organizations present today in the State House.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 342

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. Marcotte of Coventry**, action on the bill was postponed until March 27, 2025.

**Committee Bill; Second Reading; Amendment Offered;
Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**

H. 474

Rep. Waters Evans of Charlotte spoke for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Reps. Sibilia of Dover, Donahue of Northfield, Headrick of Burlington, and Lipsky of Stowe** moved to amend the bill by adding a reader assistance heading and a new section to be Secs. 5a to read as follows:

* * * Independent Candidate Filing Deadline * * *

Sec. 5a. 17 V.S.A. § 2402 is amended to read:

§ 2402. REQUISITES OF STATEMENT

* * *

(d)(1) A statement of nomination and a completed and signed consent form shall be filed:

* * *

(C) in the case of any other independent candidate, not earlier than the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~Thursday preceding~~ fourteenth day following the primary election prescribed by section 2351 of this chapter, and not later than 5:00 p.m. of the ~~third day prior to~~ fourteenth day following the day of a special primary election.

* * *

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Sibilia of Dover and others?, **Rep. Sibilia of Dover** requested that the vote be by division. Pending the taking of the vote by division, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Sibilia of Dover and others?, was decided in the negative. Yeas, 36. Nays, 107.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Burditt of West Rutland	Greer of Bennington	Morgan, L. of Milton
Burrows of West Windsor	Headrick of Burlington	Morrissey of Bennington
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Higley of Lowell	Nelson of Derby
Chapin of East Montpelier	Labor of Morgan	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Cina of Burlington	LaMont of Morristown	Parsons of Newbury
Cooper of Pownal	Laroche of Franklin	Pouech of Hinesburg
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Lipsky of Stowe	Sibilia of Dover
Donahue of Northfield	Logan of Burlington	Southworth of Walden
Duke of Burlington *	Luneau of St. Albans City	Taylor of Milton
Eastes of Guilford	Marcotte of Coventry	Tomlinson of Winooski
Feltus of Lyndon	McCann of Montpelier	Yacovone of Morristown
Galfetti of Barre Town	McGill of Bridport	
	Micklus of Milton	

Those who voted in the negative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Minier of South Burlington
Austin of Colchester	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Morgan, M. of Milton
Bailey of Hyde Park	Emmons of Springfield	Morris of Springfield
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Morrow of Weston
Bartley of Fairfax	Goldman of Rockingham	Nielsen of Brandon
Berbeco of Winooski	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Birong of Vergennes	Goslant of Northfield	North of Ferrisburgh
Bishop of Colchester	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Black of Essex	Gregoire of Fairfield *	Nugent of South Burlington
Bluemle of Burlington	Hango of Berkshire *	Ode of Burlington
Bosch of Clarendon	Harple of Glover	Olson of Starksboro
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harrison of Chittenden	Page of Newport City
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	Pezzo of Colchester
Boyden of Cambridge	Holcombe of Norwich	Pinsonault of Dorset
Brady of Williston	Hooper of Randolph	Powers of Waterford
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pritchard of Pawlet
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Quimby of Lyndon
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howland of Rutland Town	Rachelson of Burlington
Burt of Cabot	Hunter of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	James of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Kascenska of Burke	Sheldon of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Keyser of Rutland City	Squirrell of Underhill
Casey of Hubbardton	Kimbell of Woodstock	Steady of Milton
Charlton of Chester	Kleppner of Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Coffin of Cavendish	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stone of Burlington
Cole of Hartford	Krasnow of South Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	Lalley of Shelburne	Sweeney of Shelburne
Corcoran of Bennington	LaLonde of South Burlington	Tagliavia of Corinth
Cordes of Bristol	Long of Newfane	Toof of St. Albans Town
Critchlow of Colchester	Malay of Pittsford	Torre of Moretown
Demar of Enosburgh		Waszazak of Barre City
		Waters Evans of Charlotte

Dickinson of St. Albans	Masland of Thetford	White of Waitsfield
Town	McCoy of Poultney	White of Bethel
Dodge of Essex	McFaun of Barre Town	Winter of Ludlow
Dolan of Essex Junction	Mihaly of Calais	Wood of Waterbury

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Christie of Hartford	Mrowicki of Putney	Walker of Swanton
Maguire of Rutland City	Oliver of Sheldon	Wells of Brownington

Rep. Duke of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I’m voting yes because our current system of low turnout primaries and fusion candidates increases campaign tactics that can undermine the representation of the majority of voters.”

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I agree with the principle but not the deadline chosen.”

Rep. Hango of Berkshire provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I was hopeful that an agreeable date could have been negotiated ahead of this vote, but it was not.”

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Reps. McCoy of Poultney, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Higley of Lowell** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 2, 17 V.S.A. § 2381, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

Second: By striking out Sec. 3, 17 V.S.A. § 2386, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 3 to read as follows:

Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 9, 17 V.S.A. § 2370, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 9 to read as follows:

Sec. 9. 17 V.S.A. § 2370 is amended to read:

§ 2370. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES

(a) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(b) A write-in candidate shall not qualify as a primary winner unless ~~he or she~~ the candidate receives at least one-half the same number of votes as the number of signatures required for ~~his or her~~ the candidate's office on a primary petition, except that if a write-in candidate receives more votes than a candidate whose name is printed on the ballot, ~~he or she may~~ the write-in candidate shall qualify as a primary winner. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subsection (a) shall qualify as a primary winner if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this subsection.

~~(b)(c)~~ The write-in candidate who qualifies as a primary winner under this section must still be determined a winner under section 2369 of this chapter before ~~he or she~~ the candidate becomes the party's candidate in the general election.

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 10, 17 V.S.A. § 2472, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 10 to read as follows:

Sec. 10. 17 V.S.A. § 2472 is amended to read:

§ 2472. CONTENTS

* * *

(b)(1) Each office to be voted upon shall be separately indicated and preceded by the word "For," as: "For United States Senator." Beneath the office to be voted upon shall appear the instructions: "Vote for not more than (the number of candidates to be elected)."

* * *

(5)(A) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the

primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State's design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate's applicable district or the Secretary of State's Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (A) of this subdivision (5), a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subdivision (A) shall qualify as the winner of an election if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this chapter.

* * *

Fifth: By striking out Sec. 11, 17 V.S.A. § 2587, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 11 to read as follows:

Sec. 11. 17 V.S.A. § 2587 is amended to read:

§ 2587. RULES FOR COUNTING VOTES

* * *

(e)(1) In the case of "write-in" votes, the act of writing in the name of a candidate, or pasting a label containing a candidate's name upon the ballot, without other indications of the voter's intent, shall constitute a vote for that candidate, even though the voter did not fill in the square or oval after the name.

(2) A vote for a write-in candidate shall be counted as a write-in vote that is without requisite filings unless the write-in candidate filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title. The clerk shall record the name and vote totals of a write-in candidate who has complied with this section.

(3)(A) The election officials counting ballots and tallying results shall list every person who receives a "write-in" vote and the number of votes received only the names and votes received of those write-in candidates who filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title. Any write-in votes for candidates who have not filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title shall be listed as "other write-ins."

(A)(B) On each tally sheet, the counters shall add together the names of candidates that are clearly the same person, even though a nickname or last name is used.

~~(B)(C)~~ Names of ~~fictitious or deceased~~ persons who have not filed in accordance with section 2370, 2472, or 2702 of this title shall not be listed individually and shall be recorded on the tally sheet as a blank vote in aggregate as “other write-ins.”

(f) When the same number of persons are nominated for the position of justice of the peace as there are positions to be filled, the presiding officer may declare the whole slate of candidates elected without making individual tallies, providing each person on the slate has more votes than the largest number of write-in votes for any one registered write-in candidate.

Sixth: By striking out Sec. 12, 17 V.S.A. § 2702, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 12 to read as follows:

Sec. 12. 17 V.S.A. § 2702 is amended to read:

§ 2702. NOMINATING PETITION

(a) The name of any person shall be printed upon the primary ballot as a candidate for nomination by any major political party if petitions signed by at least 1,000 voters in accordance with sections 2353, 2354, and 2358 of this title are filed with the Secretary of State, together with the written consent of the person to the printing of the person’s name on the ballot.

(b) Petitions shall be filed not later than 5:00 p.m. on the 15th day of December preceding the primary election.

(c) The petition shall be in a form prescribed by the Secretary of State.

(d) A person’s name shall not be listed as a candidate on the primary ballot of more than one party in the same election.

(e) Each petition shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$2,000.00 to be paid to the Secretary of State. However, if the petition of a candidate is accompanied by the affidavit of the candidate, which shall be available for public inspection, that the candidate and the candidate’s campaign committee are without sufficient funds to pay the filing fee, the Secretary of State shall waive all but \$300.00 of the payment of the filing fee by that candidate.

(f)(1) In order to have votes listed for a write-in candidate under subdivision 2587 of this title, not later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election, a write-in candidate for the General Assembly, any State office, or any federal office shall complete a form of the Secretary of State’s design affirming that the candidate wants to have received votes listed under subdivision 2587(e)(3) of this title. The candidate shall file the form with either all town clerks within the candidate’s applicable district or the Secretary of State’s Office in an electronic manner approved by the Secretary. The

Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate town clerks of any filings made in accordance with this subsection as soon as practicable.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, a candidate who has not filed in accordance with subdivision (1) shall qualify as the winner of an election if the candidate otherwise complies with the provisions of this chapter.

Seventh: By striking out Sec. 13, 17 V.S.A. § 2921, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 13 to read as follows:

Sec. 13. 17 V.S.A. § 2921 is amended to read:

§ 2921. CANDIDATES; REGISTRATION; CHECKING ACCOUNT;
TREASURER

~~(a)(1) Each candidate who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more in an election cycle~~ files a consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot, as provided in section 2361 of this title, shall register with the Secretary of State within 10 days of reaching the \$500.00 threshold or on the date that the next report is required of the candidate under this chapter, whichever occurs first, prior to filing the consent stating his or her the candidate's full name and address, and the office the candidate is seeking.

(2) Each candidate who accepts or expends any campaign funds shall file with the Secretary of State at the time of expending the funds the name and address of the bank in which the candidate maintains his or her the campaign checking account; and the name and address of the treasurer responsible for maintaining the checking account. A candidate's treasurer may be the candidate or his or her the candidate's spouse.

* * *

Eighth: By striking out Sec. 14, 17 V.S.A. § 2964, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 14 to read as follows:

Sec. 14. 17 V.S.A. § 2964 is amended to read:

§ 2964. CAMPAIGN REPORTS; CANDIDATES FOR STATE OFFICE,
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND COUNTY OFFICE;
POLITICAL COMMITTEES; POLITICAL PARTIES

(a)(1) Each candidate for State office, the General Assembly, or a two-year-term county office who has rolled over any amount of surplus into his or her new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more during the two-year general election cycle and, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political committee that has not

~~filed a final report pursuant to subsection 2965(b) of this chapter, and each political party required to register under section 2923 of this chapter shall file with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:~~

* * *

(2) Each candidate for a four-year-term county office ~~who has rolled over any amount of surplus into his or her new campaign or who has made expenditures or accepted contributions of \$500.00 or more during the four-year general election cycle~~ shall file with the Secretary of State campaign finance reports as follows:

* * *

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

Bill Committed

H. 483

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the expansion of existing income tax credits

Was taken up and, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock**, the bill was committed to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Committed

H. 141

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up, and pending the question, Shall the bill pass, notwithstanding the Governor's refusal to approve the bill?, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction**, moved to commit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, which was agreed to.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 10

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 319**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous environmental subjects

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 9, Solid Waste Plan; flexibility, in subdivision (a)(2), after the semicolon, by inserting the word “or”

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 321

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

H. 484

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

H. 489

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 237**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

Was taken up and, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. McFaun of Barre Town**, action on the bill was postponed until March 26, 2025.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 401**

Rep. Burt of Cabot, for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) Vermont enhance its food resiliency through increased supply and distribution of locally produced food products;

(2) Vermonters have more access to the local food marketplace as both producers and consumers;

(3) local food producers are able to meet the demand for Vermont-made food products from visitors to the State;

(4) small-scale food producers, new business start-ups, and sole proprietors benefit from raising the limit of the existing licensing exemption for at-home bakery products to adjust for inflationary cost changes occurring since the initial statutory enactment; and

(5) supply-chain costs and inflationary considerations be addressed to bring risk management thresholds more in line with the economic conditions at the time of initial statutory enactment.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 4353 is amended to read:

§ 4353. FEES

(a) The Commissioner may establish by rule any requirement the Department needs to determine the applicable categories or exemptions for licenses. The following license fees shall be paid annually to the Department at the time of making the application according to the following schedules:

* * *

(3) Food manufacturing establishment — a fee for any person or persons that process food for resale to restaurants, stores, or individuals according to the following schedule:

(A) Food manufacturing establishments; nonbakeries

I ——— Gross receipts of \$10,001.00 to \$50,000.00; \$175.00

- H I — Gross receipts of over ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$30,000.00;
\$275.00
- II — Nonhome-operated food service establishment
with gross receipts of \$30,000.00 or less;
\$175.00
- III — ~~Gross~~ Home-operated food service establishment
with gross receipts of ~~\$10,000.00~~ \$30,000.00 or less
are exempt pursuant to section 4358 of this title

(B) Food manufacturing establishment; bakeries

- I — Home bakery with gross receipts over \$30,000.00;
\$100.00
- II — Small commercial; \$200.00
- III — Large commercial; \$350.00
- IV — Nonhome-operated bakery with gross receipts of
\$30,000.00 or less; \$50.00
- V — Home-operated bakery with gross receipts of
\$30,000.00 or less are exempt pursuant to section
4358 of this title

* * *

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 4358 is amended to read:

§ 4358. EXEMPTIONS

* * *

(b) ~~The provisions of licensure requirements and related licensure fees in this subchapter shall not apply to an individual manufacturing and selling bakery products from his or her own home kitchen~~ a food manufacturing establishment operating from a home kitchen whose average gross retail sales do not exceed \$125.00 per week are less than or equal to \$30,000.00 per year.

* * *

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Masland of Thetford, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Speaker presiding

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 481

Rep. Logan of Burlington spoke for the Committee on Environment.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stormwater management

Rep. Ode Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Rep. Squirrel of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended by striking out Sec. 8 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 8 to read as follows:

Sec. 8. RECOMMENDED APPROPRIATION

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Clean Water Board shall recommend \$5,000,000.00 from the Clean Water Fund in fiscal year 2027 to the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Program in 10 V.S.A. § 928 for costs of complying with permitting requirements under 10 V.S.A. § 1264(c)(7), including for residential subdivisions when the municipality assumes full legal responsibility for the stormwater system.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Appropriations agreed to, and third reading was ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 30

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 19. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 28, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At twelve o'clock and forty minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Deborah Velto and the Kurn Hattin School singers of Westminster.

**Committee Bill Introduced;
Referred to Committee on Appropriations****H. 494**

By the Committee on Corrections and Institutions,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to capital construction and State bonding

Was read the first time and, pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

House Resolution Placed on Calendar**H.R. 7**

Offered by Representatives Graning of Jericho, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Brady of Williston, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Conlon of Cornwall, Cooper of Pownal, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Duke of Burlington, Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Holcombe of Norwich, Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, Krowinski of Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Marcotte of Coventry, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, Micklus of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrow of Weston, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Quimby of Lyndon, Rachelson of Burlington, Sibilia of Dover, Stone of Burlington, Sweeney of Shelburne, Waters Evans of Charlotte, Wells of Brownington, and White of Bethel

House resolution reaffirming the friendship between the State of Vermont and Taiwan and supporting enhanced Vermont-Taiwan bilateral relations and Taiwan's participation in international organizations

Whereas, the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan) share a vibrant, mutually beneficial bilateral relationship based on our common values of freedom and a free-market economy, and the relationship is as strong as it has ever been, and

Whereas, the January 2024 election of Dr. Lai Ching-te as the President of Taiwan demonstrates the vibrancy of Taiwan's democracy, and

Whereas, the United States is Taiwan's second-largest trading partner and Taiwan is the United States' seventh-largest trading partner; in 2024, the two-way trade in goods between the United States and Taiwan totaled in excess of \$157 billion; and the United States is also the largest supplier of agricultural products to Taiwan, and

Whereas, in 2022, the United States and Taiwan launched, and in 2023 signed, the U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade, which, in part, "is intended to develop concrete ways to deepen the economic and trade relationship," and the first agreement under the Initiative became effective in December 2024, and

Whereas, Taiwan is the second-largest export destination for Vermont goods, worth approximately \$254 million, and Vermont imported an estimated \$55.3 million in goods from Taiwan, and

Whereas, the Government of Taiwan has expressed a desire to reach an avoidance of double taxation agreement with the United States, which could increase Vermont's exports to Taiwan, bilateral investment, and jobs in Vermont, and

Whereas, Vermont and Taiwan have enjoyed a long history of productive bilateral relations, including entering into a driver's license reciprocity agreement in 2020, and the Government of Taiwan desires to establish a memorandum of understanding with the State of Vermont to further increase educational exchanges and cooperation, and

Whereas, United States policy toward Taiwan is not based on United Nations Resolution 2758 of 1971, but rather the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, which "provides for the continued membership of the people on Taiwan in any international financial institution or any other international organization," and

Whereas, Taiwan's participation and contributions in international organizations, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would greatly benefit both the United States and the international community, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body reaffirms the friendship between the State of Vermont and Taiwan and supports enhanced Vermont-Taiwan bilateral relations and Taiwan's participation in international organizations, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Donald J. Trump, President Lai Ching-te of the Republic of China (Taiwan), Director-General Charles Liao of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston, Governor Philip B. Scott, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Was read by title and placed on the Action Calendar on the next legislative day pursuant to House Rule 52.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence

J.R.S. 19

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 19. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 28, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, March 28, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 61**

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Boyden of Cambridge, Branagan of Georgia, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Donahue of Northfield, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Lipsky of Stowe, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, Noyes of Wolcott, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Sibilia of Dover, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Walker of Swanton, and Wells of Brownington

Offered by Senators Collamore, Ingalls, Mattos, Norris, and Vyhovsky

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 2025 as National Athletic Training Month in Vermont

Whereas, the general public might narrowly perceive athletic trainers to be individuals who rush onto a sports field or indoor playing arena when a team member, be it high school, college, or professional, is injured during the course of a game, and

Whereas, although that is their most visible role, in reality, athletic trainers have a long history of providing professional quality health care for athletes and other individuals who are engaged in regular physical activity, and

Whereas, athletic trainers are health care professionals “who specialize in immediate, acute, and emergency care; examination, assessment, and diagnosis; injury prevention; risk management; therapeutic intervention; and rehabilitation of injury and illness,” and

Whereas, professional, collegiate, and high school teams; private industries; physician offices; rehabilitation clinics; and every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces employ athletic trainers, and they work collaboratively to promote and practice the profession of athletic training, nationally and within the State of Vermont, and

Whereas, in 1982, these health care professionals, who in 2025 number over 135 in our State, organized as the Vermont Association of Athletic Trainers (VAAT), which is dedicated to the education of its members and the enhancement of the profession of athletic training, for the healthcare benefit of all Vermonters, and

Whereas, VAAT is affiliated with the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), which represents and supports more than 45,000 members nationwide, and NATA has established March as National Athletic Training Month, and

Whereas, the General Assembly has recognized the role of athletic trainers as health care professionals, and it enacted 1998 Acts and Resolves No. 108 as amended (codified as 26 V.S.A. chapter 83) providing for the licensure of athletic trainers, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes March 2025 as National Athletic Training Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Association of Athletic Trainers.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Recess for House Caucus of the Whole

At one o'clock and twenty-five minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel in order for the House to hold a Caucus of the Whole on the Budget and Education.

Called to Order

At two o'clock and twenty-seven minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 244

Rep. Waters Evans of Charlotte, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 29 V.S.A. § 902(a) is amended to read:

(a) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract for and make all purchases, including all fuel, supplies, materials, and equipment, for all departments, offices, institutions, and other agencies of the State and counties. However, ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner may delegate authority to those governmental agencies to purchase directly individually approved types and classes of items when the interests of the State are best served thereby, provided that any such delegated authority shall be subject to the same limitations set forth in subsections 910(a)–(c) of this subchapter as apply to the Commissioner. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner shall also contract for and purchase materials for the repair and for the construction and equipment of new buildings to be erected by the State, unless otherwise provided. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner may purchase such supplies, materials, and equipment as are requisitioned by the supervisors of the natural resources conservation districts. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner may also cooperate with and advise officials of any political subdivision of the State or any institution of higher education chartered in Vermont and accredited or holding a certificate of approval from the State Board of Education in their purchase of any of the supplies, materials, and equipment needed by the political subdivision or institution of higher education, and may act as the agent of the political subdivision at the request of the authorized officials or agent thereof in the purchase of supplies, materials, and equipment.

Sec. 2. 29 V.S.A. § 910 is added to read:

§ 910. STATE CONTRACTS FOR ADVERTISING

(a) When contracting for print or digital advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local news organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the print or digital advertising services.

(b) When contracting for radio or television advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local broadcast organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the radio or television advertising services.

(c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services may exclude from the total annual value of advertising services any advertisement focused on tourism and any employment search or job posting.

(d) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall maintain a list of local news organizations and local broadcast organizations.

(e) As used in this section:

(1) "Local broadcast organization" means an organization licensed to broadcast in the State by the Federal Communications Commission.

(2) "Local news organization" means an organization that:

(A) engages professionals to create, edit, produce, and distribute original content concerning matters of public interest through reporting activities;

(B) employs a full-time employee who dedicates at least 30 hours a week to providing coverage of an area of the State for dissemination to the local or State community and lives within 50 miles of the coverage area;

(C)(i) has published at least one print publication per month over the previous 12 months and either holds a valid U. S. Postal Service periodical permit or dedicates at least 25 percent of its content to local news; or

(ii) on average over the previous 12 months, has published online at least one piece per week about the local or State community and has at least 33 percent of its online audience in Vermont;

(D) has disclosed in its print publication or on its website its beneficial ownership or, in the case of a nonprofit entity, its board of directors;

(E) in the case of an organization that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3), declares as its stated mission in its filings with the Internal Revenue Service the coverage of local or State news; and

(F) over the previous calendar year did not receive more than 50 percent of its gross receipts from political action committees, other entities described in 26 U.S.C. § 527, or from organizations exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(4), (c)(5), or (c)(6).

Sec. 3. 29 V.S.A. § 911 is added to read:

§ 911. CONTRACTS FOR ADVERTISING; REPORTING

Annually, on or before June 30, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall submit to the General Assembly a report summarizing any advertising services purchased by the State and its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions during the preceding fiscal year, including a summary of the amounts spent by entity on advertising services and where those funds were spent.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 401

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

H. 474

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

H. 481

House bill, entitled

An act relating to stormwater management

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 167**

Rep. Bos-Lun of Westminster, for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Food insecurity in Vermont, and across the country, has increased in recent years after a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) Increased access to produce improves health outcomes for individuals.

(3) For local food purchased from Vermont farms, every dollar spent contributes an additional \$0.60 to the local economy.

(4) Vermont Foodbank has been administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program since 2018, injecting \$9.5 million dollars into the Vermont agricultural economy since 2018 by purchasing over 5.7 million pounds of local food and supporting 299 farms in 2024.

(5) The General Assembly should ensure the continued operation of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program by Vermont Foodbank by establishing a grant program at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to provide ongoing, annual appropriations to the Program.

Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. chapter 207, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program

§ 4631. VERMONTERS FEEDING VERMONTERS GRANT PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section, “local food” has the same meaning as “local” in 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b).

(b) There is created in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program to provide grants to Vermont Foodbank to:

(1) purchase local food directly from Vermont farms to distribute through Vermont Foodbank’s distribution channels; and

(2) offer subgrants to:

(A) Vermont Foodbank’s network partners to buy directly from local farms of all sizes a variety of agricultural commodities and products; and

(B) Vermont Foodbank’s partners that buy directly from local farms of all sizes with a focus on providing culturally preferred foods or local relationships.

(c)(1) The Vermont Foodbank, after consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall report annually on or before March 1 to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on Agriculture regarding implementation and administration of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program. The report shall include:

(A) the total amount of food purchased with grants from the Program;

(B) the total number of farms purchased from;

(C) the total number of sites where food purchased under the Program was distributed; and

(D) if grants from the Program are used to purchase farm shares, the total number of shares.

(2) When the Vermont Foodbank reports under this section, information regarding persons receiving food under the Program shall be provided in a form that does not disclose the identity of the individual persons, households, or businesses from whom the information was obtained or whose characteristics, activities, or products the information is about.

Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

In addition to other funds appropriated in fiscal year 2026, \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to implement the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program established pursuant to 6 V.S.A. § 4631. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets may use up to \$67,500.00 of the appropriation under this section for the purposes of administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Stevens of Waterbury, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry be amended by striking out Sec. 3, appropriation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 3 to read as follows:

Sec. 3. CONTINGENCY ON FUNDING

The duty of the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets to implement Sec. 2 of this act, Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program, is contingent upon an appropriation in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund for the specific purposes described in Sec. 2 of this act.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 218**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Wood of Waterbury**, action on the bill was postponed until March 27, 2025.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 397**

Rep. Birong of Vergennes, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Division of Emergency Management; Plans and Reports * * *

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 3a is amended to read:

§ 3a. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION; DUTIES; BUDGET

(a) In addition to other duties required by law, the Division of Emergency Management shall:

* * *

(3) Annually on or before the last legislative day in January, provide an update and presentation to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations concerning all action items in the all-hazards mitigation plan required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) Provide assistance to municipalities to develop and implement the components of the Statewide Emergency Management Plan described in subdivision 41(4) of this chapter.

* * *

Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 41 is amended to read:

§ 41. STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Department of Public Safety's Vermont Emergency Management Division, in collaboration with the Chief Recovery Officer and in consultation with regional planning commissions, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and Vermont's long-term recovery groups, shall create, and republish as needed, but not less than every five years, a comprehensive State Emergency Management Plan. The Plan shall:

(1) detail response systems during all-hazards events, including communications, coordination among State, local, private, and volunteer entities, and the deployment of State and federal resources. ~~The Plan shall also;~~

(2) detail the State's emergency preparedness measures and goals, including those for the prevention of, protection against, mitigation of, and recovery from all-hazards events. ~~The Plan shall;~~

(3) include templates and guidance for regional emergency management and for local emergency plans that support municipalities in their respective emergency management planning; and

(4) provide a framework for municipalities to develop and implement:

(A) emergency parking plans for areas within a municipality affected by an all-hazard event;

(B) municipal plans and systems to ensure that vulnerable populations, including aging populations and individuals with disabilities, within the municipality are contacted and visited to ensure their safety and wellness during an all-hazard event;

(C) emergency notification systems to provide real-time alerts to residents, which shall utilize multichannel communication systems; and

(D) training to support the officers and staff that municipalities are required to maintain following an all-hazard event, including individual assistance coordinators and disaster waste coordinators.

* * * Voluntary Buyout Program and Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement
Program * * *

Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 51 is added to read:

§ 51. FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTIES; VOLUNTARY BUYOUT
PROGRAM

The Division of Emergency Management and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall establish and maintain the Voluntary Buyout Program for flood-prone properties. The Program shall allow a municipality,

at the request of the owner of a flood-prone property, to apply for funding to cover the purchase price of the property. The purchase price shall be the full fair market value of the flood-prone property. The municipality shall maintain the acquired property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property.

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 3710 is added to read:

§ 3710. VOLUNTARY BUYOUT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement Program to reimburse municipalities for the value of municipal property taxes associated with the flood-prone properties acquired by a municipality pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 51 and preserved as public open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property.

(b) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Public Safety shall certify the properties eligible for the Program to the Commissioner of Taxes along with any other information required by the Commissioner of Taxes. To be eligible for reimbursement under the Program, a municipality must have acquired an eligible property on or after July 1, 2023 and preserved the property as public open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall first certify properties to the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to this subsection on or before September 1, 2025.

(c) The Commissioner of Taxes shall certify the Program payment amounts to the Secretary of Administration. The Secretary shall make an annual payment to each municipality for each eligible property to compensate for the loss of municipal property tax. The payment shall be calculated using the grand list value of the acquired property for the year during which the property was either damaged by flooding or identified as flood-prone by the Commissioner of Public Safety, multiplied by the municipal tax rate, including any submunicipal tax rates, in effect each year. This payment shall be made on or before January 1 of each year for five years.

(d) If a municipality has received payment for any acquired property under subsection (c) of this section for five consecutive years, it shall be eligible for payment for ensuing five year periods in an amount equal to one-half of the initial annual payment calculated under subsection (c).

(e) Payments made pursuant to this section shall be paid from the PILOT Special Fund established under section 3709 of this subchapter. Payments shall be disbursed only after all other requirements of subchapter 4 of this chapter are met. If the PILOT Special Fund balance is insufficient to pay the full amount of all payments authorized under this subchapter, then payments

calculated under this section and due to each eligible municipality for each property shall be reduced proportionately.

Sec. 5. VOLUNTARY BUYOUT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM;

TRANSFERS FROM PILOT SPECIAL FUND

Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 3709 to the contrary, in fiscal year 2026 the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall transfer from the PILOT Special Fund to the Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement Program \$1,000,000.00 for purposes of the administration of the Program.

* * * Division of Emergency Management; Assistance to Municipalities * * *

Sec. 6. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; POSITIONS;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The following positions are created in the Division of Emergency Management:

(1) one full-time, exempt Municipal Grant Liaison; and

(2) one full-time, exempt All-Hazard Mitigation Technician.

(b) The Municipal Grant Liaison shall be dedicated to grant research, grant applications support, coordination between municipal corporations and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and direct assistance to municipal corporations for the acquisition of grants and other funding sources for all-hazard relief and recovery efforts. The Flood Mitigation Technician shall be dedicated to providing or supporting engineering analyses for all-hazard mitigation projects, oversight of municipal remediation and recovery projects, and managing technical assistance to municipal corporations for all-hazard recovery.

Sec. 7. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; ALL-HAZARD

AND WEATHER ALERT SYSTEMS FOR MUNICIPAL

CORPORATIONS

Upon request of a municipal corporation, the Division of Emergency Management, in collaboration with regional planning commissions and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, shall assist the municipal corporation with access to and development of the following:

(1) surface water flood monitoring devices, which shall automatically trigger notification systems for emergency services providers and residents;

(2) alert systems that are integrated with a statewide weather alert system for real-time updates during severe weather events; and

(3) connection to a statewide enhanced weather alert system that:

(A) predicts local and regional conditions using advanced modeling;
and

(B) issues real-time warnings for flooding, blizzards, and ice storms
through multiple communication channels.

* * * Needs Assessment Report * * *

Sec. 8. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; STATE
STAKEHOLDERS; NEEDS ASSESSMENT; REPORT

The Division of Emergency Management, Chief Recovery Officer, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Natural Resources, and Agency of Transportation shall conduct a needs assessment to identify any additional staffing, resources, technical needs, or authority needed to carry out the provisions of this act. On or before November 15, 2025, the Division shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations containing the needs assessments conducted by the State agencies and departments identified in this section.

* * * Vermont Community Radio Program * * *

Sec. 9. VERMONT COMMUNITY RADIO GRANT PROGRAM

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Vermont's seven active community radio stations currently serve over 200,000 Vermonters, many in rural and underserved areas.

(2) Community radio stations have consistently provided critical information during emergencies, including Tropical Storm Irene, recent severe flooding, and other natural disasters.

(3) These stations operate with small budgets, primarily relying on volunteer staff and listener donations, and are ineligible for federal funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting due to their size.

(4) Upcoming FCC-approved stations in Bristol, Richmond-Underhill-Jericho, and Ludlow will expand coverage to nearly all Vermont counties, increasing statewide accessibility to vital community radio services.

(5) Investment in these stations strengthens Vermont's public safety network and promotes civic engagement by providing local, hyper-focused content that commercial and statewide media cannot replicate.

(b) Intent. The intent of this section is to ensure Vermont's community radio stations remain resilient and prepared to serve as lifelines during emergencies while fostering local engagement and preserving Vermont's unique community fabric.

(c) Grant program.

(1) The Vermont Community Radio Grant Program is established to provide one-time funding to community radio stations for the purpose of:

(A) upgrading equipment and infrastructure necessary for reliable emergency broadcasting;

(B) procuring and installing backup generators; and

(C) enhancing operational sustainability through software improvements and technical training.

(2) The Program shall be administered by the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Broadcasters.

(3) Grants shall be allocated as follows:

(A) up to \$25,000.00 per station for seven active community radio stations; and

(B) up to \$10,000.00 per station for three upcoming stations currently under construction.

(4) To be eligible for a grant under the Program, an applicant shall:

(A) be a nonprofit, noncommercial community radio station licensed in Vermont;

(B) demonstrate a history of providing emergency broadcasting services or show the capacity to provide those services upon funding; and

(C) submit a detailed implementation plan for the proposed use of grant funding.

(d) Report. On or before June 30, 2026, a community radio station that receives a grant under the Program shall provide to the Commissioner of Public Safety a report detailing the:

(1) use of grant funds, including itemized expenses;

(2) improvements achieved in emergency readiness and operational capacity; and

(3) impact on community service and engagement.

* * * Municipal Finances and Indebtedness * * *

Sec. 10. 24 V.S.A. 1585 is added to read:

§ 1585. UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

Monies from a budget approved by the voters at an annual or special meeting that are not expended by the end of a municipality's fiscal year shall be under the control and direction of the legislative body of the municipality and may be carried forward from year to year as an unassigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balances may be invested and reinvested as are other monies received by a town treasurer and may be expended for any public purpose as established by the legislative body of the municipality.

Sec. 11. 24 V.S.A. § 1790 is added to read:

§ 1790. EMERGENCY BORROWING; ALL-HAZARD EVENT OR STATE OF EMERGENCY

The legislative body of a municipality may borrow money, in the name of the municipal corporation, by issuance of its notes or orders for the purpose of paying expenses of the municipal corporation or for public improvements associated with an all-hazards event or a declared state of emergency pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 1. The notes or orders shall be for a period of not more than five years or a term not to exceed the reasonably anticipated useful life of the improvements or assets financed by the notes or orders.

Sec. 12. 24 V.S.A. § 1759 is amended to read:

§ 1759. DENOMINATIONS; PAYMENTS; INTEREST

(a)(1) Any bond issued under this subchapter shall draw interest at a rate not to exceed the rate approved by the voters of the municipal corporation in accordance with section 1758 of this title, or if no rate is specified in the vote under that section, at a rate approved by the legislative ~~branch~~ body of the municipal corporation, ~~such the~~ interest to be payable ~~semiannually as determined by the legislative body of the municipal corporation.~~ ~~Such~~ The bonds or bond shall be payable serially, the first payment to be deferred not later than from one to five years after the issuance of the bonds and subsequent principal payments or debt service payments, which include both principal and interest payments, to be continued annually in equal substantially level or diminishing declining amounts, as determined by the legislative body of the municipality, so that the entire debt will be paid in not more than 20 years from the date of issue.

(2) In the case of bonds issued for the purchase or development of a municipal forest, the first payment may be deferred not more than 30 years from the date of issuance ~~thereof of the bond~~. ~~Thereafter such~~ After any deferral period, the bonds or bond shall be payable annually in equal substantially level or diminishing amounts declining annual debt service as the legislative body of the municipal corporation may determine, so that the entire debt will be paid in not more than 60 years from the date of issue.

* * *

(b) General obligation bonds authorized under this subchapter for the purpose of financing the improvement, construction, acquisition, repair, renovation, and replacement of a municipal plant as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 2901 shall be paid serially, the first payment to be deferred not later than from one to five years after the issuance of the bonds, and subsequent principal payments or debt service payments, which include both principal and interest payments, to be continued annually in substantially level or declining amounts, as determined by the legislative body of the municipal corporation, so that the entire debt will be paid ~~over a term equal to the useful life of the financed improvements, but~~ not more than 40 years from the date of issue, and ~~may be so arranged that beginning with the first year in which principal is payable, the amount of principal and interest in any year shall be as nearly equal as is practicable according to the denomination in which such bonds are issued,~~ notwithstanding other permissible payment schedules authorized by this section.

* * * Dam Drawdown During Emergency Flood Events * * *

Sec. 13. 20 V.S.A. § 9 is amended to read:

§ 9. EMERGENCY POWERS OF GOVERNOR

Subject to the provisions of this chapter, in the event of an all-hazards event in or directed upon the United States or Canada that causes or may cause substantial damage or injury to persons or property within the State in any manner, the Governor may declare a state of emergency within the entire State or any portion or portions of the State. Thereafter, the Governor shall have and may exercise for as long as the Governor determines the emergency to exist the following additional powers within ~~such~~ the area or areas:

* * *

(12) In consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee, to authorize the Agency to waive applicable permits and restrictions under 10 V.S.A. chapter 47 or the Vermont Water Quality Standards to allow dams within the State to draw down water levels in anticipation of a flood event that is likely to cause substantial damage or injury to persons or

property. Waivers may only be issued if the Governor, in consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee, has significant reason to believe doing so will decrease the risk of substantial damage to persons or property within the State. Dam operators operating under a waiver shall be required to make every effort to minimize the environmental impact of a water level drawdown under the authorized waiver.

* * * Appropriations * * *

Sec. 14. APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums are appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Safety:

(1) \$275,000.00 to support the two positions created in Sec. 6 of this act;

(2) \$950,000.00 to support the Urban Search and Rescue Team created pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 50; and

(3) \$205,000.00 for the purpose of funding the Vermont Community Radio Grant Program.

(b) In fiscal year 2026, the sum of \$275,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources for purposes of procuring a fire apparatus.

(c) Any unexpended monies from the appropriation under subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall revert to the General Fund on or before July 1, 2026.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 3, 20 V.S.A. § 51, in the fourth sentence, by striking out “The municipality shall maintain the acquired property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property” and inserting in lieu thereof “A municipality may transfer or redevelop the acquired property for purposes of constructing flood-resilient housing” before the period.

Second: By striking out Secs. 4 and 5 in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof new Secs. 4 and 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 3709 is amended to read:

§ 3709. PILOT SPECIAL FUND

(a) There is hereby established a PILOT Special Fund consisting of local option tax revenues paid to the Treasurer pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138. This Fund shall be managed by the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to chapter 7, subchapter 5 of this title. Notwithstanding subdivision 588(3) of this title, all interest earned on the Fund shall be retained in the Fund for use in meeting future obligations. The Fund shall be exclusively for payments required under chapter 123, ~~subchapter~~ subchapters 4 and 4C of this title, and for any additional State payments in lieu of taxes for correctional facilities ~~and to the City of Montpelier~~. The Commissioner of Finance and Management may draw warrants for disbursements from this Fund in anticipation of receipts.

* * *

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. chapter 123, subchapter 4C is added to read:

Subchapter 4C. Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program

§ 3710. MUNICIPAL GRAND LIST STABILIZATION PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program within the Department of Taxes to reimburse municipalities for municipal property taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title for flood-prone properties acquired by a municipality pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 51 or a prior voluntary buyout program operated by the Division of Emergency Management.

(b) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Public Safety shall certify to the Commissioner of Taxes the properties eligible for the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program and shall submit any other information required by the Commissioner of Taxes. To be eligible for the Program under this subchapter, a municipality must have acquired an eligible property on or after July 1, 2023 and preserved the property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall first certify properties to the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to this subsection on or before September 1, 2025.

(c) Upon notification by the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Commissioner of Taxes shall certify the payment amounts and make an annual payment to each municipality for each eligible property to compensate for the loss of municipal property tax. The payment shall be calculated using the

grand list value of the acquired property for the year during which the property was either damaged by flooding or identified as flood-prone by the Commissioner of Public Safety, multiplied by the municipal tax rate, including any submunicipal tax rates, in effect each year. This payment shall be made on or before January 1 of each year for five years.

(d) A property shall not be eligible for reimbursement payments for more than 10 years. The Commissioner shall make an annual payment for the full amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section for five years. After a municipality has received payments for an eligible property for five consecutive years, the Commissioner shall make an annual payment to the municipality for any subsequent year of eligibility in an amount equal to one-half of the amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section.

(e) Payment under this section shall be calculated and issued from the PILOT Special Fund under section 3709 of this title only after all other grants under subchapter 4 of this chapter are calculated and issued. If the PILOT Special Fund balance is insufficient to pay the full amount of all payments authorized under this subchapter, then payments calculated under this section and due to each municipality for each property shall be reduced proportionately.

Third: In Sec. 6, Division of Emergency Management; positions; appropriation, in the section heading, by striking out the semicolon and the word "APPROPRIATION" following "POSITIONS" and in subsection (b), in the second sentence, following the word "The" by striking out the word "Flood" and inserting in lieu thereof "All-Hazard" preceding "Mitigation Technician"

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 12, 24 V.S.A. § 1759, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 12. [Deleted.]

Fifth: By adding two new sections to be Secs. 13a and 13b and their reader assistance headings to read as follows:

* * * Local Option Tax; Amount Paid to Municipality * * *

Sec. 13a. 24 V.S.A. § 138 is amended to read:

§ 138. LOCAL OPTION TAXES

* * *

(c)(1) Any tax imposed under the authority of this section shall be collected and administered by the Department of Taxes, in accordance with State law governing such State tax or taxes and subdivision (2) of this

subsection; provided, however, that a sales tax imposed under this section shall be collected on each sale that is subject to the Vermont sales tax using a destination basis for taxation. Except with respect to taxes collected on the sale of aviation jet fuel, a per-return fee of \$5.96 shall be assessed, ~~70~~ 75 percent of which shall be borne by the municipality, and ~~30~~ 25 percent of which shall be borne by the State to be paid from the PILOT Special Fund. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 603 or any other provision of law or municipal charter to the contrary, revenue from the fee shall be used to compensate the Department for the costs of administering and collecting the local option tax and of administering the State appraisal and litigation program established in 32 V.S.A. § 5413. The fee shall be subject to the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 605.

* * *

(d)(1) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section and subdivision (2) of this subsection with respect to taxes collected on the sale of aviation jet fuel, of the taxes collected under this section, ~~70~~ 75 percent of the taxes shall be paid on a quarterly basis to the municipality in which they were collected, after reduction for the costs of administration and collection under subsection (c) of this section. Revenues received by a municipality may be expended for municipal services only, and not for education expenditures. Any remaining revenue shall be deposited into the PILOT Special Fund established by 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

* * *

* * * Flooding Abatement Program * * *

Sec. 13b. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 82, Sec. 1, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 108, Sec. 3, is further amended to read:

Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE

EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE
TO FLOODING

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for reimbursement under this section, prior to November 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, a municipality must have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

(2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

(A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on the property;

(B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more;

(C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

(D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

(b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, the municipality incurred unanticipated interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

* * *

Sixth: By striking out Sec. 15, effective date, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new reader assistance heading and Sec. 15 to read as follows:

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section shall take effect on passage.

(b) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. 13b (flooding abatement reimbursement program) shall take effect retroactively on November 15, 2024.

(c) All other sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Harrison of Chittenden, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, when further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, and when further amended as follows:

First: By striking Sec. 6, Division of Emergency Management; positions; appropriation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

Second: By striking out Sec. 9, Vermont Community Radio Program, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 9 to read as follows:

Sec. 9. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 14, appropriations, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 14 to read as follows:

Sec. 14. [Deleted.]

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs be amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, **Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Ways and Means by striking out the first instance of amendment, amending the fourth sentence in Sec. 3, 20 V.S.A. § 51, in its entirety, and by renumbering the remaining instances of amendment to be numerically correct.

Which was agreed to.

Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs was amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended, and then further amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. Thereafter, the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, as amended, was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 31

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 12. An act relating to sealing criminal history records.

S. 36. An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services.

S. 53. An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas and Medicaid coverage for doula services.

S. 56. An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans.

S. 63. An act relating to modifying the regulatory duties of the Green Mountain Care Board.

S. 117. An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation.

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

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 2. An act relating to increasing the minimum age for delinquency proceedings.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has considered joint resolution originating in the House of the following title:

J.R.H. 3. Joint resolution authorizing the Green Mountain Boys State and Green Mountain Girls State educational programs to use the State House facilities on June 26, 2025.

And has adopted the same in concurrence.

**Committee Bill; Second Reading; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 479

Rep. Mihaly of Calais spoke for the Committee on General and Housing.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to housing

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 6, 32 V.S.A. § 5930u, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. 32 V.S.A. § 5930u is amended to read:

§ 5930u. TAX CREDIT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

* * *

(11) “First-generation homebuyer” means a homebuyer who self-attests that the homebuyer is an individual:

(A) whose parents or legal guardians:

(i) do not have and during the homebuyer’s lifetime have not had any residential ownership interest in any state; or

(ii) lost ownership of a home due to foreclosure, short sale, or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure and have not owned a home since that loss; or

(B) who has at any time been placed in foster care.

* * *

(g) Credit allocation.

(1) In any fiscal year, the allocating agency may award up to:

(A) \$400,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations to all applicants for rental housing projects, for an aggregate limit of \$2,000,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (A).

(B) \$675,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans or grants for owner-occupied unit financing or down payment loans as provided in subdivision (b)(2) of this section consistent with the allocation plan, including for new construction and manufactured housing, for an aggregate limit of \$3,375,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (B). Of the total first-year credit allocations made under this subdivision (B), \$250,000.00 shall be used each fiscal year for manufactured home purchase and replacement.

(C) \$250,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for grants to first-time homebuyers who are also first-generation homebuyers as provided in subdivision (b)(3)(D) of this section, for an aggregate limit of \$1,250,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (C).

(2) If the full amount of first-year credits authorized by an award are not allocated to a taxpayer, the Agency may reclaim the amount not allocated and re-award such allocations to other applicants, and such re-awards shall not be subject to the limits set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(h) Credit allocation; Down Payment Assistance Program.

(1) In fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2019, the allocating agency may award up to \$125,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans through the Down Payment Assistance Program created in subdivision (b)(2) of this section.

(2) In fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year ~~2026~~ 2031, the allocating agency may award up to \$250,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans through the Down Payment Assistance Program created in subdivision (b)(3) of this section.

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 6A to read as follows:

Sec. 6A. 32 V.S.A. § 5930u is amended to read:

§ 5930u. TAX CREDIT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

* * *

(11) ~~“First-generation homebuyer” means a homebuyer who self-attests that the homebuyer is an individual:~~

~~(A) whose parents or legal guardians:~~

~~(i) do not have and during the homebuyer’s lifetime have not had any residential ownership interest in any state; or~~

~~(ii) lost ownership of a home due to foreclosure, short sale, or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure and have not owned a home since that loss; or~~

~~(B) who has at any time been placed in foster care. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(g) Credit allocation.

(1) In any fiscal year, the allocating agency may award up to:

(A) \$400,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations to all applicants for rental housing projects, for an aggregate limit of \$2,000,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (A).

(B) \$675,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans or grants for owner-occupied unit financing or down payment loans as provided in subdivision (b)(2) of this section consistent with the allocation plan, including for new construction and manufactured housing, for an aggregate limit of \$3,375,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (B). Of the total first-year credit allocations

made under this subdivision (B), \$250,000.00 shall be used each fiscal year for manufactured home purchase and replacement.

(C) ~~\$250,000.00 in total in total first-year credit allocations for grants to first-time homebuyers who are also first-generation homebuyers as provided in subdivision (b)(3)(D) of this section, for an aggregate limit of \$1,250,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (C).~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

Third: By striking out Sec. 16, 24 V.S.A. § 1539, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 16 to read as follows:

Sec. 16. [Deleted.]

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 22, effective dates, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 22 to read as follows:

Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that:

(1) Secs. 4 (Universal Design Study Committee) and 17 (repeal; Act 181 prospective landlord certificate changes) and this section shall take effect on passage; and

(2) Sec. 6A (repeal; First-Generation Homebuyer tax credits) shall take effect on July 1, 2030.

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended to substitute an amendment for the report of the Committee on Ways and Means, to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 4, universal design study committee, by striking out subsection (h) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (h) to read as follows:

(h) Intent to appropriate. Notwithstanding subsection (g) of this section, per diems for the cost of attending meetings shall only be available in the event an appropriation is made in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund to the Department of Housing and Community Development for that purpose.

Second: By striking out Sec. 6, 32 V.S.A. § 5930u, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 16, 24 V.S.A. § 1539, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 16 to read as follows:

Sec. 16. [Deleted.]

Fourth: In Sec. 19, VHFA off-site construction report, in subsection (a), by striking out the following: “The sum of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 to the Department of Housing and Community Development granted to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency to further develop recommendations from the 2025 “Opportunities to Utilize Off-Site Construction to Meet Vermont’s Housing, Workforce and Climate Goals” report.”

Fifth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 19a to read as follows:

Sec. 19a. VHFA OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION REPORT;

IMPLEMENTATION

The duty to implement Sec. 19 of this act is contingent upon an appropriation of funds in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency for the development and issuance of the report required in that section.

Sixth: By striking out Secs. 20, DHCD positions, and 21, appropriations, and their corresponding reader assistance heading in their entirety and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct.

Speaker presiding.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Ways and Means was substituted as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Ways and Means, as substituted, was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading; Bill Amended;
Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Third Reading Ordered**

H. 488

Rep. Walker of Swanton spoke for the Committee on Transportation.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

Rep. Kascenska of Burke, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill be amended by striking out Sec. 13, EVSE, one-time appropriation, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 13. [Deleted.]

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Appropriations agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** moved to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 15, effective date, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 15 and two new sections to be Secs. 16 and 17 and their associated reader assistance headings to read as follows:

* * * State Highway Bridges * * *

Sec. 15. STATE HIGHWAY BRIDGES; PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES;
AGREEMENTS; REQUIREMENTS; MODIFICATIONS

(a) For projects in the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for State Highway Bridges for which construction has not commenced, the Agency of Transportation shall, to the extent practicable, review any applicable agreements with and requirements for the municipality in which each project is located to determine if modifications to the applicable agreements or requirements, or both, can be made to support the construction of sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure on the bridge, consistent with the State's complete streets policy set forth in 19 V.S.A. § 2402.

(b) In each instance in which the Agency identifies modifications to the applicable agreements or requirements, or both, that can be made to support the construction of sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure on a bridge pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Agency shall, to the extent reasonably feasible and consistent with all applicable State and federal laws and requirements, seek to modify provisions of agreements or modify requirements, or both, as necessary to support the construction of sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with the State's complete streets policy set forth in 19 V.S.A. § 2402.

Sec. 16. STATE HIGHWAY BRIDGES; REVIEW OF
REQUIREMENTS; REPORT

(a) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation that:

(1) examines requirements for municipalities in relation to State highway bridge projects, including related Agency of Transportation procedures and the terms of required agreements with municipalities; and

(2) identifies any changes to those requirements that are necessary to facilitate and encourage the construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with the State's complete streets policy set forth in 19 V.S.A. § 2402.

(b) The report shall include:

(1) a summary of the different funding streams and programs under which the State replaces, rehabilitates, or maintains bridges located on State highways;

(2) requirements under State and federal law for the funding streams and programs identified pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection;

(3) agreements that municipalities are required to enter into with the State in relation to the replacement, rehabilitation, or maintenance of bridges on State highways within the municipality;

(4) potential modifications to the requirements and agreements identified pursuant to subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection, and any related Agency procedures or rules, that could facilitate and encourage the construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure on bridges located on State highways in a manner that is consistent with the State's complete streets policy set forth in 19 V.S.A. § 2402; and

(5) any legislative action that is necessary to facilitate and encourage the construction of sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure on bridges located on State highways in a manner that is consistent with the State's complete streets policy set forth in 19 V.S.A. § 2402.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 17. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Sec. 15 shall take effect on passage.

(b) The remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Thereupon, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Thereafter, third reading was ordered.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 17

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Reports; Second Reading;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 472

Rep. Nugent of South Burlington spoke for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 237

Rep. McFaun of Barre Town, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 26 V.S.A. § 3001 is amended to read:

§ 3001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Practice of psychology” means rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, or organizations, for a consideration, any service involving the application of principles, methods, and procedures of understanding, predicting, and influencing behavior that are primarily drawn from the science of psychology. The science of psychology includes assessment, diagnosis, prevention, and amelioration of adjustment problems and emotional and mental disorders of individuals and groups.

(2) “Psychologist” or “practicing psychologist” means a person who is licensed to practice psychology under this chapter.

(3) “Psychologist-doctorate” means a person who is so licensed under this chapter.

(4) “Psychologist-master” means a person who is so licensed under this chapter.

(5) “Board” means the Board of Psychological Examiners established under this chapter.

* * *

(12) “Collaborating practitioner” means a physician licensed to practice medicine pursuant to chapter 23 or 33 with a specialty in psychiatry.

(13) “DSM” means the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders current at the time of practice.

(14) “Drug” has the same meaning as section 2022 of this title.

(15) “Prescribing psychologist” means a licensed, doctoral-level psychologist who has undergone specialized training, has passed an examination as determined by rule, and has received a current prescribing specialty under section 3019 of this title that has not been revoked or suspended by the Board.

(16) “Prescription drug” has the same meaning as in section 2022 of this title.

(17) “Prescriptive authority” means the authority to prescribe or discontinue prescription drugs solely for the purpose of diagnosing, treating, or managing a condition recognized in the DSM. “Prescriptive authority” excludes the authority to:

(A) dispense, administer, or distribute prescription drugs; and

(B) prescribe or discontinue prescription drugs for patients who are less than 18 years of age, over 80 years of age, or pregnant.

Sec. 2. 26 V.S.A. § 3009a is amended to read:

§ 3009a. POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD

(a) The Board shall adopt rules necessary to perform its duties under this chapter, including rules that:

(1) specify educational and other prerequisites for obtaining licensure;

(2) ~~explain complaint and appeal procedures to licensees, applicants, and the public;~~

(3) explain continuing education requirements; and

(3) regulate prescribing psychologist licensees pursuant to section 3019 of this title, including:

(A) the settings of clinical rotations; and

(B) prescriptive authority, including designation of conditions and drugs excluded from that authority, as well as requirements for the prescribing of particular drugs; and

(4) ~~explain how the Board shall investigate suspected unprofessional conduct~~ regulate collaborative practice agreements pursuant to section 3019 of this title, including collaborating practitioner qualifications and annual competency evaluations.

* * *

Sec. 3. 26 V.S.A. § 3019 is added to read:

§ 3019. PRESCRIBING BY DOCTORAL-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGISTS

SPECIALITY

(a) Prescribing psychologist specialty. A psychologist-doctorate may apply to the Board for a prescribing psychologist specialty. The application shall be made in a manner approved by the Board and include the payment of any required fees.

(b) Specialty by examination. A psychologist-doctorate shall be eligible for the prescribing specialty if the psychologist-doctorate:

(1) holds a current license to practice psychology at the doctoral level in the State;

(2) has successfully completed a postdoctoral training program in psychopharmacology designated by the American Psychological Association or its successor;

(3) has completed clinical rotations over a total of not less than 14 months in not less than nine practice settings, to include psychiatry, pediatrics, geriatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, and one elective;

(4) has completed a national certifying exam, as determined by rule; and

(5) meets all other requirements for obtaining a prescribing psychologist specialty, as determined by rule.

(c) Criteria for prescribing medication.

(1) A written collaborative agreement is required for all prescribing psychologists practicing under a prescribing psychologist specialty issued pursuant to this section.

(2) The issuance of prescriptive authority by a collaborating practitioner to a prescribing psychologist shall only include prescription drugs for the treatment of mental health conditions that the collaborating practitioner generally provides to patients in the normal course of practice.

(3) The collaborating practitioner shall file the collaborative agreement with the Board and notice of any termination of the agreement.

(4) Issuance of prescribing authority for Schedule II through V controlled substances shall identify the specific controlled substance by brand name or generic name. Prescription or administration of a controlled substance by injection shall not be allowed.

(d) Specialty by endorsement. The Director of the Board may, upon payment of the required fee, grant a prescribing specialty without examination if:

(1) the applicant holds active psychologist prescribing authority in another U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction; and

(2) the requirements for psychologist prescribing authority in that jurisdiction are, in the judgement of the Director, substantially equivalent to the requirements of this section.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Sec. 2 (power and duties of the Board) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(b) All remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the report of the Committee on Health Care be amended in Sec. 3, 26 V.S.A. § 3019, in subsection (d), by striking out the word “the” before “required fee” and inserting in lieu thereof “any”

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Health Care was amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Health Care, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At six o'clock and nine minutes in the evening, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, March 27, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Ashley Bartley of Fairfax.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 12

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to sealing criminal history records

To the Committee on Judiciary.

S. 36

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

To the Committee on Human Services.

S. 53

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas and Medicaid coverage for doula services

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 56

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

S. 63

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to modifying the regulatory duties of the Green Mountain Care Board

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 117

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 62**

Offered by Representatives Greer of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Morrissey of Bennington, and Nigro of Bennington

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College

Whereas, the journey to establish Black music as a focus of academic examination and respect owes much to the pioneering initiative of the Black Music Division at Bennington College, which was established in 1974 under the auspices of Bill Dixon, a Renaissance figure in the Black cultural scene, as a composer, educator, performer, and ardent artistic advocate, and

Whereas, this avant-garde jazz luminary was ideally qualified to take on this pedagogical challenge, having studied music at the Hartnett Conservatory of Music, organized the “October Revolution in Jazz” conclave in New York City in 1964, and later co-founded the Jazz Composer’s Guild, and

Whereas, a primary rationale for the creation of the Black Music Division was “to legitimize Black Music within the academic sphere,” a mission today’s faculty continues to promote with “courses that explore the depth and cultural significance of Black music,” and

Whereas, for nearly four decades, another prominent faculty member in the Black Music Division was the eminent percussionist, New York Art Quartet member, Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, and Doris Duke Foundation Impact Award winner, Milford Graves, and

Whereas, to celebrate and reflect upon this half-century academic odyssey and its historic and “transformative impact on the field of music, education, improvisation and culture,” the Black Music Division, with the support of Bennington College Alumni Relations, is sponsoring a Black Music Symposium, an event reminiscent of Bill Dixon’s “October Revolution in Jazz,” and

Whereas, Bennington College faculty member Michael Wimberly is organizing this grand gathering of “alumni, musicians, faculty, students, and members of the public” for two glorious days of exciting “live performances, lectures, panels, and workshops” that will highlight the past, present, and future of Black music, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Black Music Division at Bennington College, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Black Music Division at Bennington College.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

House Resolution Adopted

H.R. 7

House resolution reaffirming the friendship between the State of Vermont and Taiwan and supporting enhanced Vermont-Taiwan bilateral relations and Taiwan’s participation in international organizations

Was taken up and adopted.

**Second Reading; Question Divided; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 218

Rep. Maguire of Rutland City, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

(1)(A) \$1,976,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for the provision of services that increase motivation of and engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(2) \$76,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform to fund an outreach worker position.

(3)(A) \$1,400,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(4)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(5) \$800,000.00 for distribution as follows:

(A) not more than \$35,000.00 to the Department of Corrections for distribution to Pathways Vermont to implement a contingency management

pilot program in Chittenden County for individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections; and

(B) the remainder to the Department of Health for grants to providers for ongoing support for contingency management.

(6) \$32,157.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Brattleboro Fire Department to establish community training programs on the administration of opioid antagonists, CPR, first aid, and Stop the Bleed protocols.

(7) \$44,229.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Champlain Housing Trust to continue a pilot program providing access to wound care and preventative health care in three low-barrier shelters within Chittenden County.

(8) \$800,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports and clinical nursing programs.

(9) \$309,000.00 to the Department of Health for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont's Project Connectionworks to reduce opioid use disorder morbidity and mortality in Windham County through prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

(10) \$50,000.00 to the Judicial Branch to train Vermont's judges on issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide.

(11) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate Youth Services to establish Healthy Youth Program counselors at the Basement Teen Center at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Washington County.

(12) \$100,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Friends for Change's Youth Center in Bellows Falls for the purpose of delivering intervention strategies and harm reduction supports to youth and young adults.

(13) \$170,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Spectrum Youth and Family Services for two new positions to expand opioid use disorder screening, treatment, and case management services to youth in Chittenden and Franklin Counties.

(14) \$80,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont for the purpose of teaching parenting skills and providing social and emotional parenting supports for individuals with opioid use disorder.

(15) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for distribution to HireAbility Vermont to provide specialized employment services for individuals with opioid use disorder in Burlington, Newport, Rutland, and Bennington.

(16) \$550,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Northeast Kingdom Community Action to hire four peer support specialists to assist individuals with opioid use disorder who are transitioning out of homelessness into safe, permanent housing.

(17) \$150,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Connecticut Valley Addiction Services, Inc. to expand opioid use treatment in rural Windsor County.

(18) \$300,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and the Johnson Health Center to continue and improve the Managed Medical Response Partnership.

(19) \$30,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Treatment Associates of Washington County Mental Health to hire an embedded recovery coach.

(20) \$20,824.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Umbrella to provide integrated services between domestic and sexual violence providers and partners in recovery in northeastern Vermont.

(b) The Department of Health shall carry forward \$1,100,000.00 appropriated from the Opioid Settlement Special Fund in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center upon submission of a grant proposal that has been approved by the Burlington City Council and meets the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 4256, including the guidelines developed by the Department of Health. Any unmet need in fiscal year 2026, up to \$550,000.00, shall be addressed in the Department's budget adjustment proposal.

(c) All grant agreements associated with funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall require outcome and measurements data to be collected and reported to the department issuing the grant and to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 93 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 93. OPIOID USE DISORDER

Subchapter 1. Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder

* * *

§ 4754. LIMITATION ON PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for prescription drugs for a patient who is receiving ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder if the dosage prescribed is within the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's dosing recommendations.

(b) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for all counseling and behavioral therapies associated with ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for a patient who is receiving medication-assisted treatment.

Subchapter 2. Opioid Settlement

* * *

§ 4772. OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

* * *

(b) Membership.

(1) The Advisory Committee shall be composed of the following members and shall reflect the diversity of Vermont in terms of gender, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and socioeconomic status and ensure inclusion of individuals with lived experience of opioid use disorder and their family members whenever possible:

* * *

(E) a primary care prescriber with experience providing ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder within the Blueprint for Health hub and spoke model, appointed by the Executive Director of the Blueprint for Health, to provide a statewide perspective on the provision of ~~providing medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder services;

* * *

(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall demonstrate broad ongoing consultation with individuals living with opioid use disorder about their direct experience with related systems, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder, residential treatment, recovery services, harm reduction services, overdose, supervision by the Department of Corrections, and involvement with the Department for Children and Families' Family Services Division. To that end, the Advisory Committee shall demonstrate consultation with individuals with direct lived experience of opioid use disorder, frontline support professionals, the Substance Misuse Oversight Prevention and Advisory Council, and other stakeholders to identify spending priorities as related to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention,

treatment, and recovery services and harm reduction strategies for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Governor, the Department of Health, and the General Assembly on prioritizing spending from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. The Advisory Committee shall consider:

(1) the impact of the opioid crisis on communities throughout Vermont, including communities' abatement needs and proposals for abatement strategies and responses;

(2) the perspectives of and proposals from opioid use disorder prevention coalitions, recovery centers, and ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder providers; and

(3) the ongoing challenges of the opioid crisis on marginalized populations, including individuals who have a lived experience of opioid use disorder.

* * *

(e) Presentation. Annually, the Advisory Committee shall vote on its recommendations. Recommendations shall be informed by outcomes and measurements reported by previous grantees. If the recommendations are supported by an affirmative vote of the majority, the Advisory Committee shall present its recommendations for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established pursuant to this subchapter to the Department of Health and concurrently submit its recommendations in writing to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare. The Advisory Committee's written recommendations shall address how each recommendation meets one or more of the criteria listed in subsections 4774(b) and (c) of this subchapter. The Advisory Committee shall give priority consideration to services requiring funding on an ongoing basis.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Health shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee to occur on or before June 30, 2022.

(2) Annually, the Advisory Committee shall elect a voting vice chair from among its nongovernmental members.

(3) The Advisory Committee shall meet at least quarterly but not more than 12 times per calendar year.

(3)(4) The Advisory Committee shall adopt procedures to govern its proceedings and organization, including voting procedures and how the staggered terms shall be apportioned among members.

(4)(5) All meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be consistent with Vermont's Open Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

* * *

§ 4774. OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

* * *

(c) Priority for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund shall be aimed at reducing overdose deaths, including the following:

* * *

(2) increasing access to ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder and other opioid-related treatment, specifically:

(A) increasing distribution of ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder to individuals who are uninsured or whose health insurance does not cover the needed goods and services;

(B) providing education to school-based and youth-focused programs that discourage or prevent misuse, including how to access opioid use disorder treatment;

(C) providing ~~medication-assisted~~ education and awareness training on medication for opioid use disorder to health care providers, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement, and other first responders; and

* * *

(3) assisting pregnant and postpartum individuals, specifically:

(A) enhancing services for expanding screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) services to non-Medicaid eligible or uninsured pregnant individuals;

(B) expanding comprehensive evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment and recovery services, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder, for individuals with co-occurring opioid use disorder and other substance or mental health disorders for up to 12 months postpartum; and

* * *

(5) expanding the availability of warm handoff programs and recovery services, specifically:

(A) expanding services such as navigators and on-call teams to begin ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder in hospital emergency departments;

* * *

(6) treating incarcerated populations, specifically:

(A) providing evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment and recovery support, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for individuals with opioid use disorder or co-occurring substance use or mental health disorders while transitioning out of the criminal justice system; and

* * *

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended by striking out Sec. 1 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 1 to read as follows:

Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

(1)(A) \$1,976,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for the provision of services that increase motivation of and engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(2) \$76,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform to fund an outreach worker position.

(3)(A) \$1,400,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(4)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(5)(A) \$1,100,000.00 to the Department of Health for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center upon submission of a grant proposal that has been approved by the Burlington City Council and meets the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 4256, including the guidelines developed by the Department of Health.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue to appropriate funds from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund through fiscal year 2028 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for the operation of the overdose prevention center, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(6) \$800,000.00 for distribution as follows:

(A) not more than \$35,000.00 to the Department of Corrections for distribution to Pathways Vermont to implement a contingency management pilot program in Chittenden County for individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections; and

(B) the remainder to the Department of Health for grants to providers for ongoing support for contingency management.

(7) \$32,157.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Brattleboro Fire Department to establish community training programs on the administration of opioid antagonists, CPR, first aid, and Stop the Bleed protocols.

(8) \$44,229.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Champlain Housing Trust to continue a pilot program providing access to wound care and preventative health care in three low-barrier shelters within Chittenden County.

(9) \$800,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports and clinical nursing programs.

(10) \$309,000.00 to the Department of Health for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont's Project Connectionworks to reduce opioid use disorder morbidity and mortality in Windham County through prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

(11) \$50,000.00 to the Judicial Branch to train Vermont's judges on issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide.

(12) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate Youth Services to establish Healthy Youth Program counselors at the Basement Teen Center at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Washington County.

(13) \$100,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Friends for Change's Youth Center in Bellows Falls for the purpose of delivering intervention strategies and harm reduction supports to youth and young adults.

(14) \$170,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Spectrum Youth and Family Services for two new positions to expand opioid use disorder screening, treatment, and case management services to youth in Chittenden and Franklin Counties.

(15) \$80,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont for the purpose of teaching parenting skills and providing social and emotional parenting supports for individuals with opioid use disorder.

(16) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for distribution to HireAbility Vermont to provide specialized employment services for individuals with opioid use disorder in Burlington, Newport, Rutland, and Bennington.

(17) \$550,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Northeast Kingdom Community Action to hire four peer support specialists to assist individuals with opioid use disorder who are transitioning out of homelessness into safe, permanent housing.

(18) \$150,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Connecticut Valley Addiction Services, Inc. to expand opioid use treatment in rural Windsor County.

(19) \$300,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and the Johnson Health Center to continue and improve the Managed Medical Response Partnership.

(20) \$30,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Treatment Associates of Washington County Mental Health to hire an embedded recovery coach.

(21) \$20,824.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Umbrella to provide integrated services between domestic and sexual violence providers and partners in recovery in northeastern Vermont.

(b) All grant agreements associated with funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall require outcome and measurements data to be collected and reported to the department issuing the grant and to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations?, **Rep. Steady of Milton** asked that the question be divided to first consider Sec. 1(a)(5) of the report of the Committee on Appropriations – regarding the award of grants to the City of Burlington for an overdose prevention center – and to then consider the remainder of the report of the Committee on Appropriations, and the Speaker ruled the question was divisible in that manner.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations in Section 1(a)(5) of the Appropriations Report?, **Rep. Steady of Milton** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations in Section 1(a)(5) of the Appropriations Report?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 87. Nays, 58.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Eastes of Guilford	Minier of South Burlington
Bartholomew of Hartland	Emmons of Springfield	Morrow of Weston
Berbeco of Winooski	Garofano of Essex	Mrowicki of Putney
Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Nigro of Bennington
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Noyes of Wolcott
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Nugent of South Burlington
Bluemle of Burlington	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Brady of Williston	Hooper of Randolph	Pezzo of Colchester
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Burlington	Pouech of Hinesburg
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction	Priestley of Bradford
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington *
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Burrows of West Windsor	James of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Kascenska of Burke	Sheldon of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stevens of Waterbury
Cina of Burlington	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cooper of Pownal	LaMont of Morristown	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Torre of Moretown
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	Waszazak of Barre City
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dolan of Essex Junction	McCann of Montpelier	White of Waitsfield
		Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Duke of Burlington	McGill of Bridport
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Mihaly of Calais

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nelson of Derby
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	North of Ferrisburgh
Burt of Cabot	Higley of Lowell	Oliver of Sheldon
Canfield of Fair Haven	Howland of Rutland Town	Page of Newport City
Casey of Hubbardton	Keyser of Rutland City	Parsons of Newbury
Charlton of Chester	Labor of Morgan	Pinsonault of Dorset
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Powers of Waterford
Corcoran of Bennington	Lipsky of Stowe	Pritchard of Pawlet
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Quimby of Lyndon
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Maguire of Rutland City	Southworth of Walden
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Steady of Milton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Marcotte of Coventry	Tagliavia of Corinth
Donahue of Northfield	McCoy of Poultney	Taylor of Milton
Feltus of Lyndon	McFaun of Barre Town	Toof of St. Albans Town
Galfetti of Barre Town	Micklus of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, L. of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Greer of Bennington	Morgan, M. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
	Morris of Springfield	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Austin of Colchester	Christie of Hartford
Burditt of West Rutland	White of Bethel

Rep. Rachelson of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Too many Vermonters, our friends, neighbors, and relatives, have died tragically from injecting alone. Safe injection sites save lives. No one has died at a safe injection site, and for some, it's been a catalyst to seek treatment.”

Thereupon, the remainder of the report of the Committee on Appropriations was agreed to, the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, was agreed to, and was third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 17

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown

H. 167

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

H. 237

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

Amended Offered and Withdrawn; Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 244

House bill, entitled

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 2, 29 V.S.A. § 910, by striking out subsections (a)–(b) in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof new subsections (a)–(b) to read as follows:

(a) When contracting for print or digital advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local news organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the print or digital advertising services, of which at least 40 percent of the total annual value of the print or digital advertising services shall be with local news organizations with annual revenue of less than \$3,000,000.00.

(b) When contracting for radio or television advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local broadcast organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the radio or television advertising services, of which at least 40 percent of the

total annual value of the radio or television advertising services shall be with local broadcast organizations with annual revenue of less than \$3,000,000.00.

Thereupon, **Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Thereafter, the bill was read the third time and passed.

**Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Bill Amended;
Third Reading; Bill Passed**

H. 397

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Parsons of Newbury** moved to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 13a, 24 V.S.A. § 138, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 13a to read as follows:

Sec. 13a. [Deleted.]

Thereupon, **Rep. Parsons of Newbury** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Kornheiser of Brattleboro and Waszazak of Barre City** moved to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 14, [Deleted.], in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new reader assistance heading and Secs. 14 through 14c to read as follows:

* * * Municipal Charters; Local Option Tax Revenue Share * * *

Sec. 14. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 3, § 102d is amended to read:

§ 102d. LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX AUTHORITY

The Burlington City Council is authorized to impose a one percent sales tax upon sales within the City that are subject to the State of Vermont sales tax with the same exemptions as the State sales tax. The City sales tax shall be effective beginning on the next tax quarter following 30 days' notice in 2006 to the Department of Taxes, or shall be effective on the next tax quarter following 90 days' notice to the Department of Taxes if notice is given in 2007 or after. Any tax imposed under the authority of this section shall be collected and administered by the Vermont Department of Taxes in accordance with State law governing the State sales tax. ~~Seventy percent of the~~ The taxes collected shall be paid to the City, ~~and the remaining amount of the taxes collected shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for deposit in the PILOT Special Fund first established in 1997 Acts and Resolves No. 60, Sec. 89. The~~

~~cost of administration and collection of this tax shall be paid 70 percent by the City and 30 percent by the State from the PILOT Special Fund pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138. The tax to be paid to the City, less its obligation for 70 percent of the costs of administration and collection, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138 shall be paid to the City on a quarterly basis and may be expended by the City for municipal services only and not for education expenditures.~~

Sec. 14a. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 5, § 1214 is amended to read:

§ 1214. LOCAL OPTION TAXES

Local option taxes are authorized under this section for the purpose of affording the City an alternative method of raising municipal revenues. Accordingly:

* * *

~~(3) Of the taxes reported under this section, 70 percent shall be paid to the City for calendar years thereafter. Such revenues~~ The City's local option tax revenue may be expended by the City for municipal services only and not for educational expenditures. The remaining amount of the taxes reported shall be remitted monthly to the State Treasurer for deposit in the PILOT Special Fund set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 3709. Taxes due to the City under this section shall be paid by the State on a quarterly basis.

Sec. 14b. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 127, § 1308a is amended to read:

§ 1308a. SALES, ROOMS, MEALS, AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

TAX

* * *

~~(d) Of the taxes collected under this section, 70 percent~~ The share of taxes due to the Town pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138 shall be paid to the Town on a quarterly basis ~~to the Town~~ after reduction for the costs of administration and collection under subsection (c) of this section. Revenues received by the Town may be expended for municipal services only and not for education expenditures. Any remaining revenues shall be deposited in the PILOT Special Fund established by 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

Sec. 14c. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 171, § 18 is amended to read:

§ 18. LOCAL OPTIONS TAX

The Selectboard is authorized to impose a one percent sales tax, a one percent meals and alcoholic beverages tax, and a one percent rooms tax upon sales within the Town that are subject to the State of Vermont tax on sales, meals, alcoholic beverages, and rooms. The Town tax shall be implemented in

the event the State local options tax as provided for in 24 V.S.A. § 138 is repealed or the 70-percent allocation to the town is reduced. A tax imposed under the authority of this section shall be collected and administered by the Vermont Department of Taxes in accordance with State law governing the State tax on sales, meals, alcoholic beverages, and rooms. ~~The amount of 70 percent of the taxes collected shall be paid to the Town, and the remaining amount of the taxes collected shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Pilot Special Fund first established in 1997 Acts and Resolves No. 60, § 89 pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138.~~ The cost of administration and collection of this tax shall be paid ~~70 percent by the Town and 30 percent by the State from the Pilot Special Fund pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138.~~ The tax to be paid to the Town, ~~less its obligation for the 70 percent of the costs of administration and collection, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138~~ shall be paid to the Town on a quarterly basis and may be expended by the Town for municipal services only and not for education expenditures. The Town may repeal the local option taxes by Australian ballot vote.

Which was agreed to.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Birong of Vergennes** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 7, Division of Emergency Management; all-hazard and weather alert systems for municipal corporations, by striking out the section heading in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 7. 20 V.S.A. § 52 is added to read:

§ 52. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; ALL-HAZARD
AND WEATHER ALERT SYSTEMS FOR MUNICIPAL
CORPORATIONS

Which was agreed to.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Wood of Waterbury** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 2, 20 V.S.A. § 41, in subdivision (4)(B), by striking out the subdivision in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (4)(B) to read as follows:

(B) municipal plans and systems, developed in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services, to ensure that vulnerable populations, including older Vermonters and individuals with disabilities, within the municipality are contacted and visited to ensure their safety and wellness during an all-hazard event;

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 472

House bill, entitled

An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation

H. 479

House bill, entitled

An act relating to housing

H. 488

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Committee Bill; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 491**

Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock spoke for the Committee on Ways and Means.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to setting the homestead property tax yields and the nonhomestead property tax rate

Having appeared on the Notice Calendar and appearing on the Action Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 106**

Rep. Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, for the Committee on General and Housing, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to selling real property within a FEMA mapped flood hazard area

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 27 V.S.A. § 380 is amended to read:

§ 380. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION; CONVEYANCE OF REAL
ESTATE

(a) Prior to or as part of a contract for the conveyance of real property, the seller shall provide the buyer with the following information:

(1) whether the real property is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency mapped special flood hazard area;

(2) whether the real property is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency mapped moderate flood hazard area;

(3) whether the real property was subject to flooding or flood damage while the seller possessed the property, including flood damage from inundation or from flood-related erosion or landslide damage; and

(4) whether the seller maintains flood insurance on the real property.

(b) The failure of the seller to provide the buyer with the information required under subsection (a) of this section is grounds for the buyer to terminate the contract prior to transfer of title or occupancy, whichever occurs earlier.

(c) ~~A buyer~~ If a seller of real estate who fails to receive provide the information required to be disclosed by a seller under subsection (a) of this section, ~~a buyer~~ may bring an action to recover from the seller the amount of the buyer's damages and reasonable attorney's fees. The buyer may also seek punitive damages when the seller knowingly failed to provide the required information.

(d) A seller shall not be liable for damages under this section for any error, inaccuracy, or omission of any information required to be disclosed to the buyer under subsection (a) of this section:

(1) when the error, inaccuracy, or omission was based on information provided by a public body or by another person with a professional license or special knowledge who provided a written report that the seller reasonably believed to be correct and that was provided by the seller to the buyer; or

(2) if the seller, after reasonable attempt to identify whether the location of the real property is within a Federal Emergency Management Agency mapped special or moderate flood hazard area, notifies the buyer that the seller cannot reasonably determine if the real property is located within a special or moderate flood hazard area and the seller notifies the buyer of the requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

(e) Noncompliance with the requirements of this section shall not affect the marketability of title of a real property.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on General and Housing agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 493

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury spoke for the Committee on Appropriations.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Speaker presiding.

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Scheu of Middlebury** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. B.713, by striking out “Natural resources” and inserting in lieu thereof “Land use review”

Second: In Sec. B.1100, miscellaneous fiscal year one-time appropriations, in subdivision (e)(1), by striking out “Access’s” and inserting in lieu thereof “Access”

Third: In Sec. B.1100, miscellaneous fiscal year one-time appropriations, in subdivision (n)(4), by striking out “Middle Income” and inserting in lieu thereof “Middle-Income”

Fourth: In Sec. B.1100, miscellaneous fiscal year one-time appropriations, in subdivision (n)(5), by inserting “2.0” following “Vermont Housing Improvement Program”

Fifth: In Sec. B.1100, miscellaneous fiscal year one-time appropriations, in subdivision (n)(7), by striking out “a Universal Design study” and inserting in lieu thereof “the Residential Universal Design Study Committee”

Sixth: In Sec. B.1100, miscellaneous fiscal year one-time appropriations, in subdivision (q)(1), by striking out “Vermont” and inserting in lieu thereof “Volunteer”

Seventh: In Sec. E.100, positions, following subsection (b), by inserting a new subdivision (c) to read as follows:

(c) The extension of nine limited services positions is authorized until June 30, 2026:

(1) Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs:

(A) six Deputy State’s Attorneys;

(B) two Legal Assistants; and

(C) one Victim Advocate.

Eighth: In Sec. E.321, general assistance emergency housing, in subdivision (b)(1), in the third sentence, by striking out “September 15” and inserting in lieu thereof “July 1”

Ninth: In Sec. E.333, developmental disability services payment reform, in subsection (a), by striking out “,” following “Aging”

Tenth: In Sec. E.500, education finance and administration, in subsection (a), in the first sentence, by striking out “funds appropriated in this section will” and inserting in lieu thereof “appropriation in Sec. B.500 of this act shall”

Eleventh: In Sec. E.514, state teachers’ retirement system, in subsection (a), by striking out “State Teachers’ Retirement System (STRS)” and inserting in lieu thereof “Vermont State Teachers’ Retirement System”

Twelfth: In Sec. E.603, Vermont state colleges allied health, in subsection (a), following “Global Commitment” by striking out “fund” and inserting in lieu thereof “Fund” and in subsection (b), following “Global Commitment” by striking out “funds appropriated” and inserting in lieu thereof “appropriation”

Which was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Nelson of Derby** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 104. Nays, 38.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Mihaly of Calais
Bartholomew of Hartland	Eastes of Guilford	Minier of South Burlington
Bartley of Fairfax	Emmons of Springfield	Morris of Springfield
Berbeco of Winooski	Feltus of Lyndon	Morrissey of Bennington
Birong of Vergennes	Garofano of Essex	Morrow of Weston
Bishop of Colchester	Goldman of Rockingham *	Mrowicki of Putney
Black of Essex	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Bluemle of Burlington	Graning of Jericho	North of Ferrisburgh *
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Greer of Bennington	Noyes of Wolcott
Boyden of Cambridge	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nugent of South Burlington
Brady of Williston	Hango of Berkshire	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Branagan of Georgia	Harple of Glover	Ode of Burlington
Brown of Richmond	Harrison of Chittenden	Olson of Starksboro
Burke of Brattleboro	Headrick of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Holcombe of Norwich	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burrows of West Windsor	Hooper of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Burt of Cabot	Houghton of Essex Junction	Quimby of Lyndon
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Howard of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Hunter of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Casey of Montpelier	James of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kascenska of Burke	Sheldon of Middlebury
Cina of Burlington	Kimball of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover
Cole of Hartford	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Conlon of Cornwall *	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stevens of Waterbury
Cooper of Pownal *	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Corcoran of Bennington	Lalley of Shelburne	Surprenant of Barnard
Cordes of Bristol	LaLonde of South Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Critchlow of Colchester	LaMont of Morristown	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Laroche of Franklin	Torre of Moretown
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Lipsky of Stowe	Walker of Swanton
Dodge of Essex *	Long of Newfane	Waszazak of Barre City
Dolan of Essex Junction	Marcotte of Coventry	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Donahue of Northfield	Masland of Thetford	White of Waitsfield
Duke of Burlington	McCann of Montpelier	Wood of Waterbury
	McFaun of Barre Town	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bosch of Clarendon	Keyser of Rutland City	Page of Newport City
Boutin of Barre City	Labor of Morgan	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Logan of Burlington	Pinsonault of Dorset
Casey of Hubbardton	Luneau of St. Albans City	Powers of Waterford
Charlton of Chester *	Maguire of Rutland City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Coffin of Cavendish	Malay of Pittsford	Southworth of Walden
Demar of Enosburgh	McCoy of Poultney	Steady of Milton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Micklus of Milton	Tagliavia of Corinth
Galfetti of Barre Town	Morgan, L. of Milton	Taylor of Milton

Goslant of Northfield
Harvey of Castleton
Higley of Lowell
Howland of Rutland Town

Morgan, M. of Milton
Nelson of Derby *
Nielsen of Brandon
Oliver of Sheldon

Toof of St. Albans Town
Wells of Brownington
Winter of Ludlow

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Austin of Colchester
Bailey of Hyde Park
Burditt of West Rutland

Christie of Hartford
Hooper of Randolph
McGill of Bridport

White of Bethel

Rep. Charlton of Chester provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am in admiration and have respect for the Committee that put the work into this budget, and I have a great sense of relief that I am on a different committee. My no vote reflects my conviction and hope that we will reconsider our allocations to housing. If we do not aggressively address this crisis, we will not solve homelessness, we will not attract a workforce, and we will not retain the one we have – and they shoulder our income tax and most of our sales tax, and we will not grow the grand list of our communities. Our Education Fund depends on that tax and our municipalities depend on that tax. We will have a committee looking at a budget in a few years whose task will be heartbreaking because we will not be able to sustain this kind of budget if we do not deal with this issue more assertively.”

Rep. Conlon of Cornwall provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I join in the appreciation of the difficult work of the House Appropriations Committee and voted yes. The Committee cut funding for PCB remediation because it did not receive the information it needed to make an informed decision. I call on the Administration to make this right in the Senate, and I look forward to the State meeting its obligation to affected schools.”

Rep. Cooper of Pownal provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am voting yes for two reasons. First, in this budget, I see an awareness of the health care concerns shared by many Vermonters in the rural district I represent, and second, in the 11-0 vote of your Committee on Appropriations, I see the commitment to oversight, accountability, and compromise that brings out our best work.”

Rep. Dodge of Essex provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes because I support this balanced and thoughtfully negotiated budget because it addresses our housing crisis through a mix of innovative programs and time-tested investments. Vermonters want and need us to move forward.”

Rep. Goldman of Rockingham provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Our health care system is extremely fragile at this moment. Primary care practices are closing, our major insurer is on the verge of collapse, DAs and SSAs are severely underfunded, and many of our hospitals are operating in the red. I voted yes on this budget as it begins the path toward sustainability by addressing the Institute of Healthcare Improvement’s triple aim of health care improvement of improving access and quality and reducing cost.”

Rep. Nelson of Derby provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Although the budget contains some of the asks that I championed, the reduction by 40% in the amount of \$4 million to the Environmental Contingency Fund for PCB testing/remediation in schools concerns me and my constituents. My school, of which I am a school board member, used \$8.5 million last year and I fear we are far from finished. We are culpable now that we know our levels of contamination.”

Rep. North of Ferrisburgh provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes in recognition of the hard work of the Committee to reach a compromise, voting out 11-0, and in gratitude for the members of the various parties who arrived at a common ground solution, and I encourage all other committees to do the same.”

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 342

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Was taken up and, pending third reading, on motion of **Rep. Marcotte of Coventry**, action on the bill was postponed until March 28, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 32

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 18. An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers.

S. 122. An act relating to economic and workforce development.

S. 123. An act relating to miscellaneous changes to laws related to motor vehicles.

S. 125. An act relating to workers' compensation and collective bargaining rights.

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

Adjournment

At four o'clock and fifty minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, March 28, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by former Rep. Chip Troiano of Stannard.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 495

By Rep. Hooper of Randolph,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the consideration of consolidated school district boundaries using existing regional structures

To the Committee on Education.

H. 496

By Reps. Lalley of Shelburne, Austin of Colchester, Cooper of Pownal, Dodge of Essex, Headrick of Burlington, Keyser of Rutland City, Logan of Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, Pezzo of Colchester, Rachelson of Burlington, Tomlinson of Winooski, and Torre of Moretown,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to continuing care retirement communities

To the Committee on Human Services.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 18

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 122

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to economic and workforce development

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

S. 123

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to laws related to motor vehicles

To the Committee on Transportation.

S. 125

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to workers' compensation and collective bargaining rights

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 342**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Marcotte of Coventry, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel** moved to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) The General Assembly finds that Vermont's judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and other public servants play an essential role in the functioning of the government of the State of Vermont and that the nature of their official duties regularly places them in danger of death, serious physical injury, and other reprisals from members of the public.

(b) Violence to and intimidation of such public servants and their families is on the rise and public access to the personal information of these individuals can be and has been used to facilitate violence and intimidation. The personal information of these individuals is of negligible value to the public interest or public discourse.

(c) Accordingly, the provisions of this act are both necessary and appropriate to protect the privacy, safety, and security of public servants and to prevent interference in the administration of justice and the operation of government in the State of Vermont.

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. chapter 62 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 62. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

* * *

Subchapter 5. Data Brokers

* * *

**§ 2448. NONDISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVANT
PERSONAL INFORMATION**

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Authorized agent" means any of the following persons or entities authorized to submit or revoke a request for the redaction or nondisclosure of

protected information on behalf of a covered person and to engage in communications and enforcement related to the request:

(A) a designated trustee or other agent pursuant to a written power of attorney or other legal instrument on behalf of any covered person who is physically or mentally incapacitated;

(B) a parent or legal guardian on behalf of any child who is a minor and who is otherwise entitled to address redaction or nondisclosure pursuant to this section; and

(C) a person or entity who has been appointed pursuant to a notarized document by a covered person to act for the covered person for the submission or revocation of requests for redaction or nondisclosure of protected information.

(2)(A) “Covered person” means any of the following individuals who are either currently or formerly:

(i) a judge, law enforcement officer, federal law enforcement officer, prosecutor, public defender, parole and probation officer, or member of the Vermont Parole Board;

(ii) an employee of:

(I) the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families;

(II) the Vermont Human Rights Commission;

(III) the Department of Corrections;

(IV) the Department of Public Safety, including the Vermont State Police;

(V) the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs; or

(VI) any court in the State; and

(iii) an investigator, victims advocate, mental health crisis worker, or embedded crisis specialist that is employed by or works on a contract basis for any of the entities listed in subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (a)(2)(A).

(B) “Covered person” also includes the immediate family of individuals identified in subdivisions (A)(i)–(iii) of this subdivision (a)(2).

(3) “Data broker” has the same meaning as set forth in section 2430 of this title. As used in this section, “data broker” excludes governmental agencies and their representatives acting in their official capacities.

(4) “Disclose,” “disclosing,” or “disclosure” means to solicit, sell, manufacture, give, provide, lend, trade, mail, deliver, transfer, post, publish, distribute, circulate, disseminate, present, exhibit, advertise, offer, or include within a searchable list or database, regardless of whether any person has actually searched the list or database. “Disclose” does not include an organization maintaining protected information completely inaccessible and unviewable to any person outside of the organization.

(5) “Federal law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(1) but is limited to those individuals who work or reside in Vermont.

(6) “Home address” means a partial or complete street address or other information that reveals a home’s location, including tax parcel ID, legal property description, or geographic coordinates.

(7) “Home telephone number” means any telephone number used primarily for personal communications, including a landline or cellular telephone number.

(8) “Immediate family” has the same meaning as in 3 V.S.A. § 1201.

(9) “Judge” means any justice, judge, or magistrate of a State court or of a federal court located in Vermont, or any person who serves as a judge, justice, or magistrate in another state who maintains a home address in Vermont.

(10) “Law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in 20 V.S.A. § 2351a.

(11) “Parole and probation officer” means:

(A) a corrections services specialist employed by the Department of Corrections; or

(B) a parole or probation officer employed by a Vermont county or municipality.

(12) “Prosecutor” means a Vermont State’s Attorney or Deputy State’s Attorney, the Attorney General or an Assistant Attorney General, or a U.S. Attorney or an Assistant U.S. Attorney who works in Vermont.

(13) “Protected information” means a covered person’s:

(A) home address, including primary residence and any secondary residences;

(B) home telephone number;

(C) personal email address;

(D) Social Security number or driver's license number; and

(E) license plate number or other unique identifiers of a vehicle owned, leased, or regularly used by a covered person.

(14) "Public defender" means the Defender General, Deputy Defender General, public defenders, or deputy public defenders who provide legal services to persons in need as set forth in 13 V.S.A. chapter 163.

(b) Nondisclosure of protected information.

(1) A covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person has the right through this section to send a notice to a data broker requesting that the data broker cease disclosure or redisclosure of the covered person's protected information.

(2) Upon a data broker receiving physical or electronic notice from a covered person, or an authorized agent of the covered person, requesting that the data broker cease disclosing or redisclosing protected information of the covered person, the data broker shall cease disclosing the protected information not later than 15 days after receipt of the notice and shall not disclose or redisclose the protected information after that time.

(3) The notice as set forth in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be in a form and manner provided by the Attorney General, except that:

(A) the notice shall require that the covered person provide the covered person's full name along with the specific protected information of the covered person that is being disclosed by the data broker;

(B) no prior verification of a covered person's or authorized agent's status shall be required for the notice; and

(C) the notice shall include a disclaimer that ceasing disclosure of a covered person's protected information may:

(i) complicate certain business transactions; and

(ii) not result in the covered person's protected information being totally removed from the internet.

(c) Penalties for violations.

(1) Attorney General enforcement.

(A) A data broker that receives a notice from a covered person or the authorized agent of the covered person pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section that discloses or rediscloses the covered person's protected information more than 15 days after receiving the notice is in violation of this section and

shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000.00 for each violation.

(B) The Attorney General has the same authority to adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section and to conduct civil investigations, enter into assurances of discontinuance, bring civil actions, and take other enforcement actions as provided under chapter 63, subchapter 1 of this title.

(C) The Attorney General shall create a form on its website where a covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person is able to provide notice to the Attorney General that more than 15 days have passed since the covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person submitted a notice to a data broker pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section and that the data broker continues to disclose or has redisclosed the covered person's protected information. This form shall require, at minimum, that the covered person provide the name of the:

(i) data broker; and

(ii) covered person and the specific protected information of the covered person that is being disclosed by the data broker.

(2) Private action.

(A) Subject to the requirements in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (2), a data broker that receives a notice from a covered person or the authorized agent of the covered person pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section and that discloses or rediscloses the covered person's protected information more than 15 days after receiving the notice is in violation of this section and is subject to a civil action brought in Superior Court by the covered person for the following:

(i) damages, calculated as the greater of actual damages or liquidated damages computed at the rate of \$1,000.00 for each violation of this section;

(ii) punitive damages upon proof of willful or reckless disregard of the law;

(iii) reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred; and

(iv) any other preliminary and equitable relief as the court determines to be appropriate.

(B) A data broker that ceases disclosing the protected information of a covered person not more than 15 days after being served with process in a civil suit brought by the covered person pursuant to subdivision (A) of this

subdivision (2) shall only be liable to the covered person for reasonable attorney's fees and court costs in the civil action. A data broker is not eligible for the exception provided this subdivision (B) if the data broker:

(i) more than 15 days after receiving notice from a covered person or the authorized agent of a covered person pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section discloses additional protected information of the covered person; or

(ii) rediscloses protected information of the covered person after having received notice pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section.

(3) Standard of fault. In any judicial proceeding pursuant to this section, the standard of fault shall be ordinary negligence. It shall not be a defense to liability in a judicial proceeding that the covered person's protected information is or was available to the public from other sources, on the internet or otherwise, or available by inspection of public records.

(d) Accessing information. A covered person or an authorized agent accessing a data broker's website or other public application for the purpose of determining whether the covered person's protected information is being disclosed shall not, as a result of such access, be deemed to have agreed on behalf of the covered person to any website terms and conditions with respect to the covered person's rights under this section.

(e) Limitations.

(1) A disclosure of protected information shall not constitute a violation of this section if the disclosure is:

(A) made with the express or standing authorization of the covered person, provided that the authorization is provided subsequent to the relevant nondisclosure request; or

(B) for the sole purpose of facilitating a transaction initiated by the covered person.

(2) This section does not apply to a data broker in a disclosure pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting an employer from providing employee information to the Vermont Labor Relations Board or to employee organizations that is required under Vermont law.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a data broker to delete protected information.

Sec. 3. FORM OF NOTICE

The Attorney General shall publish the form of notice pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 2448(b)(3) not later than 90 days after July 1, 2025, provided that until such form is published, covered persons and their authorized agents may use their own form of written notice that:

(1) references this section;

(2) identifies the sender as a covered person or an authorized agent acting on behalf of a covered person;

(3) provides the covered person's full name along with the specific protected information of the covered person that is being disclosed by the data broker; and

(4) requests that the data broker cease disclosing the specific protected information of the covered person.

Sec. 4. STUDY AND REPORT ON PUBLIC AGENCY COMPLIANCE

(a) Study. The Agency of Digital Services, in consultation with the Agency of Administration, the Office of the Secretary of State, the Office of the Attorney General, and with other State agencies as requested by the Agency, shall conduct a study to determine the various considerations and impacts on State public agencies if public agencies were required to conform to the disclosure policies set forth in this act. The Agency shall meet with and receive input from relevant stakeholders in conducting its study, including the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association. The Agency shall consider the following in its study:

(1) if public agencies were required to cease disclosing the protected information of covered persons:

(A) the extent to which public agencies would currently be able to accommodate these requests;

(B) the fiscal and resource impact on public agencies;

(C) whether additional staffing or training would be needed to comply;

(D) the degree to which risk can be mitigated through State or local policy; and

(E) determining which statutes, regulations, and administrative policies require amending in order to accomplish the goal of public agencies being able to cease the disclosure of protected information of covered persons;

(2) how other states have implemented similar requirements on their public agencies, including the types of penalties levied for noncompliance;

(3) the feasibility of creating a State office to manage all statewide requests to cease disclosing protected information; and

(4) any additional related areas of study as determined by the Agency.

(b) Report. On or before December 1, 2026, the Agency of Digital Services shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with a summary of its findings pursuant to the study set forth in subsection (a) of this section. The Agency shall also include in its report its recommendations for legislative action and policy modification as well as a suggested timeline for the implementation of the disclosure policies on public agencies.

Sec. 5. DELAYED START FOR PRIVATE ACTION

The private action provided to a covered person pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 2448(c)(2) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Marcotte of Coventry and others?, **Rep. Harvey of Castleton** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Marcotte of Coventry and others?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 106. Nays, 38.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Eastes of Guilford	Mihaly of Calais
Austin of Colchester	Emmons of Springfield	Minier of South Burlington
Bartholomew of Hartland	Feltus of Lyndon	Morris of Springfield
Berbeco of Winooski	Garofano of Essex	Morrow of Weston
Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho *	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington	Nugent of South Burlington
Bosch of Clarendon	Gregoire of Fairfield	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Hango of Berkshire *	Ode of Burlington
Boutin of Barre City	Harple of Glover	Olson of Starksboro
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Page of Newport City
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Pezzo of Colchester
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Pouch of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Hooper of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford

Burkhardt of South Burlington	Houghton of Essex Junction	Quimby of Lyndon
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hunter of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	James of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Kascenska of Burke	Sheldon of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover
Charlton of Chester	Kleppner of Burlington	Southworth of Walden
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Squirrel of Underhill
Coffin of Cavendish	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Cole of Hartford	LaLey of Shelburne	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cooper of Pownal	LaMont of Morristown	Taylor of Milton
Corcoran of Bennington	Lipsky of Stowe	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Torre of Moretown
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	Waszazak of Barre City
Dodge of Essex	Marcotte of Coventry	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dolan of Essex Junction	Masland of Thetford	Wells of Brownington
Donahue of Northfield	McCann of Montpelier	White of Waitsfield
Duke of Burlington	McGill of Bridport	White of Bethel
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Micklus of Milton	Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Higley of Lowell	Nelson of Derby
Bartley of Fairfax	Howland of Rutland Town	Nielsen of Brandon
Branagan of Georgia	Keyser of Rutland City	North of Ferrisburgh
Burditt of West Rutland	Labor of Morgan	Oliver of Sheldon
Canfield of Fair Haven	Laroche of Franklin	Parsons of Newbury
Casey of Hubbardton	Luneau of St. Albans City	Pinsonault of Dorset
Demar of Enosburgh	Maguire of Rutland City	Powers of Waterford
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Pritchard of Pawlet
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney *	Steady of Milton
Galfetti of Barre Town	McFaun of Barre Town	Tagliavia of Corinth
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, L. of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Harrison of Chittenden	Morgan, M. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
Harvey of Castleton	Morrissey of Bennington	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burt of Cabot	Dickinson of St. Albans	Stone of Burlington
Christie of Hartford	Town	Toof of St. Albans Town

Rep. Graning of Jericho provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

H.342 is designed to be limited in scope, provide a safe harbor for businesses that act in good faith, and offer some protection to our public servants who stand on the front line to protect all Vermonters.”

Rep. Hango of Berkshire provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Although I have serious reservations about the private right of action that remains in this bill, I vote yes on the amendment to acknowledge the work done by the Committee.”

Rep. McCoy of Poultney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I look forward to passing a data privacy bill. Unfortunately, I cannot support this amendment as it contains a private right of action.”

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and pending the question, Shall the bill pass? **Rep. Harvey of Castleton** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number.

Pending the call of the roll, **Rep. Harvey of Castleton** asked and was granted leave to withdraw his request for a roll call.

Thereafter, the bill passed.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 106

House bill, entitled

An act relating to selling real property within a FEMA mapped flood hazard area

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 218

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

Was taken up and read the third time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill pass?, **Rep. Steady of Milton** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill pass?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 119. Nays, 24.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Emmons of Springfield	McCoy of Poultney *
Austin of Colchester	Feltus of Lyndon	McFaun of Barre Town
Bartholomew of Hartland	Galfetti of Barre Town	McGill of Bridport *
Bartley of Fairfax	Garofano of Essex	Micklus of Milton *
Berbeco of Winooski	Goldman of Rockingham	Mihaly of Calais
Birong of Vergennes	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Minier of South Burlington
Bishop of Colchester	Goslant of Northfield	Morris of Springfield
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho	Morrissey of Bennington
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington *	Morrow of Weston
Bosch of Clarendon	Gregoire of Fairfield	Mrowicki of Putney
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Hango of Berkshire	Nigro of Bennington
Boutin of Barre City *	Harple of Glover	Noyes of Wolcott
Boyden of Cambridge	Harrison of Chittenden	Nugent of South Burlington
Brady of Williston	Headrick of Burlington	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Branagan of Georgia	Holcombe of Norwich	Ode of Burlington
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Olson of Starksboro
Burditt of West Rutland	Hooper of Burlington	Page of Newport City
Burke of Brattleboro	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pezzo of Colchester
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howard of Rutland City	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burrows of West Windsor	Hunter of Manchester	Priestley of Bradford
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	James of Manchester	Pritchard of Pawlet
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kascenska of Burke	Quimby of Lyndon
Casey of Montpelier	Keyser of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Satcowitz of Randolph
Cina of Burlington	Kleppner of Burlington	Scheu of Middlebury
Cole of Hartford	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sheldon of Middlebury
Conlon of Cornwall	Krasnow of South Burlington	Sibilia of Dover
Corcoran of Bennington	LaLley of Shelburne	Squirrell of Underhill
Cordes of Bristol	LaLonde of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Critchlow of Colchester	LaMont of Morristown	Surprenant of Barnard
Demar of Enosburgh	Laroche of Franklin	Sweeney of Shelburne
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Lipsky of Stowe	Taylor of Milton *
Dodge of Essex *	Logan of Burlington *	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dolan of Essex Junction	Long of Newfane	Torre of Moretown
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Luneau of St. Albans City	Waszazak of Barre City
Donahue of Northfield	Maguire of Rutland City	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Duke of Burlington	Marcotte of Coventry	White of Waitsfield
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Masland of Thetford	White of Bethel
Eastes of Guilford	McCann of Montpelier	Winter of Ludlow
		Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Labor of Morgan	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Malay of Pittsford	Pinsonault of Dorset
Casey of Hubbardton	Morgan, L. of Milton	Powers of Waterford
Charlton of Chester	Morgan, M. of Milton	Southworth of Walden
Coffin of Cavendish *	Nelson of Derby	Steady of Milton *

Harvey of Castleton	Nielsen of Brandon	Tagliavia of Corinth
Higley of Lowell	North of Ferrisburgh	Walker of Swanton
Howland of Rutland Town	Oliver of Sheldon	Wells of Brownington

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burt of Cabot	Dickinson of St. Albans	Toof of St. Albans Town
Christie of Hartford	Town	
Cooper of Pownal	Stone of Burlington	

Rep. Boutin of Barre City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes. However, I need to express my deep concern with safe injection sites. My yes vote is not a yes to safe injection sites and I want to make that very clear.”

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I cannot with good conscience support this bill. Although I agree with much of this bill, I believe that the 1.1 million dollars for the safe injection site (overdose prevention center) could be better used by funding beds for true drug addiction recovery and transitional housing. The additional 1.1 million dollars toward recovery would serve those with addiction better than providing people a place to continue to use illegal drugs. We should consider that there is a difference between just being alive and really living a full life.”

Rep. Dodge of Essex provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes in favor of Gaetano and all the many family and friends who miss you every single day.”

Rep. Greer of Bennington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Though I have my reservations with a particular item in H.218, I want to thank the Committee on Human Services for working to organize the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. Too many Vermonters and Americans have been devastated by the opioid crisis, and this fund will support many important provisions.”

Rep. Logan of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes in memory of my sister.”

Rep. McCoy of Poultney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While disappointed that the safe injection site funding remains in this bill, I vote yes for all of the prevention programs that will be funded in this bill with the Opioid Settlement Fund money.”

Rep. McGill of Bridport provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes because we must act with compassion and urgency to save our neighbors from preventable deaths and to meet people where they are with dignity and care. I voted yes with unwavering support of this investment in public health in our communities, and in the inherent worth of every Vermonter.”

Rep. Micklus of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While I don’t agree with everything in this bill, the majority of programs this does fund makes it worth my yes.”

Rep. Steady of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

My no vote is due to Section 1 Subdivision (a)(5) regarding the City of Burlington’s overdose prevention center. I support Governor Scott’s veto of this bill last session. I believe the millions of dollars being appropriated for the safe injection site would be better used on recovery sites and/or centers to help people with addiction – many loved ones may be here today. However, I agree with other pieces of the bill.”

Rep. Taylor of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Although I would have rather seen the 1.1 million dollars of opioid settlement money, earmarked for the Opioid Prevention Center, go to other harm reduction methods and beds for treatment, I voted yes because this bill will fund other much needed initiatives to treat those in need.”

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 491**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to setting the homestead property tax yields and the nonhomestead property tax rate

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

**Committee Bill; Favorable Report; Second Reading;
Third Reading Ordered****H. 494**

Rep. Emmons of Springfield spoke for the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

House bill, entitled

An act relating to capital construction and State bonding

Rep. Laroche of Franklin, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Bill Amended; Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 493**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** moved to amend the bill in Sec. E.131, 3 V.S.A. chapter 18, in section 532, in subsection (c), by striking out subdivision (2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (2) to read as follows:

(2) The Treasurer shall provide for, on a uniform basis, an annual increase of each active participant's contribution rate, by not less than one percent, but not more than eight percent, of salary or wages each year. Any such increases shall apply to active participants, including participants by default with an option to opt out or participants who are initiated by affirmative participant election, provided that any increase is subject to the IRA contribution and eligibility limits applicable under the Internal Revenue Code.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Message from the Senate No. 33

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 46. An act relating to the taxation of vehicles used for forestry operations.

S. 71. An act relating to consumer data privacy and online surveillance.

S. 126. An act relating to health care payment and delivery system reform.

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

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 63. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Brattleboro Food Co-op on its 50th anniversary and extending best future wishes.

H.C.R. 64. House concurrent resolution congratulating Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver of Winooski High School on her selection as the 2025 Vermont Teacher of the Year and Jeremy DeMink of Edmunds Middle School in Burlington and Sonya Shedd of Wolcott Elementary School on their recognition as Distinguished Finalists.

H.C.R. 65. House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Awareness Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 66. House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of tourism in the Vermont economy and designating April 10, 2025 as Tourism Economy Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 67. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's planning, in Bennington in 1775, of the successful Vermont initiation of the American War of Independence and the associated expedition to Ticonderoga.

H.C.R. 68. House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designating April 2, 2025 as Manufacturing Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 69. House concurrent resolution designating April 2, 2025 as Early College Day at the State House.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and fifty-three minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 19.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 63

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Brattleboro Food Co-op on its 50th anniversary and extending best future wishes

H.C.R. 64

House concurrent resolution congratulating Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver of Winooski High School on her selection as the 2025 Vermont Teacher of the Year and Jeremy DeMink of Edmunds Middle School in Burlington and Sonya Shedd of Wolcott Elementary School on their recognition as Distinguished Finalists

H.C.R. 65

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Awareness Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 66

House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of tourism in the Vermont economy and designating April 10, 2025 as Tourism Economy Day at the State House

H.C.R. 67

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's planning, in Bennington in 1775, of the successful Vermont initiation of the American War of Independence and the associated expedition to Ticonderoga

H.C.R. 68

House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designating April 2, 2025 as Manufacturing Day at the State House

H.C.R. 69

House concurrent resolution designating April 2, 2025 as Early College Day at the State House

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Elliot Olstad of Lincoln led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 31st day of March, 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 2 An act relating to increasing the minimum age for delinquency proceedings

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 497

By Rep. Casey of Montpelier,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to student freedom of expression rights in school-sponsored media in approved independent schools and postsecondary schools

To the Committee on Education.

H. 498

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting municipal regulation of homelessness and supporting municipal programs to address homelessness

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 499

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for the Institution of Chattel Slavery

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 500

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to automated license plate recognition systems

To the Committee on Transportation.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 46

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the taxation of vehicles used for forestry operations

To the Committee on Ways and Means.

S. 71

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to consumer data privacy and online surveillance

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

S. 126

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to health care payment and delivery system reform

To the Committee on Health Care.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**H. 454**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 59**

Offered by Representative Wood of Waterbury

House concurrent resolution honoring Linda E. Johnson for her outstanding State and national contributions to the prevention of child abuse

Whereas, during her extraordinary 38-year tenure as the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAVT), Linda Johnson devoted considerable energy to developing innovative approaches to combating child abuse, and

Whereas, Linda Johnson provided invaluable leadership and guidance to PCAVT's work that "promotes and supports healthy relationships within families, schools and communities to eliminate child abuse," and

Whereas, her pioneering initiatives have garnered praise, both in Vermont and nationally, where she is a recognized leader in the effort to prevent child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and

Whereas, Linda Johnson developed a deep understanding of the complex issues facing children and their families that might lead to child abuse, and she approached this daunting task compassionately, and

Whereas, as PCAVT executive director, she structured the organization into three departments: the Family Support Programs, the Healthy Relationships Project, and the Safe Environments for Infants and Toddlers services, and the PCAVT collaborates with numerous public and nonprofit organizations, and

Whereas, Linda Johnson directed and actively engaged in PCAVT's effective advocacy campaign that led to State funding for 80 parent support groups, impacting over 1,900 children, and enabling programs to be conducted in each of the five men's prisons in Vermont, and

Whereas, she spearheaded projects that contributed to a 66 percent reduction in the number of child abuse victims and a significant decrease in the prevalence of Shaken Baby Syndrome, and

Whereas, in December 2024, as she concluded her nearly four decades serving as the PCAVT executive director, Linda Johnson was honored as the first recipient of the organization's Lifetime Champion for Children Award, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Linda E. Johnson for her outstanding State and national contributions to the prevention of child abuse, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Linda Johnson and PCAVT.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Recommitted to
Other Committee**

H. 67

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury moved that the Committee on Appropriations be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to legislative operations and government accountability

And that the bill be recommitted to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, which was agreed to.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 494

House bill, entitled

An act relating to capital construction and State bonding

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 91

Rep. McGill of Bridport, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Findings and Legislative Intent * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, Vermont had the fourth highest rate of homelessness in 2024 in that 53 of every 10,000 Vermonters are experiencing homelessness, with only Hawaii, New York, and Oregon experiencing higher rates;

(2) in 2023, according to the same Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, 51 of every 10,000 Vermonters were experiencing homelessness;

(3) according to the Vermont 2024 Point-in-Time Count, there were approximately 3,458 unhoused individuals in Vermont, which represents a 300 percent increase over the 1,110 unhoused individuals prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020;

(4) of the 3,458 unhoused individuals in Vermont identified by the Vermont 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 166 experienced unsheltered homelessness, which is the highest count of unsheltered homeless individuals in Vermont within the past decade;

(5) according to the Vermont 2024 Point-in-Time Count, over 35 percent of those Vermonters experiencing homelessness were unhoused for more than one year and over 72 percent were unhoused for more than 90 days;

(6) according to the Vermont 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 737 of those Vermonters experiencing homelessness were children and youth under 18 years of age and 646 were 55 years of age or older;

(7) according to the Vermont 2024 Point-in-Time Count, Black Vermonters are 5.6 times more likely to be unhoused as compared to white Vermonters;

(8) the 2024 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment notes that 36,000 primary homes are needed in Vermont between 2025–2029, 3,295 of which are needed to address homelessness; and

(9) the 2024 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment notes that “[h]alf of all Vermont renters are cost-burdened, and one-in-four pay more than 50 [percent] of their income on housing costs, putting them at high risk of eviction,” which “is heightened by Vermont’s rental vacancy rate of 3 [percent], which is well below the 5 [percent] rate of a healthy market.”

Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that unsheltered homelessness be eliminated and that homelessness in Vermont be rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 is a step toward ensuring that:

(1) homelessness be reduced in Vermont and interim shelter opportunities be available to provide a stable pathway to permanent housing for all Vermonters experiencing homelessness, including safe shelter options for individuals living in unsheltered homelessness;

(2) Vermont increase the supply of emergency shelter as well as permanent supportive housing that meets the specific needs of individuals;

(3) community components of all shelter types are integrated in a systemic manner;

(4) time limits, night-by-night shelter, relocation between interim shelter sites, and other disruptions in housing stability be eliminated to the extent possible;

(5) Vermont's emergency housing statutes, rules, policies, procedures, and practices be modeled on Housing First principles; and

(6) noncongregate shelter be used to the extent possible.

(c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 replaces the provision of emergency housing through the General Assistance Program established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 21 and the Housing Opportunity Grant Program.

* * * Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to
Housing Program * * *

Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 is added to read:

CHAPTER 22. VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
AND RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING PROGRAM

§ 2201. SHORT TITLE

The Program established in this chapter may be cited as “VHEARTH” or the “VHEARTH Program.”

§ 2202. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of the General Assembly to replace the provision of emergency housing through the General Assistance Program established in chapter 21 of this title and the Housing Opportunity Grant Program and use funds and resources previously attributed to those programs, and any other identified State and federal monies, to fund the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established in this chapter.

§ 2203. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “At-risk of homelessness” means in peril of imminently losing a primary, night-time residence or precariously housed.

(2) “Community action agency” means an agency designated pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 59.

(3) “Community-based shelter” means a shelter that meets the Department’s standards for the operation of shelters.

(4) “Department” means the Department for Children and Families.

(5) “Extreme weather event” means extreme hot or cold temperatures or weather events, such as hurricanes, flooding, or blizzards, that create hazardous conditions for outdoor habitation by humans.

(6) “Homeless” means lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

(7) “Household” means an individual and any dependents for whom the individual is legally responsible and who live and intend to stay in Vermont. “Household” includes individuals who reside together as one economic unit, including those who are married, parties to a civil union, or unmarried.

(8) “Unsheltered homelessness” means sleeping in a location not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.

§ 2204. ESTABLISHMENT; VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCYASSISTANCE AND RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING
PROGRAM

(a) The Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program is established in the Department and shall be operated by community action agencies and a statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic or sexual violence, to the extent funds exist.

(b) Community action agencies shall collaborate with other community partners, including municipalities, the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, Balance of State Continuum of Care, and local housing coalitions. The Program shall utilize coordinated entry and shall utilize, but not duplicate, the work of the community partners. It shall include the following components:

(1) supportive services pursuant to section 2205 of this chapter to assist households experiencing homelessness or those households that are at-risk of homelessness pursuant to section 2205 of this chapter;

(2) extreme weather event shelters operated or caused to be operated by a community action agency pursuant section 2206 of this chapter; and

(3) emergency shelters operated or caused to be operated by a community action agency pursuant to section 2207 of this chapter.

(c) The Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program shall include supportive services and shelters specific to households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence, which shall be provided or caused to be provided by a statewide organization with population-specific service experience pursuant to section 2208 of this section.

§ 2205. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

A community action agency, in collaboration with other community partners, shall offer or cause to be offered the following supportive services, which may vary in terms of manner and extent depending on the level of shelter a household utilizes or whether the household is at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness:

(1) intake assessments and services for diversion from homelessness;

(2) household needs assessments;

(3) individualized household plans to address identified needs;

(4) assistance obtaining and retaining housing, including financial assistance;

(5) referrals to other services and supports;

(6) peer-supported services;

(7) landlord-tenant outreach, education, and conflict resolution;

(8) housing navigation services;

(9) advocacy; and

(10) progress monitoring and interventions.

§ 2206. EXTREME WEATHER EVENT SHELTER

A community action agency shall operate or cause to be operated shelters in the State that shall be used during extreme weather events to shelter any homeless individual who seeks shelter. The community action agencies, in collaboration with community partners, shall prioritize funding for extreme weather event shelters by utilizing data available under this section and considering geographic access. A shelter offered pursuant to this section during an extreme weather event may include time-limited congregate accommodations and may be provided through agreements to municipalities or other entities.

§ 2207. EMERGENCY SHELTERS

(a) Temporary shelter. At a minimum, a community action agency shall serve or cause to be served in a manner that complies with and builds upon the federally required community planning process, households that are prioritized and in need of the services of a temporary shelter. A community action agency may provide or cause to be provided temporary shelter through community-based shelters, temporary use of hotels or motels, lease agreements for full or partial use of an existing building, need-specific shelter arrangements, or other arrangements or combinations of arrangements that comply with the intent of this chapter.

(b) Transitional shelter. A community action agency shall serve or cause to be served households in its region in need of the services of a transitional shelter in a manner that complies with and builds upon the federally required community planning process. A community action agency may provide or cause to be provided transitional shelter through community-based shelter, master grant leases, developing shelter capacity, or other arrangements or combinations of arrangements that comply with the intent of this chapter.

§ 2208. SUPPORTIVE AND SHELTER SERVICES FOR HOUSEHOLDSIMPACTED BY DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

As part of the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program, the Department shall enter into an agreement with a statewide organization with population-specific experience serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence. The organization shall provide or cause to be provided various shelter and case management services that support households.

§ 2209. VHEARTH; DUTIES OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

(a) The community action agencies shall serve or cause to be served households that are experiencing homelessness or that are at risk of

homelessness in the State by providing supportive services, extreme weather event shelter, or emergency shelter pursuant to sections 2204–2207 of this chapter. If a community action agency cannot fulfil its responsibilities under this chapter, the Department shall work with other community action agencies or other appropriate community entities to ensure that there is not a gap in services in a community action agency’s region.

(b) A community action agency providing or causing to provide services in accordance with this chapter shall:

(1) have existing or planned infrastructure to support households in the region, including an established leadership team, a human resources staff, and the ability to receive grant funding and issue subgrants;

(2) have the ability to meet the Department’s reporting requirements, including past history of reporting compliance;

(3) have community connections with other providers in the region, including local housing coalitions, housing providers, providers of coordinated entry, and providers of services to individuals who are older Vermonters, individuals who have disabilities, substance use disorder, or a mental health condition; individuals reentering the community after incarceration; individuals transitioning from the care and custody of the Commissioner for Children and Families; and families with children; and

(4) provide plain language communications to households receiving services.

§ 2210. VHEARTH; DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT

(a) The Agency of Human Services, working with the Department, shall have statewide responsibility for meeting the intent of this chapter, including statewide planning, system development, and the involvement of all the Agency’s departments.

(b) For the purpose of providing administrative oversight and monitoring of the Program established in this chapter, the Department shall:

(1)(A) adopt guidance regarding when extreme weather event shelters shall be operated, including flexibility for regional weather conditions; and

(B) maintain a website with the locations of all extreme weather event shelters;

(2) include as part of any review of a community action agency required pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 59, the community action agency’s ability to perform the requirements of this chapter;

(3)(A) consult with the community action agencies and the statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence pursuant to section 2208 of this chapter, to develop appropriate resource allocations and methods for adjustment that take into account available data, the presence of community-based providers, and customary resource allocation methods, economic indicators, rate of homelessness, rental vacancy rates, and other variables, as appropriate; and

(B) annually, distribute funding to each community action agency and the statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence pursuant to section 2208 of this chapter using the allocation formula developed pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), or if the Department and community action agencies agree, disperse a joint allocation for all community action agencies, which the community action agencies shall determine how to distribute amongst themselves;

(4) consult with the community action agencies and the statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence pursuant to section 2208 of this chapter to develop appropriate measures and methods for accountability of the community action agencies' and the statewide organization's execution of duties under this chapter, including the provision of any previously agreed upon information to enable the Department to evaluate the services provided through grant funds, the effect on households receiving services, and an accounting of expended grant funds;

(5) provide support and technical assistance to the community action agencies, other community partners, and the statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence pursuant to section 2208 of this chapter;

(6) identify specific administrative resources that could be transitioned to community operations;

(7) develop and submit standards for the operation of community-based shelters;

(8) adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, in consultation with the community action agencies and the statewide organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence pursuant to section 2208 of this chapter, as appropriate, for the implementation of this chapter, including accommodations for individuals with a disability.

§ 2211. REGIONAL PLANNING; NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

(a) As part of the plan required pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 59 and the federally required planning and needs assessments for the continuums of care, the community action agencies shall develop a regional needs assessment and planning process, in collaboration with community and State partners, for use in each community action agency's region to inform future plans addressing housing and homelessness in each region of the State. The plans shall include:

(1) addressing progress in reducing the number of households experiencing homelessness in a region;

(2) assessing the rate households placed in permanent housing return to homelessness and the underlying reasons;

(3) identifying resources developed and utilized in the region to address homelessness;

(4) reporting the rate of household participation with coordinated entry processes and case management services;

(5) identifying system gaps and the funding needed to address those gaps, including periodic inflationary adjustments; and

(6) utilizing data, including Vermont's Point-in-Time Count, coordinated entry assessment results, and community conversations.

(b) Each community action agency shall submit plans developed pursuant to this section to the Department in a format prescribed by the Department. The Department shall aggregate the results of these reports and submit the aggregated report to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

§ 2212. USE OF HOTEL AND MOTEL ROOMS

(a) Hotels and motels providing emergency shelter pursuant to this chapter shall comply with Program rules and shall comply with the following:

(1) Department of Health, Licensed Lodging Establishment Rule (CVR 13-140-023); and

(2) Department of Public Safety, Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code (CVR 28-070-001).

(b) Annually, the Department shall propose hotel and motel rates as part of its budget presentation for approval by the General Assembly. A community action agency shall not pay or cause to be paid with State monies a per room, per night basis that exceeds the rate approved by the General Assembly.

(c) To the extent possible, if a hotel or motel is being utilized:

(1) a community action agency shall enter into agreements for the use of blocks of hotel and motel rooms and negotiate the conditions of use for those blocks, including access for providers of case management or other supportive services; and

(2) prioritize the use of hotel and motel room agreements over individual per-room, per-night hotel or motel room use, unless it is not appropriate to a household's needs.

Sec. 4. VERMONT HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND
RESPONSIVE TRANSITION TO HOUSING PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(a) Creation. There is created the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program Implementation Advisory Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the Commissioner for Children and Families and to the community action agencies as defined in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 regarding the design, implementation, and transition to the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established in 33 V.S.A. chapter 22, including advice and recommendations on the implementation plan required pursuant to Sec. 5 of this act.

(b) Membership. The Advisory Committee's membership shall reflect the growing diversity among Vermonters, including individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color, as well as with regard to socioeconomic status, geographic location, gender, sexual identity, and disability status and shall be composed of:

(1) five representatives with lived experience of homelessness, appointed by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and the Balance of State Continuum of Care;

(2) five representatives, one appointed by each of the community action agencies;

(3) one representative, appointed by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance;

(4) one representative, appointed by the Balance of State Continuum of Care;

(5) five representatives of local housing coalitions, including at least two of whom are shelter providers, appointed jointly by the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and the Balance of State Continuum of Care;

(6) the Deputy Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families' Economic Services Division or designee; and

(7) the Director of the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity or designee.

(c) Assistance. The Advisory Committee shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department for Children and Families.

(d) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee to occur on or before July 15, 2025.

(2) The Committee shall select co-chairs from among its members at the first meeting at least one of whom is not a State employee.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Advisory Committee may divide into subcommittees to carry out its duties under this section and subcommittees may include individuals not appointed to the Advisory Committee pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, including representatives of individuals who are older Vermonters, individuals who have disabilities, substance use disorder, or a mental health condition; individuals reentering the community after incarceration; individuals transitioning from the care and custody of the Commissioner for Children and Families; and families with children.

(e) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Advisory Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings annually. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department.

(f) Sunset. The Advisory Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, 2029.

Sec. 5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On or before February 1, 2026, the Department for Children and Families, in collaboration with community action agencies and in consultation with the departments of the Agency of Human Services and the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program Implementation Advisory Committee established pursuant to Sec. 4 of this act, shall submit a plan to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare for the implementation of the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program established by 33 V.S.A. chapter 22 that ensures maximum

flexibility for the use of resources and streamlines processes for Program participants. Specifically, the implementation plan shall address:

(1) funding allocations among the community action agencies and other providers, including for services specific to households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic or sexual violence;

(2) additional State and federal funding and other resources identified for the Program;

(3) appropriate measures and methods of accountability in fulfilling the intent of this act for community action agencies, the organization serving households that are experiencing or that have experienced domestic and sexual violence, and community partners;

(4) appropriate supportive services specific to the level of shelter a household utilizes, or whether the household is at risk of homelessness, or experiencing unsheltered homelessness;

(5) establishing an appeals process that includes a hearing before the Human Services Board and an option for an expedited appeals process;

(6) expanded use of 211 within the intake system;

(7) whether continuation in emergency shelter should include an expectation regarding household participation in case management services or other expectations such as night limits on the use of hotels and motels, and if so, what elements and in what circumstances participation in case management services or other expectations should be applied;

(8) whether the use of emergency shelter should include financial participation, and if so, what that participation should include;

(9) how prioritization should occur for emergency temporary shelter and what priority categories should exist within those parameters;

(10) how to best ensure that there is equitable access to shelter and supportive services for households experiencing homelessness;

(11) the appropriate level of required intake and assessment processes for each of the various levels of shelter that a household may utilize for households that are at risk of homelessness and for households experiencing unsheltered homelessness; and

(12) any anticipated challenges requiring a legislative solution.

* * * Community Action Agencies * * *

Sec. 6. 3 V.S.A. chapter 59 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 59. COMMUNITY SERVICES ACTION AGENCIES

§ 3901. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) Recognizing that the economic well-being and social equity of every Vermonter has long been a fundamental concern of the State, it remains evident that ~~poverty continues to be the lot of~~ a substantial number of Vermont's population continues to experience poverty. It is the policy of ~~this~~ the State to help develop the full potential of each of its citizens so they can contribute to the fullest extent possible to the life of our communities and the State as a whole.

(b) It is the purpose of this chapter to strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts that further this policy through:

(1) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning, coordinating, and managing federal, State, and other sources of assistance related to the problem of poverty;

(2) the better organization and utilization of a range of services related to the needs of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income; and

(3) the broadening of the resource base of programs to secure a more active role in assisting ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income from business, labor, and other groups from the private sector.

§ 3902. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

(a) The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity is hereby authorized to allocate available financial assistance for community ~~services~~ action agencies and programs in accordance with State and federal law and regulation.

(b) The Director may provide financial assistance to community ~~services~~ action agencies for the planning, conduct, administration, and evaluation of community ~~service~~ action programs to provide a range of services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in the community or in areas of the community where poverty is a particularly acute problem. Components of those services and activities may involve, without limitation of other activities and supporting facilities designed to assist ~~low income~~ participants with low income:

(1) to secure and retain meaningful employment;

(2) to obtain adequate education;

- (3) to make better use of available income;
- (4) ~~to provide and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment~~ have access to safe, secure, permanent housing;
- (5) to obtain prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services ~~for the prevention of narcotics addiction, alcoholism, and for the rehabilitation of narcotic addicts and alcoholics~~ individuals with substance use disorder;
- (6) to obtain emergency assistance through loans and grants to meet immediate and urgent individual and family needs, including the need for health services, nutritious food, housing, and unemployment-related assistance;
- (7) to remove obstacles and solve personal and family problems ~~which~~ that block achievement of self-sufficiency;
- (8) to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;
- (9) to make more frequent and effective use of other programs related to the purposes of this chapter; and
- (10) to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social service programs to ~~assure~~ ensure the effective delivery of such services to ~~low-income~~ persons; with low income and to encourage the use of entities in the private sector of the community in efforts to ameliorate poverty in the community.

(c) The Director is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to chapter 25 of this title appropriate to the carrying out of this chapter and the purposes thereof.

§ 3903. DESIGNATION OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND
ACTIVITIES TO AMELIORATE OR ELIMINATE POVERTY

The Director shall designate private nonprofit community based organizations ~~who~~ that have demonstrated or ~~who~~ that can demonstrate the ability to provide services and activities as defined in subsection 3902(b) of this title as community ~~services~~ action agencies.

§ 3904. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCY PLAN

Each designated community ~~services~~ action agency shall determine the need for activities and services within the area served by the agency and shall thereafter prepare a community services plan ~~which~~ that describes the method by which the agency will provide those services. The plan shall include a schedule for the anticipated provision of new or additional services and shall specify the resources ~~which~~ that are needed by and available to the agency to implement the plan. The community services plan shall be completed every

three years and updated annually. The plan shall include the regional needs assessment required under 33 V.S.A. § 2211.

§ 3905. COMMUNITY SERVICES ACTION AGENCIES;

ADMINISTRATION

(a) Each community ~~services~~ action agency shall administer its programs as set out in the community services plan and as approved by its board of directors.

(b) Each board of a nonprofit community-based organization that is designated a community ~~services~~ action agency under section 3903 of this chapter shall have an executive committee of not more than seven members who shall be representative of the composition of the board and the board shall be so constituted that:

* * *

(2) one-third of the members of the board are persons chosen in accordance with election procedures adequate to ~~assure~~ ensure that they are representative of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income in the area served; and

(3) the remainder of the members of the board are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major groups and interests in the community.

(c) Each member of ~~the a~~ board selected to represent a specific geographic area within a community shall reside in the area ~~he or she~~ the member represents. ~~No person selected under subdivisions (2) or (3) of subsection (b) as a member of a board shall serve on such board for more than five consecutive years, or more than a total of 10 years~~ Each board shall adopt term limits to govern its members.

* * * Appropriations * * *

Sec. 7. APPROPRIATION; TRANSITION PLANNING

In fiscal year 2026, \$10,000,000.00 of one-time funding is appropriated from the General Fund as follows:

(1) \$6,500,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families for distribution to the community action agencies and the statewide organization serving households experiencing or who have experienced domestic and sexual violence;

(2) \$500,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families for contractual and other system transformation assistance; and

(3) \$3,000,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families for the continued development of shelter capacity in the State.

Sec. 8. FUTURE APPROPRIATIONS; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that in fiscal year 2027 and thereafter, equivalent funds and resources, base and one-time, used in fiscal year 2025 for General Assistance emergency housing and the Housing Opportunity Grant Program be redesignated for the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapter 22.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that Sec. 3 (Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program”

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Human Services.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Human Services agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 34

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 127. An act relating to housing and housing development.

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

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 154. An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 20. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 4, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and fifty-six minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Woodman "Woody" Page of Newport City.

Senate Bill Referred

S. 127

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to housing and housing development

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on General and Housing.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

S. 3

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 20**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 20. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 4, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, April 4, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 68**

Offered by Representatives Cooper of Pownal, Austin of Colchester, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartley of Fairfax, Birong of Vergennes, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Corcoran of Bennington, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Duke of Burlington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Headrick of Burlington, Higley of Lowell, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Houghton of Essex Junction, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Luneau of St. Albans City, Masland of Thetford, Micklus of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibilia of Dover, Southworth of Walden, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, Waszazak of Barre City, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Winter of Ludlow, and Wood of Waterbury

Offered by Senators Bongartz, Brennan, Clarkson, Douglass, Hart, Ingalls, Major, Plunkett, Weeks, Westman, White, and Williams

House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designating April 2, 2025 as Manufacturing Day at the State House

Whereas, manufacturing is a vital pillar of Vermont's economy, strengthening both rural and urban communities, supplying globally recognized businesses, and driving innovation across diverse industries, ensuring the State's economic resilience and competitiveness, and

Whereas, Vermont's manufacturing industry generates close to \$3 billion, an economic impact representing over 8 percent of the State's GDP, and

Whereas, manufacturing businesses constitute approximately 10.5 percent of Vermont's private sector workforce, supporting 30,000 jobs, and

Whereas, Vermont's manufacturing jobs typically offer wages above the State's average, providing workers with greater economic mobility; and supporting and promoting manufacturing jobs with competitive wages is essential to attracting and retaining talent while fostering long-term economic stability and growth in Vermont, and

Whereas, manufacturers in our State contribute significantly to promoting strategic relationships between the State and neighboring regions, including New England, New York, Canada, and the broader local and global economy, *now therefore be it*

Resolved the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly celebrates the role of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designates April 2, 2025 as Manufacturing Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Associated Industries of Vermont, the Vermont Regional Development Corporations, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 69

Offered by Representatives Marcotte of Coventry, Bosch of Clarendon, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Micklus of Milton, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel

House concurrent resolution designating April 2, 2025 as Early College Day at the State House

Whereas, the percentage of Vermont high school students pursuing postsecondary education has declined significantly in recent years, and

Whereas, an important antidote to this trend is the Early College Program (ECP) that enables high school students simultaneously to complete their senior year and freshman year of college, and

Whereas, the enactment of 2013 Acts and Resolves No. 77, “An act... encouraging flexible pathways to secondary school completion,” updated Vermont’s long history of offering alternative methods to achieve high school graduation, and this act was designed to improve postsecondary readiness and enrollment, and

Whereas, the ECP established in Act 77 represents approximately 0.4 percent of the expenditures from the Education Fund, and it is intended to encourage postsecondary education enrollment among students who might not otherwise consider this option, and

Whereas, demonstrable gains have occurred during the past three years in the equitable admission of students into the ECP at the Community College of Vermont, including a 250 percent increase in the enrollment of students with low income, and

Whereas, Vermont associate degree graduates are among the most likely in the country to realize a positive return on their investment, a figure that stands at 79 percent according to the Strada Education Foundation, and

Whereas, the ECP has a major influence in directing the personal postsecondary education and career aspirations of the State’s students, and it prospectively strengthens the future Vermont workforce, and

Whereas, today, April 2, 2025, ECP enrollees who are studying at the Community College of Vermont are visiting the State House, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 2, 2025 as Early College Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the president of the Community College of Vermont and the Secretary of Education.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 91**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and twenty-seven minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, April 3, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Thomas Charlton of Chester.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee****S. 125**

Rep. Marcotte of Coventry moved that the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be relieved of Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to workers' compensation and collective bargaining rights

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on General and Housing, which was agreed to.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered****S. 9**

Rep. Oliver of Sheldon, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. § 5134 is amended to read:

§ 5134. EMERGENCY RELIEF

(a) In accordance with the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure, a person other than a family or household member as defined in 15 V.S.A. § 1101(2) may file a complaint for a temporary order against stalking or sexual assault. ~~Such complaint~~ Stalking complaints shall be filed during regular court hours. The plaintiff shall submit an affidavit in support of the order. The court may issue a temporary order under this chapter ex parte, without notice to the defendant, upon motion and findings by the court that the defendant has stalked or sexually assaulted the plaintiff. The court may order the defendant to stay away from the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both, and may make any other such order it deems necessary to protect the plaintiff or the plaintiff's children, or both.

* * *

Sec. 2. 12 V.S.A. § 5135(b) is amended to read:

(b) A defendant who attends a hearing held under section 5133 or 5134 of this title at which a temporary or final order under this chapter is issued and who receives notice from the court on the record that the order has been issued shall be deemed to have been served. A defendant notified by the court on the record shall be required to adhere immediately to the provisions of the order. ~~However, even when the court has previously notified the defendant of the order, the court shall transmit the order for additional service by a law enforcement agency. The clerk shall mail a copy of the order to the defendant at the defendant's last known address.~~

Sec. 3. 12 V.S.A. § 5136(b) is amended to read:

(b)(1) The Court Administrator is authorized to contract with public or private agencies to assist plaintiffs to seek relief and to gain access to Superior Court. Law enforcement agencies shall assist in carrying out the intent of this section.

(2) The Court Administrator shall establish procedures to ensure access to orders against sexual assault after regular court hours or on weekends and holidays in accordance with subdivisions (A)–(D) of this subdivision.

(A) The court shall designate an authorized person to receive requests for ex parte emergency relief orders against sexual assault submitted after regular court hours pursuant to section 5134 of this title, including requests made by reliable electronic means according to the procedures in this subdivision (2).

(B) If a secure setting is not available for processing an ex parte emergency relief order against sexual assault submitted after regular court hours, or if the authorized person determines that electronic submission is appropriate under the circumstances, the authorized person shall inform the applicant that a complaint and affidavit may be submitted electronically.

(C) The affidavit shall be sworn to or affirmed by administration of the oath over the telephone to the applicant by the authorized person and shall conclude with the following statement: "I declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to the laws of the State of Vermont that the foregoing is true and accurate. I understand that making false statements is a crime subject to a term of imprisonment or a fine, or both, as provided by 13 V.S.A. § 2904." The authorized person shall note on the affidavit the date and time that the oath was administered.

(D) The authorized person shall communicate the contents of the complaint and affidavit to a judicial officer telephonically or by reliable electronic means. The judicial officer shall decide whether to grant or deny the complaint and issue the order solely on the basis of the contents of the affidavit or affidavits provided. The judicial officer shall communicate the decision to the authorized person, who shall communicate it to the applicant. If the order is issued, it shall be delivered to the appropriate law enforcement agency for service and to the holding station.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on September 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 35

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 489. An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments.

And has passed the same in concurrence and ordered the bill delivered to the Governor.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and twenty-six minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, April 4, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Kevin Winter of Ludlow.

Pages Honored

In appreciation of their many services to the members of the General Assembly, the Speaker recognized the following named Pages who completed their service today and presented them with commemorative pins:

Skyler Barnard of Montpelier
Molly Despathy of Danville
Cecilia Huling of Thetford
Elliot Olstad of Lincoln
Mary Rogerson of Cabot
Heidi Thompson of Reading
Emanuel Van Fleet of Worcester

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

S. 18

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 27

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Third Reading;

Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment

S. 9

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Message from the Senate No. 36

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted Senate concurrent resolution of the following title:

S.C.R. 4. Senate concurrent resolution recognizing the success of the American System of Conservation Funding and commemorating the 75th anniversary of the enactment of federal sport fish restoration legislation.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 70. House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 71. House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first class at Landmark College and extending best wishes for continued academic success.

H.C.R. 72. House concurrent resolution commemorating May 9, 2025 as the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's arrival in Castleton in association with the War for Independence.

H.C.R. 73. House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Museums and Libraries Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 74. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Boys & Girls Clubs of Vermont Youth of the Year honorees.

H.C.R. 75. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets girls' gymnastics team on winning a second consecutive State championship.

H.C.R. 76. House concurrent resolution honoring Robin Lunge for her dedicated public service in Vermont State government.

H.C.R. 77. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 78. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative and Secretary of Administration Kathleen C. Hoyt of Norwich.

H.C.R. 79. House concurrent resolution celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Vermont Arts Exchange and its collaborative artistic endeavors.

H.C.R. 80. House concurrent resolution honoring the Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto for his extraordinary creativity, collaborative artistic leadership, and nomination for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:
Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 4th day of April 2025, he returned without signature and *vetoed* a bill originating in the House of Representatives of the following title:

H. 489 An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Governor's Veto Letter

"April 4, 2025

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
State House
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I'm returning H.489, *An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments*, without my signature.

It's clear, we're at an impasse on a non-budget adjustment-related policy, which has once again, been included in the latest budget adjustment bill. However, nothing prevents us from moving forward with a traditional bill, where we agree on the majority of the mid-year financial true ups.

I'm hopeful, the Legislature will stop sending me bills they know I will veto and instead send me a clean budget adjustment bill without controversial policy, so we can move forward with the many challenges we face.

Sincerely,

Philip B. Scott
Governor

PBS/kp”

Adjournment

At nine o'clock and forty-six minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 20.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 70

House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the State House

H.C.R. 71

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first class at Landmark College and extending best wishes for continued academic success

H.C.R. 72

House concurrent resolution commemorating May 9, 2025 as the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's arrival in Castleton in association with the War for Independence

H.C.R. 73

House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Museums and Libraries Day at the State House

H.C.R. 74

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Boys & Girls Clubs of Vermont Youth of the Year honorees

H.C.R. 75

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets girls' gymnastics team on winning a second consecutive State championship

H.C.R. 76

House concurrent resolution honoring Robin Lunge for her dedicated public service in Vermont State government

H.C.R. 77

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 78

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative and Secretary of Administration Kathleen C. Hoyt of Norwich

H.C.R. 79

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Vermont Arts Exchange and its collaborative artistic endeavors

H.C.R. 80

House concurrent resolution honoring the Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto for his extraordinary creativity, collaborative artistic leadership, and nomination for the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize

S.C.R. 4

Senate concurrent resolution recognizing the success of the American System of Conservation Funding and commemorating the 75th anniversary of the enactment of federal sport fish restoration legislation

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by former Rep. Jason Lorber of Burlington.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Austen N. Boulanger of South Burlington led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar
Bill Referred to the Committee on Appropriations**

H. 454

House bill, entitled

An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 53

Offered by Representatives Krowinski of Burlington, Bluemle of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, and Stone of Burlington

House concurrent resolution honoring Megan Humphrey for her outstanding leadership of HANDS

Whereas, HANDS (Helping and Nurturing Diverse Seniors) is a Chittenden County nonprofit organization dedicated to “providing food and resources for people aged 50+ who struggle with food insecurity,” and

Whereas, for a quarter of a century, Megan Humphrey served as the inspirational leader of HANDS and ensured the organization fulfilled its mission as effectively as possible, and

Whereas, under her guidance, HANDS evolved from offering Christmas dinners and friendship to seniors who were otherwise alone on the holiday to a far more extensive operation providing nourishment and food guidance to seniors in Chittenden County, and

Whereas, during the 2024 holiday season, HANDS distributed approximately 1,700 grocery gift cards to older adults struggling with food insecurity, and

Whereas, HANDS has also established gardening programs at local senior centers, offered healthy eating workshops, and partnered with food shelves and other similar entities to expand the scope of its programs, and

Whereas, after an outstanding quarter century developing services to feed older Chittenden County residents in need of food support, Megan Humphrey is concluding her leadership duties but intends to remain involved in this endeavor as a HANDS volunteer, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Megan Humphrey for her outstanding leadership of HANDS and wishes her every success in her future endeavors, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Megan Humphrey and to HANDS.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 55

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont

Whereas, many Americans and Vermonters may not be aware that there are more than 1.6 million children of U.S. military personnel, and

Whereas, family pressures are magnified for children who remain stateside when a parent is deployed abroad, and the children of the approximately 1,000 Vermont National Guard personnel who may be deployed over the course of a year experience this disruption firsthand, and

Whereas, military children's frequent relocation and corresponding lack of long-term community stability present them with an unwelcome distraction, and

Whereas, in 1986, the U.S. Department of Defense first designated April as the Month of the Military Child, and this annual event is part of a year-round initiative that brightens and improves these children's lives, and

Whereas, related programs include the national Military Kids Connect, partnerships with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and 4-H Clubs, and Sesame Street for Military Families, as well as many local activities that Vermont National Guard's Child & Youth Services and other offices administer, and

Whereas, as part of this special month, April 15, 2025 is being observed as Purple Up! For Military Kids Day, an opportunity for Americans to show solidarity with military families by wearing purple, a color that symbolizes all branches of the military, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April 2025 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont National Guard Office of Child & Youth Services.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 77

Offered by Representatives Stevens of Waterbury, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Brown of Richmond, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Cina of Burlington, Dodge of Essex, Garofano of Essex, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, James of Manchester, Kleppner of Burlington, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Satcowitz of Randolph, Scheu of Middlebury, Stone of Burlington, Tomlinson of Winooski, Waszazak of Barre City, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown

Offered by Senators Clarkson, Bongartz, Brock, Gulick, Hardy, Mattos, Perchlik, Ram Hinsdale, Watson, Weeks, and White

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2025 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont

Whereas, for generations, millions of Americans have been denied the housing of their choice because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or disability, and

Whereas, on April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, including Title VIII, known as the Fair Housing Act, and

Whereas, Vermont's 1987 Fair Housing Act, as amended, prohibits discrimination in the rental, sale, or financing of housing based on "race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, or disability of a person, or because a person intends to occupy a dwelling with one or more minor children, or because a person is a recipient of public assistance, or because a person is a victim of abuse, sexual assault, or stalking," as well as the denial of development permitting based on the income of prospective residents, making this law more protective than the federal statutes and among the most comprehensive in the nation, and

Whereas, the Vermont Human Rights Commission (the Commission) was established in 1987 and tasked with enforcing Vermont's Fair Housing Act, among other State antidiscrimination provisions, and

Whereas, in 2024 and 2025, the Commission has experienced an increase in fair housing inquiries and has processed more fair housing complaints than ever before, and

Whereas, in recent months, the federal government has drastically deprioritized fair housing enforcement and education and has attempted to reduce or eliminate funding for agencies and organizations working for fair housing, and

Whereas, inclusive, welcoming, and affordable communities promote diversity and a climate conducive to economic development, and

Whereas, the current housing crisis impacts all Vermonters and disproportionately impacts people in protected classes, and

Whereas, the State of Vermont remains committed to ensuring that everyone who lives in Vermont is entitled to the protections of Vermont's Fair Housing Act, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April 2025 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Human Rights Commission, the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Vermont Legal Aid Housing Discrimination Law Project.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

S. 46

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro moved that the Committee on Ways and Means be relieved of Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the taxation of vehicles used for forestry operations

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Transportation, which was agreed to.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 30

Rep. Cina of Burlington, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment as follows:

First: In Sec. 2, 8 V.S.A. chapter 107, in section 4029, by striking out subdivision (2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (2) to read as follows:

(2) TIME LIMIT ON CERTAIN DEFENSES: (a) After three years from the date of issue of this policy no misstatements, except fraudulent misstatements, made by the applicant in the application for such policy, shall be used to void the policy or to deny a claim for loss incurred or disability (as defined in the policy) commencing after the expiration of such three-year period.

(The foregoing policy provision shall not be so construed as to affect any legal requirement for avoidance of a policy or denial of a claim during such initial three-year period, nor to limit the application of subdivisions 4030(1)–(5) of this title in the event of misstatement with respect to age or occupation

or other insurance.) (A policy which the insured has the right to continue in force subject to its terms by the timely payment of premium (1) until at least age 50, or (2) in the case of a policy issued after age 44, for at least five years from its date of issue, may contain in lieu of the foregoing the following provision (from which the clause in parentheses may be omitted at the insurer's option) under the caption "INCONTESTABLE":

After this policy has been in force for a period of three years during the lifetime of the insured (excluding any period during which the insured is disabled), it shall become incontestable as to the statements contained in the application.)

(b) No claim for loss incurred or disability (as defined in the policy) commencing after three years from the date of issue of this policy shall be reduced or denied on the ground that a disease or physical condition not excluded from coverage by name or specific description effective on the date of loss had existed prior to the effective date of coverage of this policy.

Second: In Sec. 2, 8 V.S.A. chapter 107, in section 4030, in subdivision (3), following the first sentence, by inserting after the period, on a new line, "or, in lieu thereof:"

Third: By striking out Sec. 33, effective date, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 33 to read as follows:

Sec. 33. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on September 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H.R. 6

Rep. Bartholomew of Hartland, for the Committee on Rules, to which had been referred House Resolution, entitled

House resolution amending House Rules relating to the House Ethics Panel

Reported in favor of its adoption. The resolution, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

**Vermont Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Advisory Board
Appointment**

Pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 1581, the Speaker appointed the following member to the Vermont Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Advisory Board:

Rep. Page of Newport City

Message from the Senate No. 37

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 21. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 11, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and fifty-six minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the State House Singers: Reps. Sarita Austin, John Bartholomew, Tiff Bluemle, Mari Cordes, David Durfee, Leslie Goldman, Kathleen James, Charlie Kimbell, Rob North, Kate Nugent, Carol Ode, and Brenda Steady; Sen. Allison Clarkson, Brett Murphy, Doorkeeper; Annagrace Oblak, Committee Assistant; and David Schutz, State Curator.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 501

By Rep. Boutin of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the deadline for public bodies to respond to an alleged Open Meeting Law violation

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 502

By Reps. Lipsky of Stowe, Hunter of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Powers of Waterford, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to charging for actual cost under Vermont's Public Records Act

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 21**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 21. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 11, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, April 11, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 36**

Offered by Representatives Waters Evans of Charlotte and Krasnow of South Burlington

House concurrent resolution honoring Charlotte Board of Civil Authority Chair, and Ski and Ride Program Coordinator Michael Krasnow

Whereas, for 27 years, Michael Krasnow has served the Town of Charlotte with distinction, as a member of the municipality's Board of Civil Authority (BCA), which provides the town with tax adjudication and electoral

administration support, and his fellow panel members have elected him as the BCA's chair, and

Whereas, in a different context, as the Charlotte Ski and Ride Program Coordinator, Michael Krasnow has brought great joy to countless youngsters, and

Whereas, the genesis of this passion for introducing young persons to the slopes, especially those who might never otherwise participate in skiing or snowboarding, began at four years of age with family ski trips from his Long Island, New York, home to Vermont, and

Whereas, during his earlier career as a public school teacher in the Boston, Massachusetts, area, Michael Krasnow was an advisor for student noncompetitive skiing activities that eventually involved 1,000 students, and

Whereas, in 1989, Michael Krasnow relocated his family to Vermont and volunteered to assist the Ski and Ride Program at the Charlotte Central School, which brings students to night skiing sessions at Bolton Valley Resort (Bolton), and within a year he was the program's leader, and

Whereas, during a five-week span starting in mid-February, he oversees the participation of nearly 150 students traveling to Bolton, including approximately 20–25 new youngsters each winter, and for most of the students, the social experience is of foremost importance, and

Whereas, associated with his ski and ride leadership role, Michael Krasnow has overseen a ski and snowboard fitting and equipment distribution project, drawing on his vast collection of primarily donated gear, that provides the essential elements of the sport to area youngsters, and

Whereas, for over three decades, Michael Krasnow has enthusiastically introduced countless youngsters in Charlotte to the joys of Vermont's wintry slopes, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Charlotte Board of Civil Authority Chair, and Ski and Ride Program Coordinator Michael Krasnow, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Michael Krasnow.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 65

Offered by Representatives Demar of Enosburgh, Berbeco of Winooski, Burditt of West Rutland, Critchlow of Colchester, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Gregoire of Fairfield, Labor of Morgan, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town

Offered by Senator Ingalls

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Awareness Month in Vermont

Whereas, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP) is a rare onset progressive neurological disorder that affects numerous essential physical and mental functions, and

Whereas, an estimated 20,000 Americans have been diagnosed with this disorder, and the specific symptoms are individually unique, and

Whereas, PSP's symptoms usually appear at 60 years of age or older, although in some cases earlier, and they can result in an individual becoming depressed, forgetful, and irritable and cause an individual to have sleeping challenges, and

Whereas, individuals with PSP can experience severe quality-of-life issues, and contracting this disorder can necessitate complex care requirements that negatively impact family relationships and the lives of caregivers, and

Whereas, although outwardly similar to Parkinson's disease, PSP is a distinct disorder that is part of the group of disorders known collectively as atypical parkinsonism, and

Whereas, at present, there is neither a cure nor even a modifying treatment, and although some symptoms may be managed with medication and care, the lack of understanding about the disease has often led to misdiagnosis, and this lack of medical knowledge hinders both intervention efforts and clinical trials, and

Whereas, the recognition of May 2025 as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Awareness Month will create greater public and health care community awareness of PSP, highlight the continuing effort to find a cure, and provide comfort to the families whose lives have been drastically altered, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes May 2025 as Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Awareness Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to CurePSP in New York City and to the Vermont Medical Society.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Resolution Adopted**H.R. 6**

House resolution, entitled

House resolution amending House Rules relating to the House Ethics Panel

Was taken up, read the third time, and adopted.

**Third Reading;
Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment****S. 30**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Bill Committed**H. 489**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the bill pass, notwithstanding the Governor's refusal to approve the bill?, **Rep. Scheu of Middlebury** moved to commit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, which was agreed to.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and thirty-five minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, April 10, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Carol Ann Jones, Alzheimer's Awareness.

Message from the Senate No. 38

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 80. An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

House Bill Introduced**H. 503**

By Reps. Keyser of Rutland City, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bosch of Clarendon, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Coffin of Cavendish, Demar of Enosburgh, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Howland of Rutland Town, Hunter of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Lipsky of Stowe, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Oliver of Sheldon, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Southworth of Walden, Steady of Milton, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to delaying the requirements of the Advanced Clean Truck rule

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Transportation.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 18

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 74

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Boys & Girls Clubs of Vermont Youth of the Year honorees

Whereas, since 1947, Youth of the Year has been the Boys & Girls Clubs' premier annual honorary recognition, celebrating the extraordinary achievements of the Clubs' teens, and

Whereas, the Boys & Girls Clubs equip their members with the skills and values needed to grow into responsible, successful adults and leaders within their communities, and

Whereas, the Youth of the Year award winners exemplify the hard work, determination, and hope of the Boys & Girls Clubs movement, and

Whereas, selection as a Youth of the Year award winner is the highest honor that the Boys & Girls Clubs can bestow on their members, and

Whereas, the 2025 Vermont Youth of the Year honorees by their first names and respective local Boys & Girls Clubs are Jason (Brattleboro), Kali (Burlington), Megan (Vergennes), and Tyler (Rutland), *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2025 Boys & Girls Clubs of Vermont Youth of the Year honorees, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each honoree recognized in this resolution.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 66

Offered by Representatives Duke of Burlington, Austin of Colchester, Bartley of Fairfax, Birong of Vergennes, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Goldman of Rockingham, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Houghton of Essex Junction, James of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Kimbell of Woodstock, Kleppner of Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Luneau of St. Albans City, Masland of Thetford, Micklus of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Satcowitz of Randolph, Sibilia of Dover, Southworth of Walden, Stevens of Waterbury, Sweeney of Shelburne, Waszazak of Barre City, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Winter of Ludlow, and Wood of Waterbury

Offered by Senators Bongartz, Clarkson, Douglass, Harrison, Hart, Ingalls, Major, Plunkett, Weeks, Westman, White, and Williams

House concurrent resolution celebrating the role of tourism in the Vermont economy and designating April 10, 2025 as Tourism Economy Day at the State House

Whereas, Vermont is a global destination for outdoor recreation, dining, lodging, art, and history, and this creates business opportunities, attracts new residents, and incentivizes Vermonters to stay, and

Whereas, our State's tourism industry has a \$4 billion economic impact and constitutes over 10 percent of Vermont's workforce, and

Whereas, in 2023, 15.8 million people visited Vermont, contributing an estimated \$282.3 million in State and local taxes, and

Whereas, tourism and hospitality are among the largest industries in Vermont, constituting over 30,000 jobs, and

Whereas, meaningful representation and inclusion ensure that Vermont is welcoming to all, enabling everyone to experience the joy of visiting the State regardless of background, and

Whereas, industry leaders who center community values in their work embody the ideal of destination leadership, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly celebrates the role of tourism in the Vermont economy and designates April 10, 2025 as Tourism Economy Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Ski Vermont, and the Department of Tourism and Marketing.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 70

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the State House

Whereas, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Alzheimer's disease is a "progressive neurodegenerative disease that occurs when nerve cells in the brain die," and it can result in "[i]mpaired memory, thinking and behavior," and

Whereas, most experts calculate that nearly seven million Americans 65 years of age and older are living with this disease, and

Whereas, in Vermont, 12,800 individuals 65 years of age and older are living with Alzheimer's, and in 2020 (the most recent calculation of this statistic), 9.9 percent of the State's residents in this age cohort were its victims, and

Whereas, in 2022, Alzheimer's was the cause of death for 329 Vermonters, making the disease the fourth-leading cause of death in the State and representing a 145.5 percent increase during the years 2000–2022, and

Whereas, the impact of Alzheimer's in Vermont is not limited to those who are living with the disease, as approximately 20,000 Vermonters are dedicating 29 million hours to individuals' Alzheimer's care, a commitment currently valued at \$773 million, and 61.5 percent of the caregivers have chronic health conditions, 35.4 percent are suffering with depression, and 10.7 percent are in poor physical health, and

Whereas, the projected Medicaid cost associated with Alzheimer's care in Vermont for 2025 is \$158 million, and

Whereas, today, April 10, 2025, family members, caregivers, and medical professionals are gathered at the State House to inform the General Assembly of the financial, personal, and societal implications of Alzheimer's disease in Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 10, 2025 as Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Alzheimer's Association, Vermont Chapter.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 73

Offered by Representative Burke of Brattleboro

House concurrent resolution designating April 10, 2025 as Museums and Libraries Day at the State House

Whereas, museums and libraries are the cornerstone of our democracy, serve as public forums to debate big ideas, and are places to learn of past societies and gain guidance for shaping the future, and

Whereas, the State of Vermont is home to more museums per capita than any other state in the nation, with 48 museums per 100,000 residents, and there are nearly 300 statewide, and

Whereas, most Vermont museums are small local historical organizations, and their predominantly volunteer staff serve in these roles because they love their communities and the associated heritage these special institutions are preserving, in the form of archives, objects, and stories for future generations, and

Whereas, similarly, the State of Vermont hosts more libraries per capita than any other state, totaling 185 public libraries or 28 per 100,000 residents, and

Whereas, the modern library is not merely a convenient depository of circulating books and a wonderful place to read, but, equally important, it serves as the heart of our communities by lending tools; hosting musical performances and lectures; exhibiting films; acting as an emergency response hub and information technology access center; and, more broadly, as a community facility where curiosity can be satisfied and our common humanity shared among each other, and

Whereas, museums and libraries often combine their facilities and services, offering the best of both educational milieus, and

Whereas, today, April 10, 2025, staff and volunteers from the Vermont Historical Society, which, since 1838, has served as one of the premiere organizations in Vermont combining both museum and library facilities and services, are visiting the State House to remind the General Assembly of the great community worth of both their own institution and of museums and libraries across the Green Mountain State, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 10, 2025 as Museums and Libraries Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Historical Society.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Speaker presiding.

Favorable Reports; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

S. 3

Rep. Goodnow of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence.

Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven, for the Committee on Ways and Means, reported in favor of its passage in concurrence.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 143. Nays, 1.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Galfetti of Barre Town	Morgan, M. of Milton
Austin of Colchester	Garofano of Essex	Morris of Springfield
Bailey of Hyde Park	Goldman of Rockingham	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartholomew of Hartland	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Morrow of Weston
Bartley of Fairfax	Goslant of Northfield	Mrowicki of Putney
Berbeco of Winooski	Graning of Jericho	Nelson of Derby
Birong of Vergennes	Greer of Bennington	Nielsen of Brandon
Bishop of Colchester	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Hango of Berkshire	North of Ferrisburgh
Bluemle of Burlington	Harple of Glover	Noyes of Wolcott
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harvey of Castleton	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Boutin of Barre City	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Higley of Lowell	Olson of Starksboro
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Page of Newport City
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Randolph	Parsons of Newbury
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Burditt of West Rutland	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pinsonault of Dorset
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howland of Rutland Town	Powers of Waterford
Burrows of West Windsor	Hunter of Manchester	Priestley of Bradford
Burt of Cabot	James of Manchester	Pritchard of Pawlet
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Kascenska of Burke	Quimby of Lyndon
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Rachelson of Burlington
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimbell of Woodstock	Satcowitz of Randolph
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Hubbardton	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sheldon of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Krasnow of South Burlington	Sibilia of Dover
Charlton of Chester	Labor of Morgan	Southworth of Walden
Cina of Burlington	Lalley of Shelburne	Squirrell of Underhill
Coffin of Cavendish	LaLonde of South Burlington	Steady of Milton
Cole of Hartford	LaMont of Morristown	Stevens of Waterbury
Conlon of Cornwall	Laroche of Franklin	Stone of Burlington
Corcoran of Bennington	Lipsky of Stowe	Surprenant of Barnard
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	Tagliavia of Corinth
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Taylor of Milton
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dodge of Essex	Marcotte of Coventry	Toof of St. Albans Town
Dolan of Essex Junction	Masland of Thetford	Torre of Moretown
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCann of Montpelier	Walker of Swanton
Donahue of Northfield	McFaun of Barre Town	Waszazak of Barre City
Duke of Burlington	McGill of Bridport	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Micklus of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Eastes of Guilford	Mihaly of Calais	White of Waitsfield
Emmons of Springfield	Minier of South Burlington	White of Bethel
Feltus of Lyndon	Morgan, L. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
		Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Oliver of Sheldon

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Christie of Hartford
Cooper of Pownal

Dickinson of St. Albans
Town

Maguire of Rutland City
McCoy of Poultney

Recess

At two o'clock and eleven minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

Called to Order

At three o'clock and eight minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Second Reading; Amendments Offered and Withdrawn; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 454

Rep. Conlon of Cornwall, for the Committee on Education, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Findings and Intent * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT; PLAN

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) In 1997, the first piece of law the General Assembly enacted in response to the *Brigham* decision stated, "[t]he right to public education is integral to Vermont's constitutional form of government and its guarantees of political and civil rights...[and] fundamental for the success of Vermont's children in a rapidly-changing society and global marketplace as well as the State's own economic and social prosperity." 16 V.S.A. § 1.

(2) From the very first attempt at creating a basic frame of government, Vermont's founders chose to include a right to public education, the only governmental service included in Vermont's first Constitution of 1777.

(3) As the U.S. Supreme Court stated in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), "education is perhaps the most important function of

state and local governments...[i]t is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities...[i]t is the very foundation of good citizenship.”

(5) The most enduring legacy of *Brigham v. State*, 166 Vt. 246 (1997) is the State’s responsibility to ensure substantially equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.

(6) The education system is still reeling from the effects of a global pandemic, yet the same challenges that have faced Vermont’s education system remain. Thirty to 40 years ago, Vermont educated more than 110,000 students each year. Today, there are approximately 84,000 students in the public education system. Many schools have lost a significant number of students and, with them, the ability to offer robust services and programs at every school. Vermont’s youth need to be prepared for a rapidly evolving future.

(7) Vermonters deserve an exceptional educational system that is stable and predictable and where a student’s home address does not dictate the quality of education they receive. School district size and boundaries, school size, and class size are all influential factors in shaping the quality of instruction and overall student outcomes. The effectiveness of our schools depends on teacher quality, resource availability, and the unique strengths of local communities. Change in our educational system is needed. Systems are made of people, so change must come carefully and thoughtfully, with meaningful engagement by all Vermonters.

(b) Intent; plan.

(1) To ensure each student is provided substantially equal educational opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a 21st-century world, it is the intent of the General Assembly to work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that each incremental change made to Vermont’s public education system provides strength and support to its only constitutionally required governmental service.

(2) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to:

(A) in the 2026 session, enact new, larger school district boundaries and begin the process to create voting wards within each school district to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the election of school board members;

(B) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, the Secretary of State’s Office, town clerks, and other integral parties to the election system to hold the first school board member elections within the newly created school districts in November 2028; and

(C) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and other integral parties to ensure that the necessary guidance and funding is in place to allow for a smooth and successful transition between the operation of Vermont's current 119 school districts to the new, larger school districts, with new school districts assuming responsibility for the education of all resident students on July 1, 2029.

* * * Commission on the Future of Public Education * * *

Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

Sec. 1. THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION; REPORTS

(a) Creation. There is hereby created the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont. The right to education is fundamental for the success of Vermont's children in a rapidly changing society and global marketplace as well as for the State's own economic and social prosperity. The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality for all Vermont students.

(b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following members and, to the extent possible, the members shall represent the State's geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity:

(1) Voting members. The following members shall be voting members of the Commission:

(A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

~~(2)~~(B) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

~~(3)~~(C) the Tax Commissioner or designee;

~~(4)~~(D) one current member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

~~(5)~~(E) one current member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on Committees;

~~(6)~~(F) one representative from the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), appointed by the VSBA Executive Director;

~~(7)~~(G) one representative from the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA), appointed by the VPA Executive Director;

~~(8)~~(H) one representative from the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), appointed by the VSA Executive Director;

~~(9)~~(I) one representative from the Vermont National Education Association (VTNEA), appointed by the VTNEA Executive Director;

~~(10)~~(J) one representative from the Vermont Association of School Business Officials (VASBO) with experience in school construction projects, appointed by the President of VASBO;

~~(11)~~(K) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173;

~~(12)~~(L) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education Collaborative; and

~~(13)~~(M) one representative from the Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA), appointed by the President of VISA.

(2) Nonvoting members. The following members shall be nonvoting members of the Commission who shall be appointed on or before July 15, 2025 and all of whom shall have extensive experience working within the Vermont public education system. Appointing authorities shall coordinate to ensure that, to the extent possible, each of the five nonvoting members represents a different geographic region of the State.

(A) Two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent of a supervisory union with multiple member school districts and one of whom shall be either a retired or former Vermont school business manager or a retired or former school board member.

(B) Two members shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent and one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont school business manager.

(C) One member shall be appointed by the Governor and shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent.

(c) Steering group. On or before July 1, 2024, the Speaker of the House shall appoint two members of the Commission, the Committee on Committees shall appoint two members of the Commission, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Commission to serve as members of a steering group. The steering group shall provide leadership to the Commission and shall work

with a consultant or consultants to analyze the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont's public education system, as well as develop and propose a work plan to formalize the process through which the Commission shall seek to achieve its final recommendations. The formal work plan shall be approved by a majority of the Commission members. The steering group ~~shall form a subcommittee of the Commission to address education finance topics in greater depth and~~ may form one or more additional subcommittees of the Commission to address other key topics in greater depth, as necessary. ~~The steering group may appoint non-Commission members to the education finance subcommittee. All other subcommittees shall be composed solely of Commission members.~~

(d) Collaboration and information review.

(1) The Commission ~~shall~~ may seek input from and collaborate with key stakeholders, as directed by the steering group. At a minimum, the Commission shall consult with:

- (A) the Department of Mental Health;
- (B) the Department of Labor;
- (C) the President of the University of Vermont or designee;
- (D) the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation or designee;
- (E) a representative from the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee;
- (F) the Office of Racial Equity;
- (G) a representative with expertise in the Community Schools model in Vermont;
- (H) the Vermont Youth Council;
- (I) the Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits; and
- (J) an organization committed to ensuring equal representation and educational equity.

(2) The Commission shall also review and take into consideration existing educational laws and policy, including legislative reports the Commission deems relevant to its work and, at a minimum, 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 127, and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 76.

(e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study Vermont's public education system and make recommendations to ensure all students are afforded quality educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and equitable education system that will enable students to achieve the highest academic outcomes. The result of the Commission's work shall be a ~~recommendation for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system, with recommendations for the policy changes necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality~~ recommendations for the State-level education governance system, including the roles and responsibilities of the Agency of Education and the State Board of Education. In creating and making its recommendations, the Commission shall engage in the following:

(1) Public engagement. The Commission shall conduct not fewer than 14 public meetings to inform the work required under this section. At least one meeting of the Commission as a whole or a subcommittee of the Commission shall be held in each county. The Commission shall publish a draft of its final recommendations on or before October 1, 2025, solicit public feedback, and incorporate such feedback into its final recommendations. When submitting its final recommendations to the General Assembly, the Commission shall include all public feedback received as an addendum to its final report. The public feedback process shall include:

(A) a minimum 30-day public comment period, during which time the Commission shall accept written comments from the public and stakeholders; and

(B) a public outreach plan that maximizes public engagement and includes notice of the availability of language assistance services when requested.

(2) Policy considerations. In developing its recommendations, the Commission shall consider and prioritize the following topics:

(A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the State level, including the role of the Agency of Education in the provision of services and support for the education system. Recommendations under this subdivision (A) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(i) whether changes need to be made to the structure of the Agency of Education, including whether it better serves the recommended education vision of the State as an agency or a department;

(ii) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education;

(iii) whether changes need to be made to the composition, role, and function of the State Board of Education to better serve the recommended education vision of the State; and

(iv) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of control at the State level; and

~~(v) the effective integration of career and technical education in the recommended education vision of the State.~~

~~(B) Physical size and footprint of the education system.—The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding how the unique geographical and socioeconomic needs of different communities should factor into the provision of education in Vermont, taking into account and building upon the recommendations of the State Aid to School Construction Working Group.—Recommendations under this subdivision (B) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) an analysis and recommendation for the most efficient and effective number and location of school buildings, school districts, and supervisory unions needed to achieve Vermont's vision for education, provided that if there is a recommendation for any change, the recommendation shall include an implementation plan;~~

~~(ii) an analysis of the capacity and ability to staff all public schools with a qualified workforce, driven by data on class-size recommendations;~~

~~(iii) analysis of whether, and if so, how, collaboration with Vermont's postsecondary schools may support the development and retention of a qualified educator workforce;~~

~~(iv) an analysis of the current town tuition program and whether, and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont's vision for education, including the legal and financial impact of funding independent schools and other private institutions, including consideration of the following:~~

~~(I) the role designation, under 16 V.S.A. § 827, should play in the delivery of public education; and~~

~~(II) the financial impact to the Education Fund of public dollars being used in schools located outside Vermont; and~~

~~(v) an analysis of the current use of private therapeutic schools in the provision of special education services and whether, and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont's special education needs, including~~

~~the legal and financial impact of funding private therapeutic schools. [Repealed.]~~

~~(C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students. Recommendations under this subdivision (C) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) how public education in Vermont should be delivered;~~

~~(ii) whether Vermont's vision for public education shall include the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services;~~

~~(iii) whether, and if so, how, collaboration with Vermont's postsecondary schools may support and strengthen the delivery of public education; and~~

~~(iv) what the consequences are for the Commission's recommendations regarding the role of public schools and other service providers, including what the role of public schools means for staffing, funding, and any other affected system, with the goal of most efficiently utilizing State funds and services and maximizing federal funding. [Repealed.]~~

~~(D) Education finance system. The Commission shall explore the efficacy and potential equity gains of changes to the education finance system, including weighted educational opportunity payments as a method to fund public education. The Commission's recommendations shall be intended to result in an education funding system designed to afford substantially equal access to a quality basic education for all Vermont students in accordance with State v. Brigham, 166 Vt. 246 (1997). Recommendations under this subdivision (D) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) allowable uses for the Education Fund that shall ensure sustainable and equitable use of State funds;~~

~~(ii) the method for setting tax rates to sustain allowable uses of the Education Fund;~~

~~(iii) whether, and if so, what, alternative funding models would create a more affordable, sustainable, and equitable education finance system in Vermont, including the consideration of a statutory, formal base amount of per pupil education spending and whether school districts should be allowed to spend above the base amount;~~

~~(iv) adjustments to the excess spending threshold, including recommendations that target specific types of spending;~~

~~(v) the implementation of education spending caps on different services, including administrative and support services and categorical aid;~~

~~(vi) how to strengthen the understanding and connection between school budget votes and property tax bills;~~

~~(vii) adjustments to the property tax credit thresholds to better match need to the benefit;~~

~~(viii) a system for ongoing monitoring of the Education Fund and Vermont's education finance system, to include consideration of a standing Education Fund advisory committee;~~

~~(ix) an analysis of the impact of healthcare health care costs on the Education Fund, including recommendations for whether, and if so, what, changes need to be made to contain costs; and~~

~~(x) implementation details for any recommended changes to the education funding system. [Repealed.]~~

(E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and recommendations.

(f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General Assembly the following:

(1) a formal, written work plan, which shall include a communication plan to maximize public engagement, on or before September 15, 2024;

(2) a written report containing its preliminary findings and recommendations, including short-term cost containment considerations for the 2025 legislative session, on or before December 15, 2024; and

(3) a written report containing its final findings and recommendations ~~for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system and the policy changes necessary to make that educational vision a reality based on its analysis of the State-level governance topics contained in subdivision (e)(2)(A) of this section,~~ on or before December 1, 2025; and

~~(4) proposed legislative language to advance any recommendations for the education funding system on or before December 15, 2025.~~

(g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with one or more independent consultants or facilitators to provide technical and legal assistance to the Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes of scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the Commission shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education. The Agency shall also provide the educational and financial data necessary to

facilitate the work of the Commission. School districts shall comply with requests from the Agency to assist in data collections.

(h) Meetings.

(1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Commission to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

(2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly select a Commission chair.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

(5) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2025.

(i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 30 meetings, including subcommittee meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

(j) School district boundary subcommittee. There is created a subcommittee of the Commission to be composed of the five nonvoting members of the Commission that shall determine the most efficient number of school districts and proposed boundary lines, based on educational research; Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape; historic attendance patterns; and a comprehensive analysis of school locations, conditions, and capacity.

(1) Duties of the district boundaries subcommittee.

(A) The subcommittee shall recommend not more than three school district boundary proposals to the General Assembly. The proposed school district boundaries shall:

(i) increase equitable access to educational opportunity;

(ii) maximize opportunities for modern, regional middle and high schools, with the least disruption to students;

(iii) provide access to education for their resident students in grades kindergarten through 12;

(iv) provide access to career and technical education (CTE) for all eligible students;

(v) to the extent practical, not separate towns within school districts as those boundaries exist on July 1, 2025;

(vi) to the extent practical, consider the availability of regional services for students, such as designated agencies, and how those services would integrate into the new proposed school district boundaries;

(vii) to the extent practical, result in school districts with a minimum average daily membership of approximately 4,000 students; and

(viii) to the extent practical, consider historic attendance patterns in geographic areas that do not operate public schools at all grade levels from kindergarten through grade 12.

(B) The subcommittee may consider and make recommendations for the optimal location of schools, including CTE programs, to meet the requirements contained in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1).

(C) The subcommittee shall provide regular updates to the Commission regarding its work.

(D) The subcommittee shall have the sole authority to determine the contents of the report and maps required under subdivision (4) of this subsection (j). The Commission may provide its own comments to the subcommittee and the relevant committees of jurisdiction, either as an addendum to the report of the subcommittee or as a separate report.

(2) Public engagement. The district boundary subcommittee shall engage and coordinate with the Commission's public engagement subcommittee and the public engagement consultant to maximize public input and feedback regarding the development of the proposed new school district boundaries.

(3) Assistance. The district boundary subcommittee shall have the assistance of the Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information, which may also retain the services of one or more independent third parties to provide facilitation and mediation services to the subcommittee.

(4) Report and maps. On or before December 1, 2025, the district boundary subcommittee shall submit the following to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the Senate Committee on Government Operation, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance:

(A) Report. The district boundary subcommittee shall submit a written report with the subcommittee's proposed new school district boundaries. The report shall detail how each proposed option meets the requirements of subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection (j).

(B) Maps. The subcommittee shall also submit detailed maps for each school district boundary proposal, which, in addition to the school district boundaries themselves, shall include:

(i) average daily membership for each proposed school district for the 2023–2024 school year;

(ii) the member towns for each school district;

(iii) the location of public schools and nontherapeutic approved independent schools that are eligible to receive public tuition as of July 1, 2025, and the grades operated by each of those schools;

(iv) the five-year facility condition index score for each school;

(v) PCB testing score for each school; and

(vi) 10-year change in enrollment between 2013 and 2023 for each school.

* * * Scale * * *

Sec. 3. SCALE; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to transform education in Vermont by leveraging attainable and research-based scale to increase equity of opportunity and promote efficiency and affordability.

Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read:

§ 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS

(a) In order to carry out Vermont’s policy that all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the following education quality standards:

* * *

(9) The school complies with average class size minimum standards; provided, however, that when class size minimums apply to content areas, an individual class may be smaller than the minimum average. As used in this subdivision, “content area” means a group of courses within a specific licensing endorsement area.

(A) Class size standards.

(i) The average class size minimum for kindergarten classes shall be 12 students.

(ii) The average class size minimum for grades one through four shall be 15 students.

(iii) The average class size minimum for grades five through 12 in all required content area classes shall be 18 students.

(iv) Multiage classrooms for grades kindergarten through eight shall be limited to two grade levels per classroom.

(v) Career and technical education, flexible pathways, terminal courses, advanced placement courses, courses that require specialized equipment, and driver's education classes shall be excluded from the class size minimum requirements in this subdivision (9). Small group services for the purpose of providing special education, supplemental or targeted academic intervention, or English learner instruction shall also be excluded from the class size minimum requirements in this subdivision (9).

(vi) Class sizes shall not exceed the maximum occupancy limits established by local and State fire codes, including egress and safety requirements.

(B) Waivers. If a school board determines that it operates a school that is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation, or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the standards contained in this subdivision (9) that may include consolidation or merger, the school board may ask the State Board of Education to grant it waiver from this subdivision (9). The State Board shall define what qualifies as geographic isolation in its rules adopted pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section. The State Board's decision shall be final.

(C) State Board action. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the class size minimum standards set forth in this subdivision (9) over the course of two consecutive school years, the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section, regardless of whether the school is meeting all other education quality standards. The State Board shall then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.

(b) Annually, the Secretary shall determine whether students in each Vermont public school are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other public schools. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the education quality standards listed in subsection

(a) of this section or that the school is making insufficient progress in improving student performance in relation to the standards for student performance set forth in subdivision 164(9) of this title, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall describe in writing actions that a district must take in order to meet either or both sets of standards and shall provide technical assistance to the school. If the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress within two years ~~of~~ following the determination, the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the following actions:

(1) the Agency continue to provide technical assistance for one more cycle of review;

(2) the State Board adjust supervisory union boundaries or responsibilities of the superintendency pursuant to section 261 of this title;

(3) the Secretary assume administrative control of an individual school, school district, or supervisory union, including budgetary control to ensure sound financial practices, only to the extent necessary to correct deficiencies;

(4) the State Board close an individual school or schools and require that the school district pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school pursuant to chapter 21 of this title; or

(5) the State Board require two or more school districts to consolidate their governance structures.

(c) The State Board, after offering the school board an opportunity for a hearing, shall either dismiss the Secretary's recommendation or order that one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section be taken. The action ordered by the State Board shall be the least intrusive consistent with the need to provide students attending the school substantially equal educational opportunities. A school board aggrieved by an order of the State Board may appeal the order in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure.

* * *

(e) If the Secretary determines at any time that the failure of a school to meet the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section is severe or pervasive, potentially results in physical or emotional harm to students or significant deprivation of equal education opportunities, and the school has either unreasonably refused to remedy the problem or its efforts have proved ineffective, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section. The State Board shall then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.

* * *

(g) In addition to the education quality standards provided in subsection (a) of this section, each Vermont school district shall meet the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the Agency of Education regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. These standards shall include a process for school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education. Annually, the Secretary shall publish metrics regarding the outcomes of school district quality reviews.

Sec. 5. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH EDUCATION QUALITY

STANDARDS; STATE BOARD ACTION

Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 165(b)(4) and (5) and any other provision of law to the contrary, the State Board shall be prohibited from ordering school district consolidation or school consolidation if a school fails to comply with class size minimum education quality standards and the resulting consolidation would result in school construction costs in excess of the applicable district's capital reserve account until the General Assembly establishes new school district boundaries and takes further action regarding the consequences for failure to meet education quality standards.

Sec. 6. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; RULES; REPORT

(a) Rules.

(1) The State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend the Education Quality Standards rule 2000 series, Agency of Education, Education Quality Standards (22-000-003), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25:

(A) on or before August 1, 2026, to ensure compliance with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9); and

(B) On or before July 1, 2027, to adopt standards for statewide proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board and recommendations from the Agency of Education.

(2) On or before August 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend the approved independent school rule 2200 series, Agency of Education, Independent School Program Approval (22-000-004), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, to require approved independent schools that intend to accept public tuition to comply with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9). The amendments shall also create a process for review by the State Board for failure to meet the class size minimum requirements and the corresponding actions the Board may take for such noncompliance; provided, however, that the Board shall provide an approved independent school a substantially similar opportunity to come into

compliance with class size minimum standards that it would provide to a public school.

(b) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with proposed standards for schools to be deemed “small by necessity.”

Sec. 7. SCHOOL SIZE; INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage the efficient use of public funds to modernize school infrastructure to deliver identified 21st century educational goals.

(b) It is further the intent of the General Assembly that each public school operating grades six through 12, or some subset of those grades, shall have a minimum average daily membership of at least 450 students, at least in part by providing a robust State aid for school construction program that is driven by standards for quality for public schools, geographic accessibility, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and scale that support substantially equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.

Sec. 8. PROHIBITION ON SCHOOL CLOSURE AND TRANSITION TO PAYING TUITION

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school district shall be prohibited from closing an existing public school and then providing for the education of its resident students by paying tuition for its students to attend a public or approved independent school chosen by the parents of the district’s students. If a school district that closes an existing public school is unable to provide for the education of its affected resident students in a different school or schools operated by the district, the school district shall provide for the education of its resident students by designating three or fewer public schools to serve as the public school or schools of the district, in accordance with the process contained in 16 V.S.A. § 827.

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 3440 is added to read:

§ 3440. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the intent of this chapter to encourage the efficient use of public funds to modernize school infrastructure in alignment with current educational needs. School construction projects supported by this chapter should be developed taking consideration of standards of quality for public schools under section 165 of this title and prioritizing cost, geographic accessibility, 21st century education facilities standards, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and scale that support best educational practices. Further, it is the

intent of this chapter to encourage the use of existing infrastructure to meet the needs of Vermont students. Joint construction projects between two or more school districts and consolidation of buildings within a district where feasible and educationally appropriate are encouraged.

Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 3442 is added to read:

§ 3442. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The Agency of Education shall be responsible for implementing the State Aid for School Construction Program according to the provisions of this chapter. The Agency shall be responsible for:

(1) reviewing all preliminary applications for State school construction aid and issuing an approval or denial in accordance with section 3445 of this chapter;

(2) adopting rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 pertaining to school construction and capital outlay, including rules to specify a point prioritization methodology and a bonus incentive structure aligned with the legislative intent expressed in section 3440 of this title;

(3) including as part of its budget submitted to the Governor pursuant to subdivision 212(21) of this title its annual school construction funding request;

(4) developing a prequalification and review process for project delivery consultants and architecture and engineering firms specializing in prekindergarten through grade 12 school design, renovation, or construction and maintaining a list of such prequalified firms and consultants;

(5) providing technical assistance and guidance to school districts and supervisory unions on all phases of school capital projects;

(6) providing technical advice and assistance, training, and education to school districts, supervisory unions, general contractors, subcontractors, construction or project managers, designers, and other vendors in the planning, maintenance, and establishment of school facility space;

(7) maintaining a current list of school construction projects that have received preliminary approval, projects that have received final approval, and the priority points awarded to each project;

(8) collecting, maintaining, and making publicly available quarterly progress reports of all ongoing school construction projects that shall include, at a minimum, the costs of the project and the time schedule of the project;

(9) recommending policies and procedures designed to reduce borrowing for school construction programs at both State and local levels;

(10) conducting a needs survey at least every five years to ascertain the capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for all public schools and maintaining such data in a publicly accessible format;

(11) developing a formal enrollment projection model or using projection models already available;

(12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or supervisory union;

(13) collecting and maintaining a clearinghouse of prototypical school plans, as appropriate, that may be consulted by eligible applicants;

(14) retaining the services of consultants, as necessary, to effectuate the roles and responsibilities listed within this section; and

(15) notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before December 15, submitting a written report to the General Assembly regarding the status and implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program, including the data required to be collected pursuant to this section.

Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 3443 is added to read:

§ 3443. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY

BOARD

(a) Creation. There is hereby created the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board, which shall advise the Agency on the implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, including the adoption of rules, setting of statewide priorities, criteria for project approval, and recommendations for project approval and prioritization.

(b) Membership.

(1) Composition. The Board shall be composed of the following eight members:

(A) four members who shall serve as ex officio members:

(i) the State Treasurer or designee;

(ii) the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services or designee;

(iii) the Executive Director of the Vermont Bond Bank or designee; and

(iv) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee; and

(B) four members, none of whom shall be a current member of the General Assembly, who shall serve four-year terms as follows:

(i) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, each of whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or finance and one of whom shall represent a supervisory union; and

(ii) two members, appointed by the Committee on Committees, each of whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or finance and one of whom shall be an educator.

(2) Members with four-year terms.

(A) A member with a term limit shall serve a term of four years and until a successor is appointed. A term shall begin on January 1 of the year of appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. Terms of these members shall be staggered so that not all terms expire at the same time.

(B) A vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term.

(C) A member with a term limit shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A member appointed to fill a vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall not be deemed to have served a term for the purpose of this subdivision (C).

(c) Duties. The Board shall advise the Agency on the implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, including:

(1) rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay;

(2) project priorities;

(3) proposed legislation the Board deems desirable or necessary related to the State Aid for School Construction Program, the provisions of this chapter, and any related laws;

(4) policies and procedures designed to reduce borrowing for school construction programs at both State and local levels;

(5) development of a formal enrollment projection model or the consideration of using projection models already available;

(6) processes and procedures necessary to apply for, receive, administer, and comply with the conditions and requirements of any grant, gift, appropriation of property, services, or monies;

(7) the collection and maintenance of a clearinghouse of prototypical school plans that may be consulted by eligible applicants and recommended incentives to utilize such prototypes;

(8) the determination of eligible cost components of projects for funding or reimbursement, including partial or full eligibility for project components for which the benefit is shared between the school and other municipal and community entities;

(9) development of a long-term vision for a statewide capital plan in accordance with needs and projected funding;

(10) collection and maintenance of data on all public school facilities in the State, including information on size, usage, enrollment, available facility space, and maintenance;

(11) advising districts on the use of a needs survey to ascertain the capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for schools across the State; and

(12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or supervisory union.

(d) Meetings.

(1) The State Treasurer shall call the first meeting of the Board to occur on or before January 1, 2026.

(2) The Board shall select a chair from among its members.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Board shall meet not more than six times per year.

(e) Assistance. The Board shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Board shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings per year.

Sec. 12. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF STATE AID FOR SCHOOL

CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD

16 V.S.A. § 3443 (State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board) is repealed on July 1, 2035.

Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 3444 is added to read:

§ 3444. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AID SPECIAL FUND

(a) Creation. There is created the School Construction Aid Special Fund, to be administered by the Agency of Education. Monies in the Fund shall be used for the purposes of:

(1) awarding aid to school construction projects under section 3445 of this title;

(2) awarding grants through the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program established in section 3441 of this title;

(3) funding administrative costs of the State Aid for School Construction Program; and

(4) awarding emergency aid under section 3445 of this title.

(b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

(1) any amounts transferred or appropriated to it by the General Assembly; and

(2) any interest earned by the Fund.

Sec. 14. 16 V.S.A. § 3445 is added to read:

§ 3445. APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

(a) Construction aid.

(1) Preliminary application for construction aid. A school district eligible for assistance under section 3447 of this title that intends to construct or purchase a new school, or make extensive additions or alterations to its existing school, and desires to avail itself of State school construction aid shall submit a written preliminary application to the Secretary. A preliminary application shall include information required by the Agency by rule and shall specify the need for and purpose of the project.

(2) Approval of preliminary application.

(A) When reviewing a preliminary application for approval, the Secretary shall consider:

(i) regional educational opportunities and needs, including school building capacities across school district boundaries, and available infrastructure in neighboring communities;

(ii) economic efficiencies;

(iii) the suitability of an existing school building to continue to meet educational needs; and

(iv) statewide educational initiatives.

(B) The Secretary may approve a preliminary application if:

(i)(I) the project or part of the project fulfills a need occasioned by:

(aa) conditions that threaten the health or safety of students or employees;

(bb) facilities that are inadequate to provide programs required by State or federal law or regulation;

(cc) excessive energy use resulting from the design of a building or reliance on fossil fuels or electric space heat; or

(dd) deterioration of an existing building; or

(II) the project results in consolidation of two or more school buildings and will serve the educational needs of students in a more cost-effective and educationally appropriate manner as compared to individual projects constructed separately;

(ii) the need addressed by the project cannot reasonably be met by another means;

(iii) the proposed type, kind, quality, size, and estimated cost of the project are suitable for the proposed curriculum and meet all legal standards;

(iv) the applicant achieves the level of “proficiency” in the school district quality standards regarding facilities management adopted by rule by the Agency; and

(v) the applicant has completed a facilities master planning process that:

(I) engages robust community involvement;

(II) considers regional solutions;

(III) evaluates environmental contaminants; and

(IV) produces a facilities master plan that unites the applicant’s vision statement, educational needs, enrollment projections, renovation needs, and construction projects.

(3) Priorities. Following approval of a preliminary application and provided that the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total estimated cost of a project, the Agency, with the advice of the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board, shall assign points to the project as prescribed by rule of the Agency so that the project can be placed on a priority list based on the number of points received.

(4) Request for legislative appropriation. The Agency shall submit its annual school construction funding request to the Governor as part of its budget pursuant to subdivision 212(21) of this title. Following submission of the Governor's recommended budget to the General Assembly pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 306, the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education shall recommend a total school construction appropriation for the next fiscal year to the General Assembly.

(5) Final approval for construction aid.

(A) Unless approved by the Secretary for good cause in advance of commencement of construction, a school district shall not begin construction before the Secretary approves a final application. A school district may submit a written final application to the Secretary at any time following approval of a preliminary application.

(B) The Secretary may approve a final application for a project provided that:

(i) the project has received preliminary approval;

(ii) the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total estimated cost of the project;

(iii) the district has made arrangements for project construction supervision by persons competent in the building trades;

(iv) the district has provided for construction financing of the project during a period prescribed by the Agency;

(v) the project has otherwise met the requirements of this chapter;

(vi) if the proposed project includes a playground, the project includes a requirement that the design and construction of playground equipment follow the guidelines set forth in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground Safety; and

(vii) if the total estimated cost of the proposed project is less than \$50,000.00, no performance bond or irrevocable letter of credit shall be required.

(C) The Secretary may provide that a grant for a high school project is conditioned upon the agreement of the recipient to provide high school instruction for any high school pupil living in an area prescribed by the Agency who may elect to attend the school.

(D) A district may begin construction upon receipt of final approval. However, a district shall not be reimbursed for debt incurred due to borrowing of funds in anticipation of aid under this section.

(6) Award of construction aid.

(A) The base amount of an award shall be 20 percent of the eligible debt service cost of a project. Projects are eligible for additional bonus incentives as specified in rule for up to an additional 20 percent of the eligible debt service cost.

(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (6), "eligible debt service cost" of a project means the product of the lifetime cost of the bond authorized for the project and the ratio of the approved cost of a project to the total cost of the project.

(b) Emergency aid. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the Secretary may grant aid for a project the Secretary deems to be an emergency in the amount of 30 percent of eligible project costs, up to a maximum eligible total project cost of \$300,000.00.

Sec. 15. 16 V.S.A. § 3446 is added to read:

§ 3446. APPEAL

Any municipal corporation as defined in section 3447 of this title aggrieved by an order, allocation, or award of the Agency of Education may, within 30 days, appeal to the Superior Court in the county in which the project is located.

Sec. 16. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER OF
RULES

(a) The statutory authority to adopt rules by the State Board of Education pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted under 16 V.S.A. § 3448(e) and 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 is transferred from the State Board of Education to the Agency of Education.

(b) All rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted by the State Board of Education under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 prior to July 1, 2026 shall be deemed the rules of the Agency of Education and remain in effect until amended or repealed by the Agency of Education pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25.

(c) The Agency of Education shall provide notice of the transfer to the Secretary of State and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules in accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 848(d)(2).

Sec. 17. REPEALS

(a) 16 V.S.A. § 3448 (approval of funding of school construction projects; renewable energy) is repealed on July 1 2026.

(b) 16 V.S.A. § 3448a (appeal) is repealed on July 1, 2026.

Sec. 18. 16 V.S.A. § 828 is amended to read:

§ 828. TUITION TO APPROVED SCHOOLS; AGE; APPEAL

(a) A school district shall not pay the tuition of a student except to:

(1) a public school, located in Vermont;

(2) an approved independent school, that:

(A) is located in Vermont;

(B) is approved under section 166 of this title on or before July 1, 2025;

(C) has at least 51 percent of its student enrollment composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis pursuant to chapter 21 of this title as of July 1, 2025; and

(D) complies with the minimum class size requirements contained in subdivision 165(a)(9) of this title and State Board rule; provided, however, that if a school is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the class size minimum requirements, the school may ask the State Board to grant it a waiver from this subdivision (D), which decision shall be final;

(3) an independent school meeting education quality standards;

(4) a tutorial program approved by the State Board;

(5) an approved education program, or;

(6) an independent school in another state or country approved under the laws of that state or country, that complies with the reporting requirement under subsection 4010(e) of this title, a public school located in another state; or

(7) a therapeutic approved independent school located in Vermont or another state or country that is approved under the laws of that state or country.

(b) ~~nor shall payment~~ Payment of tuition on behalf of a person shall not be denied on account of age.

(c) Unless otherwise provided, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of a school board relating to eligibility for tuition payments, the amount of tuition payable, or the school the person may attend, may appeal to the State Board and its decision shall be final.

(d) As used in this section, “therapeutic approved independent school” means an approved independent school that limits enrollment for publicly funded students residing in Vermont to students who are on an individualized education program or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, or who are enrolled pursuant to a written agreement between a local education agency and the school or pursuant to a court order.

Sec. 19. TUITION TRANSITION

A school district that pays tuition pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. chapter 21 in effect on June 30, 2025 shall continue to pay tuition on behalf of a resident student enrolled for the 2024–2025 school year in or who has been accepted for enrollment for the 2025–2026 school year by an approved independent school subject to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 828 in effect on June 30, 2025, until such time as the student graduates from that school.

* * * Statewide Cohesion * * *

Sec. 20. STATEWIDE COHESION; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to consolidate structures and systems that are foundational to the administration of education.

Sec. 21. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; SCHOOL CALENDAR;

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; REPORT

(a) Statewide graduation requirements. On or before January 1, 2026, the Agency of Education shall recommend to the State Board of Education standards for statewide proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board.

(b) Statewide school calendar.

(1) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary of Education shall develop and publish a statewide calendar for the public schools of the State, including career and technical centers, that shall be in effect in the 2028–2029 academic year and after.

(2) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary shall present to the House and Senate Committees on Education a list of the statutory amendments necessary to effect the intent of this subsection.

(c) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit a written report and recommended legislative language, as applicable, to the House and Senate Committees on Education with the following:

(1) In consultation with educators and administrators, a proposed implementation plan for statewide financial data and student information systems.

(2) Recommendations for a school construction division within the Agency of Education, including position descriptions and job duties for each position within the division, a detailed description of the assistance the division would provide to the field, and the overall role the Agency would play within a State aid to school construction program.

(3) A progress report regarding the development of clear, unambiguous guidance that would be provided to school officials and school board members regarding the business processes and transactions that would need to occur to facilitate school district mergers into larger, consolidated school districts, including the merging of data systems, asset and liability transfers, and how to address collective bargaining agreements for both educators and staff. The report shall include a detailed description of how the Agency will provide support and consolidation assistance to the field in each of these areas and an estimate of the costs associated with such work.

(4) In consultation with superintendents, directors of therapeutic independent schools, special education directors, and, in the opinion of the Agency, other experts, recommendations for the need for cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools within the school governance framework both at a state and local level.

* * * State-Level Governance * * *

Sec. 22. STATE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that the State Board of Education is the independent, transparent, and public facing body for public education and to ensure the Board maintains its ability provide an important outlet for the public to engage in the rulemaking process and regularly provide public comment regarding the state of Vermont's education system.

Sec. 23. 16 V.S.A. § 161 is amended to read:

§ 161. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; APPOINTMENT OF
MEMBERS; TERM; VACANCY

The State Board shall consist of ~~ten~~ 10 members. Two of the members shall be secondary students, one of whom shall be a full member and the other of whom shall be a junior member who may not vote. ~~All~~ Eight members shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House and one member shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees. In the appointment of the nonstudent members, priority shall be given to the selection of persons with a demonstrated commitment to ensuring quality education for Vermont students. To the extent possible, the members shall represent the State's geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity. The Secretary shall serve on the State Board as a nonvoting member.

(1) Upon the expiration of the respective terms of those members of the Board previously appointed, excluding the student members, the ~~Governor~~ appointing authority that made the initial appointment to the expired term shall, biennially in the month of February with the advice and consent of the Senate, as applicable, appoint members for terms of six years. The terms shall begin March 1 of the year in which the appointments are made. A member serving a term of six years shall not be eligible for reappointment for successive terms.

(2) In the event of any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Board, the ~~Governor~~ appointing authority that made the initial appointment to the vacated term shall fill the vacancy with a qualified person whose appointment shall be for the unexpired portion of the term.

(3) Biennially, the Board shall choose a member of the Board to be its chair.

(4) Annually, using an application process that is open and accessible to all eligible students, the Governor shall appoint a Vermont secondary school student who will continue to be a secondary student for at least two years following taking office, to serve on the State Board for two years, beginning on July 1 of the year of appointment. The student member shall not vote during the first year and shall be a full and voting member during the second year of ~~his or her~~ the student's term.

Sec. 24. TRANSITION PERIOD APPOINTMENTS; STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

(a) Members currently serving on the State Board of Education may continue to serve for the duration of the term to which they were appointed.

(b) Beginning on July 1, 2025, as terms of currently serving members expire, appointments of successors shall be made in accordance with the considerations and appointment authority contained in 16 V.S.A. § 161.

(1) The Speaker of the House shall make the first appointment to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(2) The Senate Committee on Committees shall make the second appointment to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(3) The Governor shall make the third appointment, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(c) Once the first three appointments after July 1, 2025 are made in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, the Governor shall make all subsequent appointments for the remaining five non-student seats, with the advice and consent of the Senate, in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 161.

Sec. 25. 16 V.S.A. § 162 is amended to read:

§ 162. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS

After notice and hearing, the Governor may remove a member of the State Board for incompetency, failure to discharge ~~his or her~~ the member's duties, malfeasance, illegal acts, or other cause inimical to the welfare of the public schools; and in case of such removal, ~~he or she~~ the appointing authority that made the initial appointment shall appoint a person to fill the unexpired term.

Sec. 26. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW OF RULES;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The State Board of Education shall review each rule series the State Board is responsible for and make a determination as to the continuing need for, appropriateness of, or need for updating of said rules. On or before December 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report

to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its recommendation for rules that are no longer needed and a plan to update rules that are still necessary, including the order in which the Board proposes to update the rules and any associated costs or staffing needs.

(b) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 to provide the State Board of Education with the staffing and resources necessary to review and update the Board's rules.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 27. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 1 (findings; intent; plan) and 2 (Commission on the Future of Public Education) shall take effect on passage.

(b) Secs. 3 (scale; intent), 6 (SBE rules; report), 7 (school size; intent), 8 (school closure), 11 (16 V.S.A. § 3443), 12 (school construction advisory board sunset), 18 (18 V.S.A. § 828), 19 (tuition transition), 20 (statewide cohesion; intent), 21 (AOE report; school calendar; graduation requirements), 22 (state-level governance; intent), 23 (16 V.S.A. § 161), 24 (SBE appointments transition), 25 (16 V.S.A. § 162), and 26 (SBE rule review; appropriation) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(c) Secs. 4 (class size minimums), 5 (failure to comply with class size minimums), 9 (school construction policy), 10 (16 V.S.A. § 3442), 13 (16 V.S.A. § 3444), 14 (16 V.S.A. § 3445), 15 (16 V.S.A. § 3446), 16 (transfer of rulemaking authority), and 17 (repeals) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the report of the Committee on Education be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Findings and Intent * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT; PLAN

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) In 1997, the first piece of law the General Assembly enacted in response to the *Brigham* decision stated, “[t]he right to public education is integral to Vermont’s constitutional form of government and its guarantees of political and civil rights...[and] fundamental for the success of Vermont’s children in a rapidly-changing society and global marketplace as well as the State’s own economic and social prosperity.” 16 V.S.A. § 1.

(2) From the very first attempt at creating a basic frame of government, Vermont's founders chose to include a right to public education, the only governmental service included in Vermont's first Constitution of 1777.

(3) As the U.S. Supreme Court stated in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), "education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments...[i]t is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities...[i]t is the very foundation of good citizenship."

(4) The most enduring legacy of *Brigham v. State*, 166 Vt. 246 (1997) is the State's responsibility to ensure substantially equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.

(5) The education system is still reeling from the effects of a global pandemic, yet the same challenges that have faced Vermont's education system remain. Thirty to 40 years ago, Vermont educated more than 110,000 students each year. Today, there are approximately 84,000 students in the public education system. Many schools have lost a significant number of students and, with them, the ability to offer robust services and programs at every school. Vermont's youth need to be prepared for a rapidly evolving future.

(6) Vermonters deserve an exceptional educational system that is stable and predictable and where a student's home address does not dictate the quality of education they receive. School district size and boundaries, school size, and class size are all influential factors in shaping the quality of instruction and overall student outcomes. The effectiveness of our schools depends on teacher quality, resource availability, and the unique strengths of local communities. Change in our educational system is needed. Systems are made of people, so change must come carefully and thoughtfully, with meaningful engagement by all Vermonters.

(b) Intent; plan.

(1) To ensure each student is provided substantially equal educational opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a 21st-century world, it is the intent of the General Assembly to work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that each incremental change made to Vermont's public education system provides strength and support to its only constitutionally required governmental service.

(2) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to:

(A) in the 2026 session:

(i) enact new, larger school district boundaries that would be effective July 1, 2027;

(ii) enact updates to career and technical education governance systems, both at the local and statewide levels, that are reflective of the larger public education governance transformation to new, larger school districts;

(iii) create a coordinated and coherent statewide strategy for career and technical education that is responsive to students and the state's workforce needs and that provides opportunities for more integration between career and technical education and traditional high school work;

(iv) enact student-centered updates to career and technical education funding within a foundation formula that does not create competition between sending schools and career and technical education programs for available funds; and

(v) begin the process to create voting wards within each school district to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the election of school board members;

(B) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, the Secretary of State's Office, town clerks, and other integral parties to the election system to hold the first school board member elections within the newly created school districts in a special election in March 2028; and

(C) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and other integral parties to ensure that the necessary guidance and funding is in place to allow for a smooth and successful transition between the operation of Vermont's current 119 school districts to the new, larger school districts, with new school districts assuming responsibility for the education of all resident students on July 1, 2029.

* * * Commission on the Future of Public Education * * *

Sec. 2. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

Sec. 1. THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION; REPORTS

(a) Creation. There is hereby created the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont. The right to education is fundamental for the success of Vermont's children in a rapidly changing society and global marketplace as well as for the State's own economic and social prosperity. The Commission shall study the provision of education in Vermont and make recommendations for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system to ensure that all students are afforded substantially equal educational

opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and stable education system. The Commission shall also make recommendations for the strategic policy changes necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality for all Vermont students.

(b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following members and, to the extent possible, the members shall represent the State's geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity:

(1) Voting members. The following members shall be voting members of the Commission:

(A) the Secretary of Education or designee;

~~(2)~~(B) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee;

~~(3)~~(C) the Tax Commissioner or designee;

~~(4)~~(D) one current member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

~~(5)~~(E) one current member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on Committees;

~~(6)~~(F) one representative from the Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), appointed by the VSBA Executive Director;

~~(7)~~(G) one representative from the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA), appointed by the VPA Executive Director;

~~(8)~~(H) one representative from the Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), appointed by the VSA Executive Director;

~~(9)~~(I) one representative from the Vermont National Education Association (VTNEA), appointed by the VTNEA Executive Director;

~~(10)~~(J) one representative from the Vermont Association of School Business Officials (VASBO) with experience in school construction projects, appointed by the President of VASBO;

~~(11)~~(K) the Chair of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group, created under 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173;

~~(12)~~(L) the Executive Director of the Vermont Rural Education Collaborative; and

~~(13)~~(M) one representative from the Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA), appointed by the President of VISA.

(2) Nonvoting members. The following members shall be nonvoting members of the Commission who shall be appointed on or before July 15, 2025 and all of whom shall have extensive experience working within the Vermont public education system. Appointing authorities shall coordinate to ensure that, to the extent possible, each of the five nonvoting members represents a different geographic region of the State.

(A) Two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent of a supervisory union with multiple member school districts and one of whom shall be either a retired or former Vermont school business manager or a retired or former school board member.

(B) Two members shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent and one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont school business manager.

(C) One member shall be appointed by the Governor and shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent.

(c) Steering group. On or before July 1, 2024, the Speaker of the House shall appoint two members of the Commission, the Committee on Committees shall appoint two members of the Commission, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Commission to serve as members of a steering group. The steering group shall provide leadership to the Commission and shall work with a consultant or consultants to analyze the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont's public education system, as well as develop and propose a work plan to formalize the process through which the Commission shall seek to achieve its final recommendations. The formal work plan shall be approved by a majority of the Commission members. The steering group shall ~~form a subcommittee of the Commission to address education finance topics in greater depth and may form one or more additional subcommittees of the Commission to address other key topics in greater depth, as necessary. The steering group may appoint non-Commission members to the education finance subcommittee. All other subcommittees shall be composed solely of Commission members.~~

(d) Collaboration and information review.

(1) The Commission ~~shall~~ may seek input from and collaborate with key stakeholders, as directed by the steering group. At a minimum, the Commission shall consult with:

(A) the Department of Mental Health;

(B) the Department of Labor;

- (C) the President of the University of Vermont or designee;
- (D) the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation or designee;
- (E) a representative from the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee;
- (F) the Office of Racial Equity;
- (G) a representative with expertise in the Community Schools model in Vermont;
- (H) the Vermont Youth Council;
- (I) the Commission on Public School Employee Health Benefits; and
- (J) an organization committed to ensuring equal representation and educational equity.

(2) The Commission shall also review and take into consideration existing educational laws and policy, including legislative reports the Commission deems relevant to its work and, at a minimum, 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 127, and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 76.

(e) Duties of the Commission. The Commission shall study Vermont's public education system and make recommendations to ensure all students are afforded quality educational opportunities in an efficient, sustainable, and equitable education system that will enable students to achieve the highest academic outcomes. The result of the Commission's work shall be a ~~recommendation for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system, with recommendations for the policy changes necessary to make Vermont's educational vision a reality~~ recommendations for the State-level education governance system, including the roles and responsibilities of the Agency of Education and the State Board of Education. In creating and making its recommendations, the Commission shall engage in the following:

(1) Public engagement. The Commission shall conduct not fewer than 14 public meetings to inform the work required under this section. At least one meeting of the Commission as a whole or a subcommittee of the Commission shall be held in each county. The Commission shall publish a draft of its final recommendations on or before October 1, 2025, solicit public feedback, and incorporate such feedback into its final recommendations. When submitting its final recommendations to the General Assembly, the Commission shall include all public feedback received as an addendum to its final report. The public feedback process shall include:

(A) a minimum 30-day public comment period, during which time the Commission shall accept written comments from the public and stakeholders; and

(B) a public outreach plan that maximizes public engagement and includes notice of the availability of language assistance services when requested.

(2) Policy considerations. In developing its recommendations, the Commission shall consider and prioritize the following topics:

(A) Governance, resources, and administration. The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding education governance at the State level, including the role of the Agency of Education in the provision of services and support for the education system. Recommendations under this subdivision (A) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(i) whether changes need to be made to the structure of the Agency of Education, including whether it better serves the recommended education vision of the State as an agency or a department;

(ii) what are the staffing needs of the Agency of Education;

(iii) whether changes need to be made to the composition, role, and function of the State Board of Education to better serve the recommended education vision of the State; and

(iv) what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of local control and what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of control at the State level; and

~~(v) the effective integration of career and technical education in the recommended education vision of the State.~~

~~(B) Physical size and footprint of the education system.—The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding how the unique geographical and socioeconomic needs of different communities should factor into the provision of education in Vermont, taking into account and building upon the recommendations of the State Aid to School Construction Working Group. Recommendations under this subdivision (B) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) an analysis and recommendation for the most efficient and effective number and location of school buildings, school districts, and supervisory unions needed to achieve Vermont's vision for education, provided that if there is a recommendation for any change, the recommendation shall include an implementation plan;~~

~~(ii) an analysis of the capacity and ability to staff all public schools with a qualified workforce, driven by data on class-size recommendations;~~

~~(iii) analysis of whether, and if so, how, collaboration with Vermont's postsecondary schools may support the development and retention of a qualified educator workforce;~~

~~(iv) an analysis of the current town tuition program and whether, and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont's vision for education, including the legal and financial impact of funding independent schools and other private institutions, including consideration of the following:~~

~~(I) the role designation, under 16 V.S.A. § 827, should play in the delivery of public education; and~~

~~(II) the financial impact to the Education Fund of public dollars being used in schools located outside Vermont; and~~

~~(v) an analysis of the current use of private therapeutic schools in the provision of special education services and whether, and if so, what, changes are necessary to meet Vermont's special education needs, including the legal and financial impact of funding private therapeutic schools. [Repealed.]~~

~~(C) The role of public schools. The Commission shall study and make recommendations regarding the role public schools should play in both the provision of education and the social and emotional well-being of students. Recommendations under this subdivision (C) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) how public education in Vermont should be delivered;~~

~~(ii) whether Vermont's vision for public education shall include the provision of wraparound supports and collocation of services;~~

~~(iii) whether, and if so, how, collaboration with Vermont's postsecondary schools may support and strengthen the delivery of public education; and~~

~~(iv) what the consequences are for the Commission's recommendations regarding the role of public schools and other service providers, including what the role of public schools means for staffing, funding, and any other affected system, with the goal of most efficiently utilizing State funds and services and maximizing federal funding. [Repealed.]~~

~~(D) Education finance system. The Commission shall explore the efficacy and potential equity gains of changes to the education finance system, including weighted educational opportunity payments as a method to fund public education. The Commission's recommendations shall be intended to result in an education funding system designed to afford substantially equal access to a quality basic education for all Vermont students in accordance with State v. Brigham, 166 Vt. 246 (1997). Recommendations under this subdivision (D) shall include, at a minimum, the following:~~

~~(i) allowable uses for the Education Fund that shall ensure sustainable and equitable use of State funds;~~

~~(ii) the method for setting tax rates to sustain allowable uses of the Education Fund;~~

~~(iii) whether, and if so, what, alternative funding models would create a more affordable, sustainable, and equitable education finance system in Vermont, including the consideration of a statutory, formal base amount of per pupil education spending and whether school districts should be allowed to spend above the base amount;~~

~~(iv) adjustments to the excess spending threshold, including recommendations that target specific types of spending;~~

~~(v) the implementation of education spending caps on different services, including administrative and support services and categorical aid;~~

~~(vi) how to strengthen the understanding and connection between school budget votes and property tax bills;~~

~~(vii) adjustments to the property tax credit thresholds to better match need to the benefit;~~

~~(viii) a system for ongoing monitoring of the Education Fund and Vermont's education finance system, to include consideration of a standing Education Fund advisory committee;~~

~~(ix) an analysis of the impact of healthcare health care costs on the Education Fund, including recommendations for whether, and if so, what, changes need to be made to contain costs; and~~

~~(x) implementation details for any recommended changes to the education funding system. [Repealed.]~~

(E) Additional considerations. The Commission may consider any other topic, factor, or issue that it deems relevant to its work and recommendations.

(f) Reports. The Commission shall prepare and submit to the General Assembly the following:

(1) a formal, written work plan, which shall include a communication plan to maximize public engagement, on or before September 15, 2024;

(2) a written report containing its preliminary findings and recommendations, including short-term cost containment considerations for the 2025 legislative session, on or before December 15, 2024; and

(3) a written report containing its final findings and recommendations ~~for a statewide vision for Vermont's public education system and the policy changes necessary to make that educational vision a reality based on its analysis of the State-level governance topics contained in subdivision (e)(2)(A) of this section,~~ on or before December 1, 2025; and

~~(4) proposed legislative language to advance any recommendations for the education funding system on or before December 15, 2025.~~

(g) Assistance. The Agency of Education shall contract with one or more independent consultants or facilitators to provide technical and legal assistance to the Commission for the work required under this section. For the purposes of scheduling meetings and providing administrative assistance, the Commission shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education. The Agency shall also provide the educational and financial data necessary to facilitate the work of the Commission. School districts shall comply with requests from the Agency to assist in data collections.

(h) Meetings.

(1) The Secretary of Education shall call the first meeting of the Commission to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

(2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly select a Commission chair.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

(5) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2025.

(i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 30 meetings, including subcommittee meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Education.

(j) School district boundary subcommittee. There is created a subcommittee of the Commission to be composed of the five nonvoting members of the Commission that shall determine the most efficient number of school districts and proposed boundary lines, based on educational research; Vermont's geographic and cultural landscape; historic attendance patterns; the distribution of equalized grand list value per pupil; the provision of career and technical education; and a comprehensive analysis of school locations, conditions, and capacity.

(1) Duties of the district boundaries subcommittee.

(A) The subcommittee shall recommend not more than three school district boundary proposals to the General Assembly and may consult with the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Education Directors regarding how to incorporate career and technical education into the proposals. The proposed school district boundaries shall:

(i) increase equitable access to educational opportunity;

(ii) maximize opportunities for modern, regional middle and high schools, with the least disruption to students;

(iii) provide access to education for their resident students in grades kindergarten through 12;

(iv) provide access to career and technical education (CTE) for all eligible students;

(v) to the extent practical, not separate towns within school districts as those boundaries exist on July 1, 2025;

(vi) to the extent practical, consider the availability of regional services for students, such as designated agencies, and how those services would integrate into the new proposed school district boundaries;

(vii) to the extent practical, result in school districts with a minimum average daily membership of approximately 4,000 students; and

(viii) to the extent practical, consider historic attendance patterns in geographic areas that do not operate public schools at all grade levels from kindergarten through grade 12.

(B) The subcommittee may consider and make recommendations for the optimal location of schools, including CTE programs, to meet the requirements contained in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1).

(C) The subcommittee shall provide regular updates to the Commission regarding its work.

(D) The subcommittee shall have the sole authority to determine the contents of the report and maps required under subdivision (4) of this subsection (j). The Commission may provide its own comments to the subcommittee and the relevant committees of jurisdiction, either as an addendum to the report of the subcommittee or as a separate report.

(2) Public engagement. The district boundary subcommittee shall engage and coordinate with the Commission's public engagement subcommittee and the public engagement consultant to maximize public input and feedback regarding the development of the proposed new school district boundaries.

(3) Assistance. The district boundary subcommittee shall have the assistance of the Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information, which may also retain the services of one or more independent third parties to provide facilitation and mediation services to the subcommittee.

(4) Report and maps. On or before December 1, 2025, the district boundary subcommittee shall submit the following to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the Senate Committee on Government Operation, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance:

(A) Report. The district boundary subcommittee shall submit a written report with the subcommittee's proposed new school district boundaries. The report shall detail how each proposed option meets the requirements of subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection (j).

(B) Maps. The subcommittee shall also submit detailed maps for each school district boundary proposal, which, in addition to the school district boundaries themselves, shall include:

(i) average daily membership for each proposed school district for the 2023–2024 school year;

(ii) the member towns for each school district;

(iii) the location of public schools and nontherapeutic approved independent schools that are eligible to receive public tuition as of July 1, 2025, and the grades operated by each of those schools;

(iv) the five-year facility condition index score for each school;

(v) PCB testing score for each school; and

(vi) 10-year change in enrollment between 2013 and 2023 for each school.

* * * Scale * * *

Sec. 3. SCALE; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to transform education in Vermont by leveraging attainable and research-based scale to increase equity of opportunity and promote efficiency and affordability.

Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended to read:

§ 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING
EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS

(a) In order to carry out Vermont's policy that all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the following education quality standards:

* * *

(9) The school complies with average class size minimum standards; provided, however, that when class size minimums apply to content areas, an individual class may be smaller than the minimum average. As used in this subdivision, "content area" means a group of courses within a specific licensing endorsement area.

(A) Class size standards.

(i) The average class size minimum for kindergarten classes shall be 12 students.

(ii) The average class size minimum for grades one through four shall be 15 students.

(iii) The average class size minimum for grades five through 12 in all required content area classes shall be 18 students.

(iv) Multiage classrooms for grades kindergarten through eight shall be limited to two grade levels per classroom.

(v) Prekindergarten, career and technical education, flexible pathways, terminal courses, advanced placement courses, courses that require specialized equipment, and driver's education classes shall be excluded from the class size minimum requirements in this subdivision (9). Small group services for the purpose of providing special education, supplemental or targeted academic intervention, or English learner instruction shall also be excluded from the class size minimum requirements in this subdivision (9).

(vi) Class sizes shall not exceed the maximum occupancy limits established by local and State fire codes, including egress and safety requirements.

(B) Waivers. If a school board determines that it operates a school that is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation, or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the standards contained in this subdivision (9) that may include consolidation or merger, the school board may ask the State Board of Education to grant it waiver from this subdivision (9). The State Board shall define what qualifies as geographic isolation in its rules adopted pursuant to subdivision (a)(3) of this section. The State Board's decision shall be final.

(C) State Board action. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the class size minimum standards set forth in this subdivision (9) over the course of two consecutive school years, the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section, regardless of whether the school is meeting all other education quality standards. The State Board shall then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.

(b) Annually, the Secretary shall determine whether students in each Vermont public school are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other public schools. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section or that the school is making insufficient progress in improving student performance in relation to the standards for student performance set forth in subdivision 164(9) of this title, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall describe in writing actions that a district must take in order to meet either or both sets of standards and shall provide technical assistance to the school. If the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress within two years ~~of following~~ the determination, the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the following actions:

(1) the Agency continue to provide technical assistance for one more cycle of review;

(2) the State Board adjust supervisory union boundaries or responsibilities of the superintendency pursuant to section 261 of this title;

(3) the Secretary assume administrative control of an individual school, school district, or supervisory union, including budgetary control to ensure sound financial practices, only to the extent necessary to correct deficiencies;

(4) the State Board close an individual school or schools and require that the school district pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school pursuant to chapter 21 of this title; or

(5) the State Board require two or more school districts to consolidate their governance structures.

(c) The State Board, after offering the school board an opportunity for a hearing, shall either dismiss the Secretary's recommendation or order that one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section be taken. The action ordered by the State Board shall be the least intrusive consistent with the need to provide students attending the school substantially equal educational opportunities. A school board aggrieved by an order of the State Board may appeal the order in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure.

* * *

(e) If the Secretary determines at any time that the failure of a school to meet the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section is severe or pervasive, potentially results in physical or emotional harm to students or significant deprivation of equal education opportunities, and the school has either unreasonably refused to remedy the problem or its efforts have proved ineffective, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section. The State Board shall then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.

* * *

(g) In addition to the education quality standards provided in subsection (a) of this section, each Vermont school district shall meet the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the Agency of Education regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. These standards shall include a process for school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education. Annually, the Secretary shall publish metrics regarding the outcomes of school district quality reviews.

Sec. 5. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH EDUCATION QUALITY

STANDARDS; STATE BOARD ACTION

Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 165(b)(4) and (5) and any other provision of law to the contrary, the State Board shall be prohibited from ordering school district consolidation or school consolidation if a school fails to comply with class size minimum education quality standards and the resulting consolidation would result in school construction costs in excess of the applicable district's capital reserve account until the General Assembly establishes new school

district boundaries and takes further action regarding the consequences for failure to meet education quality standards.

Sec. 6. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; RULES; REPORT

(a) Rules.

(1) The State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend the Education Quality Standards rule 2000 series, Agency of Education, Education Quality Standards (22-000-003), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25:

(A) on or before August 1, 2026, to ensure compliance with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9); and

(B) on or before July 1, 2027, to adopt standards for statewide proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board and recommendations from the Agency of Education, which shall take effect beginning in the 2027–2028 school year for the graduating class of 2031 and every graduating class thereafter.

(2) On or before August 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall initiate rulemaking to amend the approved independent school rule 2200 series, Agency of Education, Independent School Program Approval (22-000-004), pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, to require approved independent schools that intend to accept public tuition to comply with the class size minimum standards set pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 165(a)(9). The amendments shall also create a process for review by the State Board for failure to meet the class size minimum requirements and the corresponding actions the Board may take for such noncompliance; provided, however, that the Board shall provide an approved independent school a substantially similar opportunity to come into compliance with class size minimum standards that it would provide to a public school.

(b) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education with proposed standards for schools to be deemed “small by necessity.”

Sec. 7. SCHOOL SIZE; INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage the efficient use of public funds to modernize school infrastructure to deliver identified 21st century educational goals.

(b) It is further the intent of the General Assembly that each public school operating grades six through 12, or some subset of those grades, shall have a minimum average daily membership of at least 450 students, at least in part by providing a robust State aid for school construction program that is driven by

standards for quality for public schools, geographic accessibility, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and scale that support substantially equal educational opportunities for all Vermont students.

Sec. 8. PROHIBITION ON SCHOOL CLOSURE AND TRANSITION TO
PAYING TUITION

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a school district shall be prohibited from closing an existing public school and then providing for the education of its resident students by paying tuition for its students to attend a public or approved independent school chosen by the parents of the district's students. If a school district that closes an existing public school is unable to provide for the education of its affected resident students in a different school or schools operated by the district, the school district shall provide for the education of its resident students by designating three or fewer public schools to serve as the public school or schools of the district. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, if designation is required pursuant to this section, the designation process contained in 16 V.S.A. § 827 shall apply to schools operating grades kindergarten through grade 12, or any subset of grades therein.

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 3440 is added to read:

§ 3440. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the intent of this chapter to encourage the efficient use of public funds to modernize school infrastructure in alignment with current educational needs. School construction projects supported by this chapter should be developed taking consideration of standards of quality for public schools under section 165 of this title and prioritizing cost, geographic accessibility, 21st century education facilities standards, statewide enrollment trends, and capacity and scale that support best educational practices. Further, it is the intent of this chapter to encourage the use of existing infrastructure to meet the needs of Vermont students. Joint construction projects between two or more school districts and consolidation of buildings within a district where feasible and educationally appropriate are encouraged.

Sec. 10. 16 V.S.A. § 3442 is added to read:

§ 3442. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The Agency of Education shall be responsible for implementing the State Aid for School Construction Program according to the provisions of this chapter. The Agency shall be responsible for:

(1) reviewing all preliminary applications for State school construction aid and issuing an approval or denial in accordance with section 3445 of this chapter;

(2) adopting rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 pertaining to school construction and capital outlay, including rules to specify a point prioritization methodology and a bonus incentive structure aligned with the legislative intent expressed in section 3440 of this title;

(3) including as part of its budget submitted to the Governor pursuant to subdivision 212(21) of this title its annual school construction funding request;

(4) developing a prequalification and review process for project delivery consultants and architecture and engineering firms specializing in prekindergarten through grade 12 school design, renovation, or construction and maintaining a list of such prequalified firms and consultants;

(5) providing technical assistance and guidance to school districts and supervisory unions on all phases of school capital projects;

(6) providing technical advice and assistance, training, and education to school districts, supervisory unions, general contractors, subcontractors, construction or project managers, designers, and other vendors in the planning, maintenance, and establishment of school facility space;

(7) maintaining a current list of school construction projects that have received preliminary approval, projects that have received final approval, and the priority points awarded to each project;

(8) collecting, maintaining, and making publicly available quarterly progress reports of all ongoing school construction projects that shall include, at a minimum, the costs of the project and the time schedule of the project;

(9) recommending policies and procedures designed to reduce borrowing for school construction programs at both State and local levels;

(10) conducting a needs survey at least every five years to ascertain the capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for all public schools and maintaining such data in a publicly accessible format;

(11) developing a formal enrollment projection model or using projection models already available;

(12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or supervisory union;

(13) collecting and maintaining a clearinghouse of prototypical school plans, as appropriate, that may be consulted by eligible applicants;

(14) retaining the services of consultants, as necessary, to effectuate the roles and responsibilities listed within this section; and

(15) notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), annually on or before December 15, submitting a written report to the General Assembly regarding the status and implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program, including the data required to be collected pursuant to this section.

Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 3443 is added to read:

§ 3443. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY

BOARD

(a) Creation. There is hereby created the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board, which shall advise the Agency on the implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, including the adoption of rules, setting of statewide priorities, criteria for project approval, and recommendations for project approval and prioritization.

(b) Membership.

(1) Composition. The Board shall be composed of the following eight members:

(A) four members who shall serve as ex officio members:

(i) the State Treasurer or designee;

(ii) the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services or designee;

(iii) the Executive Director of the Vermont Bond Bank or designee; and

(iv) the Chair of the State Board of Education or designee; and

(B) four members, none of whom shall be a current member of the General Assembly, who shall serve four-year terms as follows:

(i) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, each of whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or finance and one of whom shall represent a supervisory union; and

(ii) two members, appointed by the Committee on Committees, each of whom shall have expertise in education or construction, real estate, or finance and one of whom shall be an educator.

(2) Members with four-year terms.

(A) A member with a term limit shall serve a term of four years and until a successor is appointed. A term shall begin on January 1 of the year of appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. Terms of these members shall be staggered so that not all terms expire at the same time.

(B) A vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion of the term.

(C) A member with a term limit shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A member appointed to fill a vacancy created before the expiration of a term shall not be deemed to have served a term for the purpose of this subdivision (C).

(c) Duties. The Board shall advise the Agency on the implementation of the State Aid for School Construction Program in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, including:

(1) rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay;

(2) project priorities;

(3) proposed legislation the Board deems desirable or necessary related to the State Aid for School Construction Program, the provisions of this chapter, and any related laws;

(4) policies and procedures designed to reduce borrowing for school construction programs at both State and local levels;

(5) development of a formal enrollment projection model or the consideration of using projection models already available;

(6) processes and procedures necessary to apply for, receive, administer, and comply with the conditions and requirements of any grant, gift, appropriation of property, services, or monies;

(7) the collection and maintenance of a clearinghouse of prototypical school plans that may be consulted by eligible applicants and recommended incentives to utilize such prototypes;

(8) the determination of eligible cost components of projects for funding or reimbursement, including partial or full eligibility for project components for which the benefit is shared between the school and other municipal and community entities;

(9) development of a long-term vision for a statewide capital plan in accordance with needs and projected funding;

(10) collection and maintenance of data on all public school facilities in the State, including information on size, usage, enrollment, available facility space, and maintenance;

(11) advising districts on the use of a needs survey to ascertain the capital construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and other capital needs for schools across the State; and

(12) encouraging school districts and supervisory unions to investigate opportunities for the maximum utilization of space in and around the district or supervisory union.

(d) Meetings.

(1) The Chair of the State Board of Education shall call the first meeting of the Board to occur on or before September 1, 2025.

(2) The Board shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Board shall meet not more than six times per year.

(e) Assistance. The Board shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Board shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings per year.

(g) Report. On or before December 15, 2025, the Board shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Education and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Education and on Finance on recommendations for addressing the transfer of any debt obligations from current school districts to future school districts as contemplated by Vermont's education transformation.

Sec. 12. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF STATE AID FOR SCHOOL

CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY BOARD

16 V.S.A. § 3443 (State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board) is repealed on July 1, 2035.

Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 3444 is added to read:

§ 3444. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AID SPECIAL FUND

(a) Creation. There is created the School Construction Aid Special Fund, to be administered by the Agency of Education. Monies in the Fund shall be used for the purposes of:

(1) awarding aid to school construction projects under section 3445 of this title;

(2) awarding grants through the Facilities Master Plan Grant Program established in section 3441 of this title;

(3) funding administrative costs of the State Aid for School Construction Program; and

(4) awarding emergency aid under section 3445 of this title.

(b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

(1) any amounts transferred or appropriated to it by the General Assembly;

(2) any amounts deposited in the Fund from the Supplemental District Spending Reserve; and

(3) any interest earned by the Fund.

Sec. 14. 16 V.S.A. § 3445 is added to read:

§ 3445. APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

PROJECTS

(a) Construction aid.

(1) Preliminary application for construction aid. A school district eligible for assistance under section 3447 of this title that intends to construct or purchase a new school, or make extensive additions or alterations to its existing school, and desires to avail itself of State school construction aid shall submit a written preliminary application to the Secretary. A preliminary application shall include information required by the Agency by rule and shall specify the need for and purpose of the project.

(2) Approval of preliminary application.

(A) When reviewing a preliminary application for approval, the Secretary shall consider:

(i) regional educational opportunities and needs, including school building capacities across school district boundaries, and available infrastructure in neighboring communities;

(ii) economic efficiencies;

(iii) the suitability of an existing school building to continue to meet educational needs; and

(iv) statewide educational initiatives.

(B) The Secretary may approve a preliminary application if:

(i)(I) the project or part of the project fulfills a need occasioned by:

(aa) conditions that threaten the health or safety of students or employees;

(bb) facilities that are inadequate to provide programs required by State or federal law or regulation;

(cc) excessive energy use resulting from the design of a building or reliance on fossil fuels or electric space heat; or

(dd) deterioration of an existing building; or

(II) the project results in consolidation of two or more school buildings and will serve the educational needs of students in a more cost-effective and educationally appropriate manner as compared to individual projects constructed separately;

(ii) the need addressed by the project cannot reasonably be met by another means;

(iii) the proposed type, kind, quality, size, and estimated cost of the project are suitable for the proposed curriculum and meet all legal standards;

(iv) the applicant achieves the level of “proficiency” in the school district quality standards regarding facilities management adopted by rule by the Agency; and

(v) the applicant has completed a facilities master planning process that:

(I) engages robust community involvement;

(II) considers regional solutions;

(III) evaluates environmental contaminants; and

(IV) produces a facilities master plan that unites the applicant's vision statement, educational needs, enrollment projections, renovation needs, and construction projects.

(3) Priorities. Following approval of a preliminary application and provided that the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total estimated cost of a project, the Agency, with the advice of the State Aid for School Construction Advisory Board, shall assign points to the project as prescribed by rule of the Agency so that the project can be placed on a priority list based on the number of points received.

(4) Request for legislative appropriation. The Agency shall submit its annual school construction funding request to the Governor as part of its budget pursuant to subdivision 212(21) of this title. Following submission of the Governor's recommended budget to the General Assembly pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 306, the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education shall recommend a total school construction appropriation for the next fiscal year to the General Assembly.

(5) Final approval for construction aid.

(A) Unless approved by the Secretary for good cause in advance of commencement of construction, a school district shall not begin construction before the Secretary approves a final application. A school district may submit a written final application to the Secretary at any time following approval of a preliminary application.

(B) The Secretary may approve a final application for a project provided that:

(i) the project has received preliminary approval;

(ii) the district has voted funds or authorized a bond for the total estimated cost of the project;

(iii) the district has made arrangements for project construction supervision by persons competent in the building trades;

(iv) the district has provided for construction financing of the project during a period prescribed by the Agency;

(v) the project has otherwise met the requirements of this chapter;

(vi) if the proposed project includes a playground, the project includes a requirement that the design and construction of playground equipment follow the guidelines set forth in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground Safety; and

(vii) if the total estimated cost of the proposed project is less than \$50,000.00, no performance bond or irrevocable letter of credit shall be required.

(C) The Secretary may provide that a grant for a high school project is conditioned upon the agreement of the recipient to provide high school instruction for any high school pupil living in an area prescribed by the Agency who may elect to attend the school.

(D) A district may begin construction upon receipt of final approval. However, a district shall not be reimbursed for debt incurred due to borrowing of funds in anticipation of aid under this section.

(6) Award of construction aid.

(A) The base amount of an award shall be 20 percent of the eligible debt service cost of a project. Projects are eligible for additional bonus incentives as specified in rule for up to an additional 20 percent of the eligible debt service cost. Amounts shall be awarded annually.

(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (6), “eligible debt service cost” of a project means the product of the lifetime cost of the bond authorized for the project and the ratio of the approved cost of a project to the total cost of the project.

(b) Emergency aid. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the Secretary may grant aid for a project the Secretary deems to be an emergency in the amount of 30 percent of eligible project costs, up to a maximum eligible total project cost of \$300,000.00.

Sec. 15. 16 V.S.A. § 3446 is added to read:

§ 3446. APPEAL

Any municipal corporation as defined in section 3447 of this title aggrieved by an order, allocation, or award of the Agency of Education may, within 30 days, appeal to the Superior Court in the county in which the project is located.

Sec. 16. TRANSFER OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; TRANSFER OF
RULES

(a) The statutory authority to adopt rules by the State Board of Education pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted under 16 V.S.A. § 3448(e) and 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 is transferred from the State Board of Education to the Agency of Education.

(b) All rules pertaining to school construction and capital outlay adopted by the State Board of Education under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 prior to July 1, 2026 shall be deemed the rules of the Agency of Education and remain in effect until amended or repealed by the Agency of Education pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25.

(c) The Agency of Education shall provide notice of the transfer to the Secretary of State and the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules in accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 848(d)(2).

Sec. 17. REPEALS

(a) 16 V.S.A. § 3448 (approval of funding of school construction projects; renewable energy) is repealed on July 1 2026.

(b) 16 V.S.A. § 3448a (appeal) is repealed on July 1, 2026.

Sec. 18. 16 V.S.A. § 828 is amended to read:

§ 828. TUITION TO APPROVED SCHOOLS; AGE; APPEAL

(a) A school district shall not pay the tuition of a student except to:

(1) a public school; located in Vermont;

(2) an approved independent school; that:

(A) is located in Vermont;

(B) is approved under section 166 of this title on or before July 1, 2025;

(C) has at least 51 percent of its student enrollment composed of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis pursuant to chapter 21 of this title during the 2024–2025 school year; and

(D) complies with the minimum class size requirements contained in subdivision 165(a)(9) of this title and State Board rule; provided, however, that if a school is unable to comply with the class size minimum standards due to geographic isolation or a school has developed an implementation plan to meet the class size minimum requirements, the school may ask the State Board to grant it a waiver from this subdivision (D), which decision shall be final;

(3) an independent school meeting education quality standards;;

(4) a tutorial program approved by the State Board;;

(5) an approved education program,–or;

~~(6) an independent school in another state or country approved under the laws of that state or country, that complies with the reporting requirement under subsection 4010(c) of this title, a public school located in another state; or~~

~~(7) a therapeutic approved independent school located in Vermont or another state or country that is approved under the laws of that state or country.~~

~~(b) nor shall payment~~ Payment of tuition on behalf of a person shall not be denied on account of age.

~~(c) Unless otherwise provided, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of a school board relating to eligibility for tuition payments, the amount of tuition payable, or the school the person may attend, may appeal to the State Board and its decision shall be final.~~

~~(d) As used in this section, "therapeutic approved independent school" means an approved independent school that limits enrollment for publicly funded students residing in Vermont to students who are on an individualized education program or plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, or who are enrolled pursuant to a written agreement between a local education agency and the school or pursuant to a court order.~~

Sec. 19. TUITION TRANSITION

A school district that pays tuition pursuant to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. chapter 21 in effect on June 30, 2025 shall continue to pay tuition on behalf of a resident student enrolled for the 2024–2025 school year in or who has been accepted for enrollment for the 2025–2026 school year by an approved independent school subject to the provisions of 16 V.S.A. § 828 in effect on June 30, 2025, until such time as the student graduates from that school.

* * * Statewide Cohesion * * *

Sec. 20. STATEWIDE COHESION; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to consolidate structures and systems that are foundational to the administration of education.

Sec. 21. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; SCHOOL CALENDAR;

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; REPORT

(a) Statewide graduation requirements. On or before January 1, 2026, the Agency of Education shall recommend to the State Board of Education standards for statewide proficiency-based graduation requirements based on standards adopted by the State Board.

(b) Statewide school calendar.

(1) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary of Education shall develop and publish a statewide calendar for the public schools of the State, including career and technical centers, that shall be in effect in the 2028–2029 academic year and after.

(2) On or before January 15, 2027, the Secretary shall present to the House and Senate Committees on Education a list of the statutory amendments necessary to effect the intent of this subsection.

(c) Report. On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit a written report and recommended legislative language, as applicable, to the House and Senate Committees on Education with the following:

(1) In consultation with educators and administrators, a proposed implementation plan for statewide financial data and student information systems.

(2) Recommendations for a school construction division within the Agency of Education, including position descriptions and job duties for each position within the division, a detailed description of the assistance the division would provide to the field, and the overall role the Agency would play within a State aid to school construction program.

(3) A progress report regarding the development of clear, unambiguous guidance that would be provided to school officials and school board members regarding the business processes and transactions that would need to occur to facilitate school district mergers into larger, consolidated school districts, including the merging of data systems, asset and liability transfers, and how to address collective bargaining agreements for both educators and staff. The report shall include a detailed description of how the Agency will provide support and consolidation assistance to the field in each of these areas and an estimate of the costs associated with such work.

(4) In consultation with superintendents, directors of therapeutic independent schools, special education directors, and, in the opinion of the Agency, other experts, recommendations for the need for cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools within the school governance framework both at a state and local level.

* * * State-Level Governance * * *

Sec. 22. STATE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE; INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that the State Board of Education is the independent, transparent, and public facing body for public education and to ensure the Board maintains its ability provide an important

outlet for the public to engage in the rulemaking process and regularly provide public comment regarding the state of Vermont's education system.

Sec. 23. 16 V.S.A. § 161 is amended to read:

§ 161. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; APPOINTMENT OF
MEMBERS; TERM; VACANCY

The State Board shall consist of ~~ten~~ 10 members. Two of the members shall be secondary students, one of whom shall be a full member and the other of whom shall be a junior member who may not vote. All Eight members, including the two student members, shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House and one member shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees. In the appointment of the nonstudent members, priority shall be given to the selection of persons with a demonstrated commitment to ensuring quality education for Vermont students. To the extent possible, the members shall represent the State's geographic, gender, racial, and ethnic diversity. The Secretary shall serve on the State Board as a nonvoting member.

(1) Upon the expiration of the respective terms of those members of the Board previously appointed, excluding the student members, the ~~Governor~~ appointing authority that made the initial appointment to the expired term shall, biennially in the month of February with the advice and consent of the Senate, as applicable, appoint members for terms of six years. The terms shall begin March 1 of the year in which the appointments are made. A member serving a term of six years shall not be eligible for reappointment for successive terms.

(2) In the event of any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Board, the ~~Governor~~ appointing authority that made the initial appointment to the vacated term shall fill the vacancy with a qualified person whose appointment shall be for the unexpired portion of the term.

(3) Biennially, the Board shall choose a member of the Board to be its chair.

(4) Annually, using an application process that is open and accessible to all eligible students, the Governor shall appoint a Vermont secondary school student who will continue to be a secondary student for at least two years following taking office, to serve on the State Board for two years, beginning on July 1 of the year of appointment. The student member shall not vote during the first year and shall be a full and voting member during the second year of ~~his or her~~ the student's term.

Sec. 24. TRANSITION PERIOD APPOINTMENTS; STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

(a) Members currently serving on the State Board of Education may continue to serve for the duration of the term to which they were appointed.

(b) Beginning on July 1, 2025, as terms of currently serving members expire, appointments of successors shall be made in accordance with the considerations and appointment authority contained in 16 V.S.A. § 161.

(1) The Speaker of the House shall make the first appointment to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(2) The Senate Committee on Committees shall make the second appointment to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(3) The Governor shall make the third appointment, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to a vacant or expired seat that occurs after July 1, 2025 and shall make any subsequent appointments to fill the vacated or expired term for that same seat after the initial transition period appointment.

(c) Once the first three appointments after July 1, 2025 are made in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, the Governor shall make all subsequent appointments for the remaining five non-student seats, with the advice and consent of the Senate, in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 161.

Sec. 25. 16 V.S.A. § 162 is amended to read:

§ 162. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS

After notice and hearing, the Governor may remove a member of the State Board for incompetency, failure to discharge ~~his or her~~ the member's duties, malfeasance, illegal acts, or other cause inimical to the welfare of the public schools; and in case of such removal, ~~he or she~~ the appointing authority that made the initial appointment shall appoint a person to fill the unexpired term.

Sec. 26. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW OF RULES;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The State Board of Education shall review each rule series the State Board is responsible for and make a determination as to the continuing need for, appropriateness of, or need for updating of said rules. On or before December 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall submit a written report

to the House and Senate Committees on Education with its recommendation for rules that are no longer needed and a plan to update rules that are still necessary, including the order in which the Board proposes to update the rules and any associated costs or staffing needs.

(b) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 to provide the State Board of Education with the contracted resources necessary to review and update the Board's rules.

* * * Tuition * * *

Sec. 27. 16 V.S.A. § 823 is amended to read:

§ 823. ~~ELEMENTARY TUITION~~

~~(a) Tuition for elementary students shall be paid by the district in which the student is a resident. The district shall pay the full tuition charged its students attending a public elementary school to a receiving school an amount equal to the base amount contained in subdivision 4001(16) of this title multiplied by the sum of one and any weights applicable to the resident student under section 4010 of this title, for each resident student attending the receiving school. If a payment made to a public elementary school is three percent more or less than the calculated net cost per elementary pupil in the receiving school district for the year of attendance, the district shall be reimbursed, credited, or refunded pursuant to section 836 of this title. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection or of subsection 825(b) of this title, the boards of both the receiving and sending districts may enter into tuition agreements with terms differing from the provisions of those subsections, provided that the receiving district must offer identical terms to all sending districts, and further provided that the statutory provisions apply to any sending district that declines the offered terms.~~

~~(b) Unless the electorate of a school district authorizes payment of a higher amount at an annual or special meeting warned for the purpose, the tuition paid to an approved independent elementary school or an independent school meeting education quality standards shall not exceed the least of:~~

~~(1) the average announced tuition of Vermont union elementary schools for the year of attendance;~~

~~(2) the tuition charged by the approved independent school for the year of attendance; or~~

~~(3) the average per-pupil tuition the district pays for its other resident elementary students in the year in which the student is enrolled in the approved independent school. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 28. REPEALS

16 V.S.A. §§ 824 (high school tuition), 825 (maximum tuition rate; calculated net cost per pupil defined), 826 (notice of tuition rates; special education charges), and 836 (tuition overcharge or undercharge) are repealed on July 1, 2029.

* * * Adult Education Funding * * *

Sec. 29. 16 V.S.A. § 4011 is amended to read:

§ 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS

(a) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate funds to pay for statewide education spending and a portion of a base education amount for each adult education and secondary credential program student.

(b) For each fiscal year, the base education amount shall be \$6,800.00, ~~increased by the most recent New England Economic Project Cumulative Price Index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subsection, “adjusted for inflation” means adjusting the base education amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2005 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, plus an additional one-tenth of one percent and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.~~

* * *

(f) ~~Annually, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program from funds appropriated for this subsection to the Agency in an amount equal to 26 percent of the base education amount for each student who completes the diagnostic portions of the an adult education and secondary credential program, based on an average of the previous two years; 40, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program an amount that shall be calculated pursuant to the funding formula contained in the State Board of Education adult education rules. Forty percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the Education Fund and 60 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the General Fund.~~

* * *

Sec. 30. ADULT EDUCATION; FUNDING; REPORT

(a) On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Education, in consultation with local adult education and literacy providers, shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education with recommendations to modernize adult education funding to ensure funds are distributed equitably across all regions of the State.

(b) For fiscal year 2026, the Agency of Education shall negotiate in good faith to extend the existing contracts with local adult education and literacy providers for a term of one year. The Agency shall endeavor to maintain the terms of the existing contracts to the greatest extent possible.

Sec. 31. STATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DELIVERY; AGENCY OF
EDUCATION; REPORT

(a) On or before September 1, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance addressing the factors contributing to growth in extraordinary special education reimbursement costs. The report shall include detailed information regarding the current state of special education delivery in Vermont, including an update on the implementation of special education changes enacted pursuant to 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 (Act 173). The report shall include a description of the current state of support for students with disabilities in Vermont and recommended changes to structure, practice, and law with the goal of:

(1) improving the delivery of special education services and managing the rising extraordinary special education costs as Vermont's special education finance system transitions from a census block grant to a weight for special education costs;

(2) ensuring better, more inclusive services in the least restrictive environment in a way that makes efficient and effective use of limited resources while resulting in the best outcomes;

(3) responding to the challenges of fully implementing Act 173 and the lessons learned from implementation efforts to date;

(4) ensuring that the delivery of special education is responsive to student needs; and

(5) addressing drivers of growth of extraordinary expenditures in special education.

(b) The report shall include:

(1) An analysis of the costs of and services provided for students with extraordinary needs in specialized settings, separated by school-district-operated specialized programs, independent nonprofit programs, and independent for-profit programs. The report shall include a geographic map with the location of all specialized programs within the State of Vermont, as well as the following information for each individual specialized program:

(A) disability categories served;

(B) grade levels served;

(C) the number of students with IEPs and the average duration of time each student spent in the program over the last 10 years;

(D) average cost per pupil, inclusive of extraordinary spending and any costs in excess of general tuition rates;

(E) years of experience, training, and tenure of licensed special education staff;

(F) a review of the findings of all investigations conducted by the Agency of Education; and

(G) a review of the Agency's public assurance capabilities, with respect to special education programs in all settings, and an analysis of the effectiveness of current oversight or rule, and recommended changes if needed.

(2) An evaluation of the state of implementation of Act 173, including examples of where implementation has been successful, where it has not, and why.

(3) Identification of drivers of accelerating costs within the special education system.

(4) Identification of barriers to the success of students with disabilities.

(5) A description of how specialized programs for students with extraordinary needs operated by school districts, independent nonprofit schools, and independent for-profit schools are funded, with an analysis of the benefits and risks of each funding model.

(6) An assessment of whether Vermont's current special education laws ensure equitable access for all students with disabilities to education alongside their peers in a way that is consistent with the Vermont education quality

standards for public schools and the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400–1482.

(7) A review of the capacity of the Agency to support and guide school districts on the effective support of students with disabilities, as well as compliance with federal law, which shall include:

(A) a review of final reports of investigations conducted by the Agency in school-district-operated specialized programs, independent nonprofit programs, and independent for-profit programs in the previous 10 years and an evaluation of what practices could reduce adverse findings in these settings;

(B) an assessment of the ability of the State to ensure State resources are used in the most efficient and effective way possible to support the success of students with disabilities and their access to a free and appropriate public education;

(C) a review of any pending and recent federal findings against the State or school districts, as well as progress on corrective actions;

(D) a review of the Agency’s staffing and capacity to review and conduct monitoring and visits to schools, especially independent settings;

(E) a description of the process and status of reviews and approvals of approved independent schools that provide special education and therapeutic schools; and

(F) recommendations for whether the Agency has capacity to ensure timely review of approved independent schools and provide sufficient oversight for specialized programs in nonprofit independent schools and for-profit independent schools.

(8) Recommendations for needed capacity at the Agency to provide technical assistance and support to school districts in the provision of special education services.

(9) An analysis of whether more strategic support for better primary first instruction and more successful implementation of Act 173 needs to be in place for a weighted funding model for special education to succeed, including a suggested transition timeline, with indicators, to be incorporated into the Agency’s strategic plan.

(10) If warranted, a review of options for changes to practice, structure, and law that ensure students with disabilities are provided access to quality education, in the least restrictive environment, in a cost-effective way that is consistent with State and federal law, which may include a review of the

possible role of BOCES and the impact of larger districts on effective, high-quality support for students with disabilities.

Sec. 32. SPECIAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN; AGENCY OF
EDUCATION

(a) Strategic plan. In consultation with the State Advisory Panel on Special Education established under 16 V.S.A. § 2945, the Agency of Education shall develop a three-year strategic plan for the delivery of special education services in Vermont. The strategic plan shall include unambiguous measurable outcomes and a timeline for implementation. The strategic plan shall be informed by the analysis and findings of the report required of the Agency under Sec. 31 of this act and be designed to ensure successful implementation of 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 173 (Act 173) and provide the supports and processes that need to be in place for the transition to a weighted funding model for special education to succeed, including a suggested transition timeline, with benchmarks for success. The strategic plan shall also include contingency recommendations for special education funding in the event federal special education funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400–1482, is no longer available or transitions to a system that requires more planning and management on the part of the State to ensure funds are distributed equitably.

(b) Reports.

(1) On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency shall submit the three-year strategic plan created pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance.

(2) On or before December 1 of 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029, the Agency shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance with a detailed update on the Agency's implementation of its strategic plan and any recommendations for legislative changes needed to ensure a successful transition to a weighted funding model and continued successful implementation of Act 173.

Sec. 33. POSITION; AGENCY OF EDUCATION

(a) Establishment of one new permanent, classified position is authorized in the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026, to support development and implementation of the three-year strategic plan required under Sec. 32 of this act.

(b) The sum of \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Education's base budget in fiscal year 2026 for the purposes of funding the position created in subsection (a) of this section. The Agency shall include funding for this permanent position in their annual base budget request in subsequent years.

* * * State Funding of Public Education * * *

Sec. 34. 16 V.S.A. § 4001 is amended to read:

§ 4001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) ~~“Average daily membership” of a school district or, if needed in order to calculate the appropriate homestead tax rate, of the municipality as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(9), in any year means:~~

* * *

~~(6) “Education spending” means the amount of the school district budget, any assessment for a joint contract school, career technical center payments made on behalf of the district under subsection 1561(b) of this title, and any amount added to pay a deficit pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1523(b) that is paid for by the school district, but excluding any portion of the school budget paid for from any other sources such as endowments, parental fundraising, federal funds, nongovernmental grants, or other State funds such as special education funds paid under chapter 101 of this title.~~

~~(A) [Repealed.]~~

~~(B) For all bonds approved by voters prior to July 1, 2024, voter-approved bond payments toward principal and interest shall not be included in “education spending” for purposes of calculating excess spending pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5401(12). [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(13) “Base education Categorical base amount” means a number used to calculate categorical grants awarded under this title that is equal to \$6,800.00 per equalized pupil, adjusted as required under section 4011 of this title.

(14) ~~“Per pupil education spending” of a school district in any school year means the per pupil education spending of that school district as determined under subsection 4010(f) of this title. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(16) “Base amount” means a per pupil cost-factor amount of \$15,033.00, which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subdivision, “adjusted for inflation” means adjusting the base dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.

(17) “Educational opportunity payment” means the base amount multiplied by the school district’s weighted long-term membership as determined under section 4010 of this title.

Sec. 35. 16 V.S.A. § 4010 is amended to read:

§ 4010. DETERMINATION OF WEIGHTED LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP
AND PER PUPIL EDUCATION SPENDING EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITY PAYMENT

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “EL pupils” means pupils described under section 4013 of this title.

(2) “FPL” means the Federal Poverty Level.

(3) “Weighting categories” means the categories listed under subsection (b) of this section.

(4) “Child with a disability” has the same meaning as in section 2942 of this title.

(5) “Disability” means any of:

(A) a specific learning disability or a speech or language impairment, each of which is identified as “low cost”;

(B) an emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, or other health impairment, each of which is identified as “medium cost”; or

(C) autism spectrum disorder, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment, each of which is identified as “high cost.”

(6) “English language proficiency level” means each of the English language proficiency levels published as a standardized measure of academic language proficiency in WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and available to members of the WIDA consortium of state departments of education.

(7) “Newcomer or SLIFE” means a pupil identified as a New American or as a student with limited or interrupted formal education.

(b) Determination of average daily membership and weighting categories. On or before the first day of December during each school year, the Secretary shall determine the average daily membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(1) of this title, of each school district for the current school year and shall ~~perform the following tasks,~~

~~(1) Using~~ using average daily membership, list for each school district the number of:

~~(A) pupils in prekindergarten;~~

~~(B) pupils in kindergarten through grade five;~~

~~(C) pupils in grades six through eight;~~

~~(D) pupils in grades nine through 12;~~

~~(E)(1)~~ pupils whose families are at or below 185 percent of FPL, using the highest number of pupils in the district:

~~(i)(A)~~ that meet this definition under the universal income declaration form; or

~~(ii)(B)~~ who are directly certified for free and reduced-priced meals;
and

~~(F)(2)~~ EL pupils that have been most recently assessed at an English language proficiency level of:

(A) Level 1;

(B) Level 2 or 3;

(C) Level 4; or

(D) Level 5 or 6;

(3) EL pupils that are identified as Newcomer or SLIFE; and

(4) Children with a disability whose disability is identified as:

(A) low cost;

(B) medium cost; or

(C) high cost, provided that a child with multiple disabilities shall be counted solely under this subdivision (C).

~~(2)(A) Identify all school districts that have low population density, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, equaling:~~

~~(i) fewer than 36 persons per square mile;~~

~~(ii) 36 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 55 persons per square mile; or~~

~~(iii) 55 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 100 persons per square mile.~~

~~(B) Population density data shall be based on the best available U.S. Census data as provided to the Agency of Education by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.~~

~~(C) Using average daily membership, list for each school district that has low population density the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(iii) of this subdivision (2).~~

~~(3)(A) Identify all school districts that have one or more small schools, which are schools that have an average two-year enrollment of:~~

~~(i) fewer than 100 pupils; or~~

~~(ii) 100 or more pupils but fewer than 250 pupils.~~

~~(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), “average two-year enrollment” means the average enrollment of the two most recently completed school years, and “enrollment” means the number of pupils who are enrolled in a school operated by the district on October 1. A pupil shall be counted as one whether the pupil is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student.~~

~~(C) Using average two-year enrollment, list for each school district that has a small school the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(ii) of this subdivision (3).~~

(c) Reporting on weighting categories to the Agency of Education. Each school district shall annually report to the Agency of Education by a date established by the Agency the information needed in order for the Agency to compute the weighting categories under subsection (b) of this section for that district. In order to fulfill this obligation, a school district that pays public tuition on behalf of a resident student (sending district) to a public school in another school district, an approved independent school, or an out-of-state school (each a receiving school) may request the receiving school to collect this information on the sending district’s resident student, and if requested, the

receiving school shall provide this information to the sending district in a timely manner.

(d) Determination of weighted long-term membership. For each weighting category ~~except the small schools weighting category under subdivision (b)(3) of this section~~, the Secretary shall compute the weighting count by using the long-term membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(7) of this title, in that category.

(1) ~~The Secretary shall first apply grade level weights. Each pupil included in long-term membership shall count as one, multiplied by the following amounts:~~

~~(A) prekindergarten—negative 0.54;~~

~~(B) grades six through eight—0.36; and~~

~~(C) grades nine through 12—0.39. [Repealed.]~~

(2) ~~The Secretary shall next apply a weight for pupils whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL. Each pupil included in long-term membership whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL shall receive an additional weighting amount of 1.03~~ 1.02.

(3) ~~The Secretary shall next apply a weight for EL pupils. Each EL pupil included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the EL pupil's English language proficiency level, of 2.49:~~

~~(A) 2.11, if assessed as Level 1;~~

~~(B) 1.41, if assessed as Level 2 or 3;~~

~~(C) 1.20, if assessed as Level 4; or~~

~~(D) 0.12, if assessed as Level 5 or 6.~~

(4) ~~The Secretary shall then apply a weight for pupils living in low population density school districts. Each EL pupil that is a Newcomer or SLIFE included in long-term membership residing in a low population density school district, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, shall receive an additional weighting amount of:~~ 0.42

~~(A) 0.15, where the number of persons per square mile is fewer than 36 persons;~~

~~(B) 0.12, where the number of persons per square mile is 36 or more but fewer than 55 persons; or~~

~~(C) 0.07, where the number of persons per square mile is 55 or more but fewer than 100.~~

~~(5) The Secretary shall lastly apply a weight for pupils who attend a small school. If the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of a school district as of July 1 of the year of determination is 55 or fewer, then, for each pupil listed under subdivision (b)(3)(C) of this section (pupils who attend small schools) Each child with a disability included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the cost level associated with the child's disability, of:~~

~~(A) where the school has fewer than 100 pupils in average two-year enrollment, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.21 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment 0.79, if the disability is identified as low cost; or~~

~~(B) where the small school has 100 or more but fewer than 250 pupils, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.07 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment 1.35, if the disability is identified as medium cost; or~~

~~(C) 2.49, if the disability is identified as high cost.~~

~~(6) A school district's weighted long-term membership shall equal long-term membership plus the cumulation of the weights assigned by the Secretary under this subsection.~~

~~(e) Hold harmless. A district's weighted long-term membership shall in no case be less than 96 and one-half percent of its actual weighted long-term membership the previous year prior to making any adjustment under this subsection.~~

~~(f) Determination of per pupil education spending educational opportunity payment. As soon as reasonably possible after a school district budget is approved by voters, the Secretary shall determine the per pupil education spending for the next fiscal year for the school district. Per pupil education spending shall equal a school district's education spending divided by its weighted long-term membership The Secretary shall determine each school district's educational opportunity payment by multiplying the school district's weighted long-term membership determined under subsection (d) of this section by the base amount.~~

* * *

(h) Updates to weights, base amount, and transportation reimbursement. On or before January 1, ~~2027~~ 2026 and on or before January 1 of every fifth year thereafter, the Agency of Education and the Joint Fiscal Office shall calculate, based on their consensus view, updates to the weights and the base amount, including any inflationary measure, to account for cost changes underlying those weights and shall issue a written report on their work to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance. The General Assembly shall update the weights under this section, the base amount, and transportation reimbursement under section 4016 of this title not less than every five years and the implementation date for the updated weights and transportation reimbursement shall be delayed by a year in order to provide school districts with time to prepare their budgets. Updates to the weights may include recalibration, recalculation, adding or eliminating weights, or any combination of these actions.

Sec. 36. 16 V.S.A. § 4011 is amended to read:

§ 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS

(a) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate funds to pay for ~~statewide education spending~~ each school district's educational opportunity payment and supplemental district spending, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401, the small schools and sparsity support grants under section 4019 of this chapter, and a portion of a base education categorical base amount for each adult education and secondary credential program student.

(b) For each fiscal year, the categorical ~~base education~~ amount shall be \$6,800.00, which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subsection, "adjusted for inflation" means adjusting the categorical base dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2005 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.

(c) Annually, each school district shall receive ~~an education spending payment~~ for support of education costs its educational opportunity payment determined pursuant to subsection 4010(f) of this chapter and a dollar amount equal to its supplemental district spending, if applicable to that school district, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401. ~~An unorganized town or gore shall receive an amount equal to its per pupil education spending for that year for each student. No district shall receive more than its education spending amount.~~

(d) [Repealed.]

(e) [Repealed.]

(f) Annually, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program an amount equal to 26 percent of the categorical base education amount for each student who completes the diagnostic portions of the program, based on an average of the previous two years; 40 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the Education Fund and 60 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the General Fund.

* * *

(i) Annually, on or before October 1, the Secretary shall send to school boards for inclusion in town reports and publish on the Agency website ~~the following information:~~

~~(1) the statewide average district per pupil education spending for the current fiscal year; and~~

~~(2) a statewide comparison of student-teacher ratios among schools that are similar in number of students and number of grades.~~

Sec. 37. 16 V.S.A. § 4019 is added to read:

§ 4019. SMALL SCHOOLS; SPARSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS;

SUPPORT GRANTS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Enrollment" means the number of students who are enrolled in a school operated by the school district on October 1. A student shall be counted as one whether the student is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student.

(2) "Small school" means a school that:

(A) has fewer than 100 pupils in two-year average enrollment; and

(B) has been determined by the State Board of Education, on an annual basis, to be "small by necessity" under standards consistent with those submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Sec. 6(b) of this act.

(3) "Sparse school district" means a school district where the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination is fewer than 55 persons.

(4) “Two-year average enrollment” means the average enrollment of the two most recently completed school years.

(b) Small schools support grant. Annually, the Secretary shall pay a small schools support grant to each school district for each small school within the school district in an amount determined by multiplying the two-year average enrollment in the small school by \$3,157.00.

(c) Sparsity support grant. Annually, the Secretary shall pay a sparsity support grant to each sparse school district in an amount determined by multiplying the two-year average enrollment of each public school in the school district by \$1,954.00.

(d) Inflationary adjustment. Each dollar amount under subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary. As used in this subsection, “adjusted for inflation” means adjusting the dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.

Sec. 38. 16 V.S.A. § 4025 is amended to read:

§ 4025. EDUCATION FUND

(a) The Education Fund is established to comprise the following:

(1) all revenue paid to the State from the statewide education tax on nonhomestead and homestead property under 32 V.S.A. chapter 135;

(2) all revenue paid to the State from the supplemental district spending tax imposed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402(f);

* * *

(b) Monies in the Education Fund shall be used for the following:

* * *

(3) ~~To make payments required under 32 V.S.A. § 6066(a)(1) and only that portion attributable to education taxes, as determined by the Commissioner of Taxes, of payments required under 32 V.S.A. § 6066(a)(3).~~ The State Treasurer shall withdraw funds from the Education Fund upon warrants issued by the Commissioner of Finance and Management based on information supplied by the Commissioner of Taxes. The Commissioner of Finance and Management may draw warrants for disbursements from the Fund in anticipation of receipts. All balances in the Fund at the end of any fiscal

year shall be carried forward and remain a part of the Fund. Interest accruing from the Fund shall remain in the Fund.

* * *

Sec. 39. 16 V.S.A. § 4026 is amended to read:

§ 4026. EDUCATION FUND BUDGET STABILIZATION RESERVE;

CREATION AND PURPOSE

* * *

(e) ~~The enactment of this chapter and other provisions of the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of which it is a part have been premised upon estimates of balances of revenues to be raised and expenditures to be made under the act for such purposes as education spending payments, categorical State support grants, provisions for property tax income sensitivity, payments in lieu of taxes, current use value appraisals, tax stabilization agreements, the stabilization reserve established by this section, and for other purposes. If the stabilization reserve established under this section should in any fiscal year be less than 5.0 percent of the prior fiscal year's appropriations from the Education Fund, as defined in subsection (b) of this section, the Joint Fiscal Committee shall review the information provided pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402b and provide the General Assembly its recommendations for change necessary to restore the stabilization reserve to the statutory level provided in subsection (b) of this section.~~

Sec. 40. 16 V.S.A. § 4028 is amended to read:

§ 4028. FUND PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

(a) ~~On or before September 10, December 10, and April 30 of each school year, one-third of the education spending payment under section 4011 of this title each school district's educational opportunity payment as determined under subsection 4010(f) of this chapter and supplemental district spending, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401, shall become due to school districts, except that districts that have not adopted a budget by 30 days before the date of payment under this subsection shall receive one-quarter of the base education amount and upon adoption of a budget shall receive additional amounts due under this subsection.~~

(b) Payments made for special education under chapter 101 of this title, for career technical education under chapter 37 of this title, and for other aid and categorical grants paid for support of education shall also be from the Education Fund.

~~(c)(1) Any district that has adopted a school budget that includes high spending, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(12), shall, upon timely notice, be authorized to use a portion of its high spending penalty to reduce future education spending;~~

~~(A) by entering into a contract with an operational efficiency consultant or a financial systems consultant to examine issues such as transportation arrangements, administrative costs, staffing patterns, and the potential for collaboration with other districts;~~

~~(B) by entering into a contract with an energy or facilities management consultant; or~~

~~(C) by engaging in discussions with other school districts about reorganization or consolidation for better service delivery at a lower cost.~~

~~(2) To the extent approved by the Secretary, the Agency shall pay the district from the property tax revenue to be generated by the high spending increase to the district's spending adjustment as estimated by the Secretary, up to a maximum of \$5,000.00. For the purposes of this subsection, "timely notice" means written notice from the district to the Secretary by September 30 of the budget year. If the district enters into a contract with a consultant pursuant to this subsection, the consultant shall not be an employee of the district or of the Agency. A copy of the consultant's final recommendations or a copy of the district's recommendations regarding reorganization, as appropriate, shall be submitted to the Secretary, and each affected town shall include in its next town report an executive summary of the consultant's or district's final recommendations and notice of where a complete copy is available. No district is authorized to obtain funds under this section more than one time in every five years. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

Sec. 41. 16 V.S.A. § 563 is amended to read:

§ 563. POWERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS; FORM OF VOTE

The school board of a school district, in addition to other duties and authority specifically assigned by law:

* * *

(11)(A) Shall prepare and distribute annually a proposed budget for the next school year according to such major categories as may from time to time be prescribed by the Secretary.

(B) [Repealed.]

(C) At a school district's annual or special meeting, the electorate may vote to provide notice of availability of the school budget required by this subdivision to the electorate in lieu of distributing the budget. If the electorate of the school district votes to provide notice of availability, it must specify how notice of availability shall be given, and such notice of availability shall be provided to the electorate at least 30 days before the district's annual meeting. The proposed budget shall be prepared and distributed at least ~~ten~~ 10 days before a sum of money is voted on by the electorate. Any proposed budget shall show the following information in a format prescribed by the Secretary:

(i) all revenues from all sources, and expenses, including as separate items any assessment for a supervisory union of which it is a member and any tuition to be paid to a career technical center; and including the report required in subdivision 242(4)(D) of this title itemizing the component costs of the supervisory union assessment;

(ii) the specific amount of any deficit incurred in the most recently closed fiscal year and how the deficit was or will be remedied;

(iii) the anticipated ~~homestead~~ statewide education tax rate and the percentage of household income used to determine income sensitivity in the district as a result of passage of the budget, including those portions of the tax rate attributable to supervisory union assessments, as adjusted for each tax classification pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402; and

(iv) the definition of "~~education spending supplemental district spending,~~" the number of pupils and number of equalized pupils in long-term membership of the school district, and the district's ~~education spending per equalized pupil~~ supplemental district spending in the proposed budget and in each of the prior three years; and

(v) the supplemental district spending yield.

(D) The board shall present the budget to the voters by means of a ballot in the following form:

"Article #1 (School Budget):

Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$ _____, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary in excess of the school district's educational opportunity payment for the ensuing fiscal year?

The _____ District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil ~~education~~ supplemental district spending of \$ _____, which is _____% higher/lower than per pupil ~~education~~

supplemental district spending for the current year, and a supplemental district spending tax rate of _____ per \$100.00 of equalized education property value.”

* * *

Sec. 42. REPEALS

(a) 16 V.S.A. § 4031 (unorganized towns and gores) is repealed.

(b) 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 127, Sec. 8 (suspension of excess spending penalty, hold harmless provision, and ballot language requirement) is repealed.

(c) 16 V.S.A. § 2961 (census grant; special education) is repealed.

Sec. 43. 16 V.S.A. § 4032 is added to read

§ 4032. SUPPLEMENTAL DISTRICT SPENDING RESERVE

(a) There is hereby created the Supplemental District Spending Reserve within the Education Fund. Any recapture, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401, paid to the Education Fund as part of the revenue from the supplemental district spending tax imposed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402(f) shall be reserved within the Supplemental District Spending Reserve.

(b) In any fiscal year in which the amounts raised through the supplemental district spending tax imposed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402(f) are insufficient to cover payment to each school district of its supplemental district spending, the Supplemental District Spending Reserve shall be used by the Commissioner of Finance and Management to the extent necessary to offset the deficit as determined by generally accepted accounting principles.

(c) Any funds remaining in the Supplemental District Spending Reserve at the close of the fiscal year after accounting for the process under subsection (b) of this section shall be transferred into the School Construction Aid Special Fund established in section 3444 of this title.

Sec. 44. AGENCY OF EDUCATION; TRANSPORTATION

REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

On or before December 15, 2025, the Agency of Education shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Ways and Means and on Education and the Senate Committees on Finance and on Education on clear and equitable guidelines for minimum transportation to be provided and covered by transportation reimbursement grant under 16 V.S.A. § 4016 as part of Vermont’s education transformation.

Sec. 45. REPORT; JOINT FISCAL OFFICE; INFLATIONARY

MEASURES; PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION FUNDING

(a) On or before December 15, 2025, the Joint Fiscal Office shall submit a report to the House Committees on Ways and Means and on Education and the Senate Committees on Finance and on Education that analyzes the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and alternative inflationary measures that may be applied to state education funding systems. As part of the report, the Joint Fiscal Office shall analyze options and provide considerations for selecting an inflationary measure appropriate to Vermont's education funding system.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Joint Fiscal Office shall submit a report to the House Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Finance, and the House and Senate Committees on Education on the current funding systems for prekindergarten education, the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, or any other early care and learning systems. The report shall review financial incentives in these existing early care and learning systems. As part of the report, the Joint Fiscal Office shall provide considerations for changing the funding streams associated with these early care and learning systems to align with the education transformation initiatives envisioned in this act.

* * * Education Property Tax Rate Formula * * *

Sec. 46. 32 V.S.A. § 5401 is amended to read:

§ 5401. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(8) ~~“Education spending” means “education spending” as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6). [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(12) ~~“Excess spending” means:~~

~~(A) The per pupil spending amount of the district's education spending, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), plus any amount required to be added from a capital construction reserve fund under 24 V.S.A. § 2804(b).~~

~~(B) In excess of 118 percent of the statewide average district per pupil education spending increased by inflation, as determined by the Secretary of Education on or before November 15 of each year based on the passed budgets to date. As used in this subdivision, “increased by inflation” means increasing the statewide average district per pupil education spending for fiscal year 2025 by the most recent New England Economic Project cumulative price index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined. [Repealed.]~~

~~(13)(A) —“Education property tax spending adjustment” means the greater of one or a fraction in which the numerator is the district’s per pupil education spending plus excess spending for the school year, and the denominator is the property dollar equivalent yield for the school year, as defined in subdivision (15) of this section.~~

~~(B) “Education income tax spending adjustment” means the greater of one or a fraction in which the numerator is the district’s per pupil education spending plus excess spending for the school year, and the denominator is the income dollar equivalent yield for the school year, as defined in subdivision (16) of this section. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

~~(15) “Property dollar equivalent yield” means the amount of per pupil education spending that would result if the homestead tax rate were \$1.00 per \$100.00 of equalized education property value and the statutory reserves under 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and section 5402b of this title were maintained. [Repealed.]~~

~~(16) “Income dollar equivalent yield” means the amount of per pupil education spending that would result if the income percentage in subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title were 2.0 percent and the statutory reserves under 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and section 5402b of this title were maintained. [Repealed.]~~

~~(17) “Statewide adjustment” means the ratio of the aggregate education property tax grand list of all municipalities to the aggregate value of the equalized education property tax grand list of all municipalities. [Repealed.]~~

~~(18) “Recapture” means the amount of revenue raised through imposition of the supplemental district spending tax pursuant to subsection 5402(f) of this chapter that is in excess of the school district’s supplemental district spending.~~

~~(19) “Supplemental district spending” means the spending that the voters of a school district approve in excess of the school district’s educational opportunity payment, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(17), for the fiscal year, provided that the voters of a school district other than an interstate school~~

district shall not approve spending in excess of 10 percent of the school district's educational opportunity payment for the fiscal year.

(20) "Supplemental district spending yield" means the amount of property tax revenue per long-term membership as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(7) that would be raised in the school district with the lowest taxing capacity using a supplemental district spending tax rate of \$1.00 per \$100.00 of equalized education property value.

(21) "Per pupil supplemental district spending" means the per pupil amount of supplemental district spending resulting from dividing a school district's supplemental district spending by its long-term membership as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(7).

(22) "School district with the lowest taxing capacity" means the school district other than an interstate school district anticipated to have the lowest aggregate equalized education property tax grand list of its municipal members per long-term membership as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(7) in the following fiscal year.

Sec. 47. 32 V.S.A. § 5402 is amended to read:

§ 5402. EDUCATION PROPERTY TAX LIABILITY

(a) A statewide education tax is imposed on all nonhomestead and homestead property at the following rates:

~~(1) The tax rate for nonhomestead property shall be \$1.59 per \$100.00 divided by the statewide adjustment.~~

~~(2) The tax rate for homestead property shall be \$1.00 multiplied by the education property tax spending adjustment for the municipality per \$100.00 of equalized education property value as most recently determined under section 5405 of this title. The homestead property tax rate for each municipality that is a member of a union or unified union school district shall be calculated as required under subsection (e) of this section. a rate sufficient to cover expenditures from the Education Fund under 16 V.S.A. § 4025(b) other than supplemental district spending, after accounting for the forecasted available revenues. It is the intention of the General Assembly that the statewide education tax rate under this section shall be adopted for each fiscal year by act of the General Assembly. The statewide education tax rate shall be adjusted for homestead property and each general class of nonhomestead property provided under section 4152a of this title as follows:~~

<u>If the tax classification of the</u>	<u>then the statewide education tax rate</u>
<u>property subject to taxation is:</u>	<u>is multiplied by a factor of:</u>
<u>Homestead</u>	<u>1.0</u>
<u>Nonhomestead, Apartment</u>	<u>1.0</u>
<u>Nonhomestead, Nonresidential</u>	<u>1.0</u>
<u>Nonhomestead, Residential</u>	<u>1.0</u>

(b) The statewide education tax shall be calculated as follows:

(1) The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine for each municipality the education tax rates under subsection (a) of this section divided by the ~~number resulting from dividing the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal by the statewide adjustment.~~ The legislative body in each municipality shall then bill each property taxpayer at the ~~homestead or nonhomestead~~ applicable rate determined by the Commissioner under this subdivision, multiplied by the education property tax grand list value of the property, properly classified as homestead or nonhomestead property and without regard to any other tax classification of the property not authorized under this chapter. Statewide education property tax bills shall show the tax due and the calculation of the rate determined under subsection (a) of this section, divided by ~~the number resulting from dividing the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal by the statewide adjustment,~~ multiplied by the current grand list value of the property to be taxed. Statewide education property tax bills shall also include language provided by the Commissioner pursuant to subsection 5405(g) of this title.

(2) Taxes assessed under this section shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title with no tax classification other than ~~as homestead or nonhomestead property~~ those required by this section; provided, however, that the tax levied under this chapter shall be billed to each taxpayer by the municipality in a manner that clearly indicates the tax is separate from any other tax assessed and collected under chapter 133, including an itemization of the separate taxes due. The bill may be on a single sheet of paper with the statewide education tax and other taxes presented separately and side by side.

(3) ~~If a district has not voted a budget by June 30, an interim homestead education tax shall be imposed at the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section, divided by the number resulting from dividing the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal by the statewide adjustment, but without regard to any spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title. Within 30 days after a budget is adopted and the~~

~~deadline for reconsideration has passed, the Commissioner shall determine the municipality's homestead tax rate as required under subdivision (1) of this subsection. [Repealed.]~~

(c)(1) The treasurer of each municipality shall by December 1 of the year in which the tax is levied and on June 1 of the following year pay to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Education Fund one-half of the municipality's statewide ~~nonhomestead tax and one-half of the municipality's homestead~~ education tax, as determined under subdivision (b)(1) of this section.

(2) ~~The Secretary of Education~~ Commissioner of Taxes shall determine each municipality's net ~~nonhomestead~~ education tax payment and ~~its net homestead education tax payment~~ to the State based on grand list information received by the ~~Secretary~~ Commissioner not later than the March 15 prior to the June 1 net payment. Payment shall be accompanied by a return prescribed by the ~~Secretary of Education~~ Commissioner of Taxes. Each municipality may retain 0.225 of one percent of the total education tax collected, only upon timely remittance of net payment to the State Treasurer or to the applicable school district or districts. ~~Each municipality may also retain \$15.00 for each late property tax credit claim filed after April 15 and before September 2, as notified by the Department of Taxes, for the cost of issuing a new property tax bill.~~

(d) [Repealed.]

(e) ~~The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine a homestead education tax rate for each municipality that is a member of a union or unified union school district as follows:~~

~~(1) For a municipality that is a member of a unified union school district, use the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based upon the per pupil education spending of the unified union.~~

~~(2) For a municipality that is a member of a union school district:~~

~~(A) Determine the municipal district homestead tax rate using the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based on the per pupil education spending in the municipality who attends a school other than the union school.~~

~~(B) Determine the union district homestead tax rate using the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based on the per pupil education spending of the union school district.~~

~~(C) Determine a combined homestead tax rate by calculating the weighted average of the rates determined under subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (2), with weighting based upon the ratio of union school long-term membership, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(7), from the member municipality to total long-term membership of the member municipality; and the ratio of long-term membership attending a school other than the union school to total long-term membership of the member municipality. Total long-term membership of the member municipality is based on the number of pupils who are legal residents of the municipality and attending school at public expense. If necessary, the Commissioner may adopt a rule to clarify and facilitate implementation of this subsection (e). [Repealed.]~~

(f)(1) A supplemental district spending tax is imposed on all homestead and nonhomestead property in each member municipality of a school district that approves spending pursuant to a budget presented to the voters of a school district under 16 V.S.A. § 563. The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine the supplemental district spending tax rate for each school district by dividing the school district's per pupil supplemental district spending as certified by the Secretary of Education by the supplemental district spending yield. The legislative body in each member municipality shall then bill each property taxpayer at the rate determined by the Commissioner under this subsection, divided by the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal and multiplied by the current grand list value of the property to be taxed. The bill shall show the tax due and the calculation of the rate.

(2) The supplemental district spending tax assessed under this subsection shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title with no tax classification other than as homestead or nonhomestead property; provided, however, that the tax levied under this chapter shall be billed to each taxpayer by the municipality in a manner that clearly indicates the tax is separate from any other tax assessed and collected under chapter 133 and the statewide education property tax under this section, including an itemization of the separate taxes due. The bill may be on a single sheet of paper with the supplemental district spending tax, the statewide education tax, and other taxes presented separately and side by side.

(3) The treasurer of each municipality shall on or before December 1 of the year in which the tax is levied and on or before June 1 of the following year pay to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Education Fund one-half of the municipality's supplemental district spending tax, as determined under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine each municipality's net supplemental district spending tax payment to the State based on grand list information received by the Commissioner not later than the March 15 prior to the June 1 net payment. Payment shall be accompanied by a return prescribed by the Commissioner of Taxes. Each municipality may retain 0.225 of one percent of the total supplemental district spending tax collected, only upon timely remittance of net payment to the State Treasurer or to the applicable school district.

Sec. 48. 32 V.S.A. § 5402b is amended to read:

§ 5402b. STATEWIDE EDUCATION TAX ~~YIELDS RATE~~;

SUPPLEMENTAL DISTRICT SPENDING YIELD;

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMISSIONER

(a) Annually, not later than December 1, the Commissioner of Taxes, after consultation with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Administration, and the Joint Fiscal Office, shall calculate and recommend ~~a property dollar equivalent yield, an income dollar equivalent yield, and a nonhomestead property tax rate~~ the statewide education property tax rate pursuant to subsection 5402(a) of this chapter and the supplemental district spending yield for the following fiscal year. In making these calculations, the Commissioner shall assume: the statutory reserves are maintained at five percent pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and the amounts in the Supplemental District Spending Reserve are unavailable for any purpose other than that specified in 16 V.S.A. § 4032(b)

~~(1) the homestead base tax rate in subdivision 5402(a)(2) of this title is \$1.00 per \$100.00 of equalized education property value;~~

~~(2) the applicable percentage in subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title is 2.0;~~

~~(3) the statutory reserves under 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and this section were maintained at five percent;~~

~~(4) the percentage change in the average education tax bill applied to nonhomestead property and the percentage change in the average education tax bill of homestead property and the percentage change in the average education tax bill for taxpayers who claim a credit under subsection 6066(a) of this title are equal;~~

~~(5) the equalized education grand list is multiplied by the statewide adjustment in calculating the property dollar equivalent yield; and~~

~~(6) the nonhomestead rate is divided by the statewide adjustment.~~

(b) For each fiscal year, the ~~property dollar equivalent~~ supplemental district spending yield ~~and the income dollar equivalent yield~~ shall be the same as in the prior fiscal year, unless set otherwise by the General Assembly.

* * *

(d) Along with the recommendations made under this section, the Commissioner shall include:

(1) the base amount as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(16);

(2) for each school district, the estimated long-term membership, weighted long-term membership, and aggregate equalized education property tax grand list of its municipal members;

(3) for each school district, the estimated aggregate equalized education property tax grand list of its municipal members per long-term membership;

(4) the estimated school district with the lowest taxing capacity; and

(5) the range of per pupil supplemental district spending between all districts in the State for the previous year.

* * *

* * * Conforming Revisions; Statewide Property Tax Rate * * *

Sec. 49. 32 V.S.A. § 5404a(b)(1) is amended to read:

(b)(1) An agreement affecting the education property tax grand list defined under subsection (a) of this section shall reduce the municipality's education property tax liability under this chapter for the duration of the agreement or exemption without extension or renewal, and for a maximum of 10 years. A municipality's property tax liability under this chapter shall be reduced by any difference between the amount of the education property taxes collected on the subject property and the amount of education property taxes that would have been collected on such property if its fair market value were taxed at the equalized ~~nonhomestead~~ rate for the tax year.

Sec. 50. 32 V.S.A. § 5405(g) is amended to read:

(g) The Commissioner shall provide to municipalities for the front of property tax bills the ~~district homestead property~~ statewide education tax rate before equalization, ~~the nonresidential tax rate before equalization~~, and the calculation process that creates the equalized homestead and nonhomestead tax rates. The Commissioner shall further provide to municipalities for the back of property tax bills an explanation of the common level of appraisal, including its origin and purpose.

* * * Statewide Property Tax Credit Repeal; Homestead Exemption

Created * * *

Sec. 51. 32 V.S.A. § 5400 is amended to read:

§ 5400. STATUTORY PURPOSES

* * *

(c) The statutory purpose of the exemption for qualified housing in subdivision 5404a(a)(6) of this title is to ensure that taxes on this rent-restricted housing provided to Vermonters of low and moderate income are more equivalent to property taxed using the State as a homestead rate property and to adjust the costs of investment in rent-restricted housing to reflect more accurately the revenue potential of such property.

* * *

(j) The statutory purpose of the homestead property tax exemption in subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this title is to reduce the property tax liability for Vermont households with low and moderate household income.

Sec. 52. 32 V.S.A. chapter 154 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 154. HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION,
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT, AND RENTER CREDIT

§ 6061. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter ~~unless the context requires otherwise:~~

(1) ~~“Property~~ Municipal property tax credit” means a credit of the prior tax year’s ~~statewide or municipal property tax liability or a homestead owner credit,~~ as authorized under ~~section~~ subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title, ~~as the context requires~~ chapter.

* * *

(8) ~~“Annual tax levy” means the property taxes levied on property taxable on April 1 and without regard to the year in which those taxes are due or paid. [Repealed.]~~

(9) “Taxable year” means the calendar year preceding the year in which the claim is filed.

(10) [Repealed.]

(11) “Housesite” means that portion of a homestead, as defined under subdivision 5401(7) of this title but not under subdivision 5401(7)(G) of this title, that includes as much of the land owned by the claimant surrounding the dwelling as is reasonably necessary for use of the dwelling as a home, but in

no event more than two acres per dwelling unit, and, in the case of multiple dwelling units, not more than two acres per dwelling unit up to a maximum of 10 acres per parcel.

(12) “Claim year” means the year in which a claim is filed under this chapter.

(13) “Homestead” means a homestead as defined under subdivision 5401(7) of this title, but not under subdivision 5401(7)(G) of this title, and declared on or before October 15 in accordance with section 5410 of this title.

(14) ~~“Statewide education tax rate” means the homestead education property tax rate multiplied by the municipality’s education spending adjustment under subdivision 5402(a)(2) of this title and used to calculate taxes assessed in the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year.~~
[Repealed.]

* * *

(21) “Homestead property tax exemption” means a reduction in the amount of housesite value subject to the statewide education tax and the supplemental district spending tax in the claim year as authorized under sections 6066 and 6066a of this chapter.

§ 6062. NUMBER AND IDENTITY OF CLAIMANTS; APPORTIONMENT

* * *

(d) Whenever a housesite is an integral part of a larger unit such as a farm or a multi-purpose or multi-dwelling building, property taxes paid shall be that percentage of the total property tax as the value of the housesite is to the total value. Upon a claimant’s request, the listers shall certify to the claimant the value of ~~his or her~~ the claimant’s homestead and housesite.

* * *

§ 6063. CLAIM AS PERSONAL; CREDIT AND EXEMPTION AMOUNT AT TIME OF TRANSFER

(a) The right to file a claim under this chapter is personal to the claimant and shall not survive ~~his or her~~ the claimant’s death, but the right may be exercised on behalf of a claimant by ~~his or her~~ the claimant’s legal guardian or attorney-in-fact. When a claimant dies after having filed a timely claim, the municipal property tax credit and the homestead exemption amount shall be credited applied to the ~~homestead~~ property tax liability of the claimant’s estate as provided in section 6066a of this title.

(b) In case of sale or transfer of a residence, after April 1 of the claim year:

(1) any municipal property tax credit ~~amounts~~ amount related to that residence shall be allocated to the ~~seller~~ transferor at closing unless the parties otherwise agree;

(2) any homestead property tax exemption related to that residence based on the transferor's household income under subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this chapter shall cease to be in effect upon transfer; and

(3) a transferee who is eligible to declare the residence as a homestead but for the requirement to own the residence on April 1 of the claim year shall, notwithstanding subdivision 5401(7) and subsection 5410(b) of this title, be eligible to apply for a homestead property tax exemption in the claim year when the transfer occurs by filing with the Commissioner of Taxes a homestead declaration pursuant to section 5410 of this title and a claim for exemption on or before the due date prescribed under section 6068 of this chapter.

* * *

§ 6065. FORMS; TABLES; NOTICES

(a) In administering this chapter, the Commissioner shall provide suitable claim forms with tables of allowable claims, instructions, and worksheets for claiming a homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit.

(b) Prior to June 1, the Commissioner shall also prepare and supply to each town in the State notices describing the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit for inclusion in property tax bills. The notice shall be in simple, plain language and shall explain how to file for a homestead property tax exemption and a municipal property tax credit, where to find assistance filing for a credit or an exemption, or both, and any other related information as determined by the Commissioner. The notice shall direct taxpayers to a resource where they can find versions of the notice translated into the five most common non-English languages in the State. A town shall include such notice in each tax bill and notice of delinquent taxes that it mails to taxpayers who own in that town a residential property, without regard for whether the property was declared a homestead pursuant to subdivision 5401(7) of this title.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, towns that use envelopes or mailers not able to accommodate notices describing the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit may distribute such notices in an alternative manner.

§ 6066. COMPUTATION OF HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX

EXEMPTION, MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT, AND
RENTER CREDIT

(a) ~~An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the year in which the claim is filed shall be entitled to a credit for the prior year's homestead property tax liability amount determined as follows:~~

~~(1)(A) For a claimant with household income of \$90,000.00 or more:~~

~~(i) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year;~~

~~(ii) minus (if less) the sum of:~~

~~(I) the income percentage of household income for the taxable year; plus~~

~~(II) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$225,000.00.~~

~~(B) For a claimant with household income of less than \$90,000.00 but more than \$47,000.00, the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year, minus (if less) the sum of:~~

~~(i) the income percentage of household income for the taxable year; plus~~

~~(ii) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$400,000.00.~~

~~(C) For a claimant whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00, the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year, minus the lesser of:~~

~~(i) the sum of the income percentage of household income for the taxable year plus the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$400,000.00; or~~

~~(ii) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year reduced by \$15,000.00.~~

~~(2) "Income percentage" in this section means two percent, multiplied by the education income tax spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13)(B) of this title for the property tax year that begins in the claim year for the municipality in which the homestead residence is located~~

(1) An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the claim year shall be entitled to a homestead property tax exemption in the claim year in an amount determined as follows:

(A) for a claimant whose household income is equal to or less than \$25,000.00, the exemption shall be 95 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(B) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$25,000.00 but equal to or less than \$47,000.00, the exemption shall be 90 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(C) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$47,000.00 but equal to or less than \$50,000.00, the exemption shall be 80 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(D) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$50,000.00 but equal to or less than \$60,000.00, the exemption shall be 70 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(E) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$60,000.00 but equal to or less than \$70,000.00, the exemption shall be 60 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(F) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$70,000.00 but equal to or less than \$80,000.00, the exemption shall be 50 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(G) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$80,000.00 but equal to or less than \$90,000.00, the exemption shall be 40 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(H) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$90,000.00 but equal to or less than \$100,000.00, the exemption shall be 30 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(I) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$100,000.00 but equal to or less than \$110,000.00, the exemption shall be 20 percent of the claimant's housesite value;

(J) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$110,000.00 but equal to or less than \$115,000.00, the exemption shall be 10 percent of the claimant's housesite value; and

(K) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$115,000.00, no amount of housesite value shall be exempt under this section.

(3)(2) A An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the claim year and whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00 shall

also be entitled to ~~an additional~~ a credit amount ~~from~~ against the claimant's municipal taxes for the upcoming fiscal year that is equal to the amount by which the municipal property taxes for the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year upon the claimant's housesite exceeds a percentage of the claimant's household income for the taxable year as follows:

If household income (rounded to the nearest dollar) is:	then the taxpayer is entitled to credit for the reduced property tax in excess of this percent of that income:
\$0.00 — 9,999.00	1.50
\$10,000.00 — 47,000.00	3.00

~~(4) A claimant whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00 shall also be entitled to an additional credit amount from the claimant's statewide education tax for the upcoming fiscal year that is equal to the amount by which the education property tax for the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year upon the claimant's housesite, reduced by the credit amount determined under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, exceeds a percentage of the claimant's household income for the taxable year as follows:~~

If household income (rounded to the nearest dollar) is:	then the taxpayer is entitled to credit for the reduced property tax in excess of this percent of that income:
\$0.00 — 9,999.00	0.5
\$10,000.00 — 24,999.00	1.5
\$25,000.00 — 47,000.00	2.0

~~(5)(3) In no event shall the homestead property tax exemption provided for in subdivision (1) of this subsection reduce the housesite value below zero. In no event shall the municipal property tax credit provided for in subdivision (3) or (4)(2) of this subsection exceed the amount of the reduced municipal property tax. The credits under subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be calculated considering only the tax due on the first \$400,000.00 in equalized housesite value.~~

(4) Each dollar amount in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Commissioner of Taxes. As used in this subdivision, "adjusted for inflation"

means adjusting the dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.

(b)(1) An eligible claimant who rented the homestead shall be entitled to a credit for the taxable year in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.00, to be calculated as follows:

* * *

(c) To be eligible for an ~~adjustment~~ exemption or credit under this chapter, the claimant:

(1) must have been domiciled in this State during the entire taxable year;

(2) may not be a person claimed as a dependent by any taxpayer under the federal Internal Revenue Code during the taxable year; and

(3) in the case of a renter, shall have rented property for at least six calendar months, which need not be consecutive, during the taxable year.

(d) The owner of a mobile home that is sited on a lot not owned by the homeowner may include an amount determined under subdivision 6061(7) of this title as allocable rent paid on the lot with the amount of property taxes paid by the homeowner on the home for the purpose of computation of ~~credits~~ the municipal property tax credit under subdivision (a)(3)(2) of this section, unless the homeowner has included in the claim an amount of property tax on common land under the provisions of subsection (e) of this section.

(e) Property taxes paid by a cooperative, not including a mobile home park cooperative, allocable to property used as a homestead shall be attributable to the co-op member for the purpose of computing the ~~credit~~ of property tax liability of the co-op member under this section. Property owned by a cooperative declared as a homestead may only include the homestead and a pro rata share of any common land owned or leased by the cooperative, not to exceed the two-acre housesite limitation. The share of the cooperative's assessed value attributable to the housesite shall be determined by the cooperative and specified annually in a notice to the co-op member. Property taxes paid by a mobile home park cooperative, allocable to property used as a housesite, shall be attributed to the owner of the housesite for the purpose of computing the ~~credit~~ of property tax liability of the housesite owner under this section. Property owned by the mobile home park cooperative and declared as a housesite may only include common property of the cooperative contiguous

with at least one mobile home lot in the park, not to exceed the two-acre housesite limitation. The share attributable to any mobile home lot shall be determined by the cooperative and specified in the cooperative agreement. A co-op member who is the housesite owner shall be entitled to a property tax credit in an amount determined by multiplying the property taxes allocated under this subsection by the percentage of the exemption for which the housesite owner's household income qualifies under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(f) [Repealed.]

(g) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, if the land surrounding a homestead is owned by a nonprofit corporation or community land trust with tax exempt status under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3), the homeowner may include an allocated amount as property tax paid on the land with the amount of property taxes paid by the homeowner on the home for the purposes of computation of ~~the credit~~ property tax liability under this section. The allocated amount shall be determined by the nonprofit corporation or community land trust on a proportional basis. The nonprofit corporation or community land trust shall provide to that homeowner, by January 31, a certificate specifying the allocated amount. The certificate shall indicate the proportion of total property tax on the parcel that was assessed for municipal property tax and for statewide property tax and the proportion of total value of the parcel. A homeowner under this subsection shall be entitled to a property tax credit in an amount determined by multiplying the property taxes allocated under this subsection by the percentage of the exemption for which the homeowner's household income qualifies under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(h) A homestead owner shall be entitled to an additional property tax credit amount equal to one percent of the amount of income tax refund that the claimant elects to allocate to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax under section 6068 of this title.

(i) ~~Adjustments~~ The homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit under subsection (a) of this section shall be calculated without regard to any exemption under subdivision 3802(11) of this title.

§ 6066a. DETERMINATION OF HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX

EXEMPTION AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT

(a) Annually, the Commissioner shall determine the homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit amount under section 6066 of this title, related to a homestead owned by the claimant, based on the prior taxable year's income and for the municipal property tax credit, crediting property taxes paid in the prior year, and for the homestead property tax

exemption, exempting the housesite value in the claim year. The Commissioner shall notify the municipality in which the housesite is located of the amount of the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit for the claimant for ~~homestead~~ property tax liabilities on a monthly basis. The municipal property tax credit of a claimant who was assessed property tax by a town that revised the dates of its fiscal year, however, is the excess of the property tax that was assessed in the last 12 months of the revised fiscal year, over the adjusted property tax of the claimant for the revised fiscal year, as determined under section 6066 of this title, related to a homestead owned by the claimant.

(b) The Commissioner shall include in the total homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amount determined under subsection (a) of this section, for credit to the taxpayer for ~~homestead statewide education~~ property tax and supplemental district spending tax liabilities, any income tax overpayment remaining after allocation under section 3112 of this title and setoff under section 5934 of this title, which the taxpayer has directed to be used for payment of property taxes.

(c) The Commissioner shall notify the municipality of any claim and refund amounts unresolved by November 1 at the time of final resolution, including adjudication, if any; provided, however, that towns will not be notified of any additional credit amounts after November 1 of the claim year, and such amounts shall be paid to the claimant by the Commissioner.

(d) [Repealed.]

(e) At the time of notice to the municipality, the Commissioner shall notify the taxpayer of the homestead property tax credit exemption amount determined under subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this title, ~~the amount determined under subdivision 6066(a)(3) of this title;~~ any additional municipal property credit amounts amount due the homestead owner under ~~section~~ subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title; the amount of income tax refund, if any, allocated to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax liabilities; and any late-claim reduction amount.

(f)(1) For taxpayers and amounts stated in the notice to towns on or before July 1, municipalities shall create and send to taxpayers a ~~homestead~~ property tax bill, instead of the bill required under subdivision 5402(b)(1) of this title, providing the total amount allocated to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax liabilities and notice of the balance due. Municipalities shall apply the amount of the homestead property tax exemption allocated under this chapter to current year property taxes in equal amounts to each of the taxpayers' property tax installments that include education taxes and the amount of the municipal property tax credit allocated under this chapter to

current year municipal property taxes in equal amounts to each of the taxpayers' property tax installments that include municipal taxes. Notwithstanding section 4772 of this title, if a town issues a corrected bill as a result of the notice sent by the Commissioner under subsection (a) of this section, issuance of the corrected new bill does not extend the time for payment of the original bill nor relieve the taxpayer of any interest or penalties associated with the original bill. If the corrected bill is less than the original bill, and there are also no unpaid current year taxes, interest, or penalties, and no past year delinquent taxes or penalties and interest charges, any overpayment shall be reflected on the corrected tax bill and refunded to the taxpayer.

(2) For homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amounts for which municipalities receive notice after November 1, municipalities shall issue a new homestead property tax bill with notice to the taxpayer of the total amount allocated to payment of homestead property tax liabilities and notice of the balance due.

(3) The homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amount determined for the taxpayer shall be allocated first to current year housesite value and property tax on the homestead parcel, next to current-year homestead parcel penalties and interest, next to any prior year homestead parcel penalties and interest, and last to any prior year housesite value and property tax on the homestead parcel. No homestead property tax exemption or municipal credit shall be allocated to a housesite value or property tax liability for any year after the year for which the claim or refund allocation was filed. No municipal tax-reduction incentive for early payment of taxes shall apply to any amount allocated to the property tax bill under this chapter.

(4) If the homestead property tax exemption or the municipal property tax credit amount as described in subsection (e) of this section exceeds the property tax, penalties, and interest due for the current and all prior years, the municipality shall refund the excess to the taxpayer, without interest, within 20 days of the first date upon which taxes become due and payable or 20 days after notification of the exemption or credit amount by the Commissioner of Taxes, whichever is later.

(g) The Commissioner of Taxes shall pay monthly to each municipality the amount of municipal property tax credit of which the municipality was last notified related to municipal property tax on homesteads within that municipality, as determined by the Commissioner of Taxes.

§ 6067. CREDIT CLAIM LIMITATIONS

(a) Claimant. Only one individual per household per taxable year shall be entitled to a homestead exemption claim or property tax credit claim, or both, under this chapter.

(b) Other states. An individual who received a homestead exemption or credit with respect to property taxes assessed by another state for the taxable year shall not be entitled to receive a credit under this chapter.

(c) Dollar amount. No ~~taxpayer~~ claimant shall receive a renter credit under subsection 6066(b) of this title in excess of \$2,500.00. No ~~taxpayer~~ claimant shall receive a municipal property tax credit under subdivision 6066(a)(3)(2) of this title greater than \$2,400.00 ~~or cumulative credit under subdivisions 6066(a)(1)-(2) and (4) of this title greater than \$5,600.00.~~

§ 6068. APPLICATION AND TIME FOR FILING

(a) A homestead property tax exemption or municipal property tax credit claim or request for allocation of an income tax refund to homestead statewide education property tax payment shall be filed with the Commissioner on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return, without extension, and shall describe the school district in which the homestead property is located and shall particularly describe the homestead property for which the exemption or credit or allocation is sought, including the school parcel account number prescribed in subsection 5404(b) of this title. A renter credit claim shall be filed with the Commissioner on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return, without extension.

(b)(1) If ~~the~~ a claimant files a municipal property tax credit claim after October 15 but on or before March 15 of the following calendar year, the municipal property tax credit under this chapter:

(1)(A) shall be reduced in amount by \$150.00, but not below \$0.00;

(2)(B) shall be issued directly to the claimant; and

(3)(C) shall not require the municipality where the claimant's property is located to issue an adjusted ~~homestead~~ property tax bill.

(2) If a claimant files a homestead property tax exemption claim under this chapter after October 15 but on or before March 15 of the following calendar year, the claimant shall pay a penalty of \$150.00 and the municipality where the claimant's property is located shall not be required to issue an adjusted property tax bill.

(c) No request for allocation of an income tax refund or for a renter credit claim may be made after October 15. No homestead property tax exemption or municipal property tax credit claim may be made after March 15 of the calendar year following the due date under subsection (a) of this section.

* * *

§ 6070. DISALLOWED CLAIMS

A claim shall be disallowed if the claimant received title to ~~his or her~~ the claimant's homestead primarily for the purpose of receiving benefits under this chapter.

§ 6071. EXCESSIVE AND FRAUDULENT CLAIMS

(a) In any case in which it is determined under the provisions of this title that a claim is or was excessive and was filed with fraudulent intent, the claim shall be disallowed in full and the Commissioner may impose a penalty equal to the amount claimed. A disallowed claim may be recovered by assessment as income taxes are assessed. The assessment, including assessment of penalty, shall bear interest from the date the claim was credited against property tax or income tax or paid by the State until repaid by the claimant at the rate per annum established from time to time by the Commissioner pursuant to section 3108 of this title. The claimant in that case, and any person who assisted in the preparation of filing of such excessive claim or supplied information upon which the excessive claim was prepared, with fraudulent intent, shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 or be imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(b) In any case in which it is determined that a claim is or was excessive, the Commissioner may impose a 10 percent penalty on such excess, and if the claim has been paid or credited against property tax or income tax otherwise payable, the municipal property tax credit or homestead exemption shall be reduced or canceled and the proper portion of any amount paid shall be similarly recovered by assessment as income taxes are assessed, and such assessment shall bear interest at the rate per annum established from time to time by the Commissioner pursuant to section 3108 of this title from the date of payment or, in the case of credit of a municipal property tax bill under section 6066a of this title, from December 1 of the year in which the claim is filed until refunded or paid.

* * *

§ 6073. ~~REGULATIONS~~ RULES OF THE COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner may, from time to time, ~~issue~~ adopt, amend, and withdraw ~~regulations~~ rules interpreting and implementing this chapter.

§ 6074. AMENDMENT OF CERTAIN CLAIMS

At any time within three years after the date for filing claims under subsection 6068(a) of this chapter, a claimant who filed a claim by October 15 may file to amend that claim with regard to housesite value, ~~housesite education tax~~, housesite municipal tax, and ownership percentage or to correct the amount of household income reported on that claim.

Sec. 53. DEPARTMENT OF TAXES; HOMESTEAD DECLARATION;

SAMPLE FORM;

On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Taxes shall provide to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance suggestions for updating the homestead declaration under 32 V.S.A. § 5410 to address the implementation of the homestead exemption under section 19 of this act, which may be provided as a sample form.

* * * Conforming Revisions; Property Tax Credit Repeal * * *

Sec. 54. 11 V.S.A. § 1608 is amended to read:

§ 1608. ELIGIBILITY FOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Members of cooperative housing corporations shall be eligible to apply for and receive a homestead property tax ~~adjustment~~ exemption and municipal property tax credit under 32 V.S.A. § 6066, subject to the conditions of eligibility set forth therein.

Sec. 55. 32 V.S.A. § 3102(j) is amended to read:

(j) Tax bills prepared by a municipality under subdivision 5402(b)(1) of this title showing only the amount of total tax due shall not be considered confidential return information under this section. For the purposes of calculating ~~credits~~ the homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit under chapter 154 of this title, information provided by the Commissioner to a municipality under subsection 6066a(a) of this title and information provided by the municipality to a taxpayer under subsection 6066a(f) shall be considered confidential return information under this section.

Sec. 56. 32 V.S.A. § 3206(b) is amended to read:

(b) As used in this section, “extraordinary relief” means a remedy that is within the power of the Commissioner to grant under this title, a remedy that compensates for the result of inaccurate classification of property as homestead or nonhomestead pursuant to section 5410 of this title through no fault of the taxpayer, or a remedy that makes changes to a taxpayer’s homestead property tax exemption, municipal property tax credit, or renter

credit claim necessary to remedy the problem identified by the Taxpayer Advocate.

* * * Future Review of Foundation Formula * * *

Sec. 57. 32 V.S.A. § 5414 is amended to read:

§ 5414. CREATION; EDUCATION FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(a) Creation. There is created the Education Fund Advisory Committee to monitor Vermont's education financing system, conduct analyses, assist with the transformation of Vermont's education finance system, and perform the duties under subsection (c) of this section.

* * *

(c) Powers and duties.

(1) Annually, on or before December 15, the Committee shall make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding:

(A) updating the weighting factors using the weighting model and methodology used to arrive at the weights enacted under 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 127, which may include recalibration, recalculation, adding or eliminating weights, or any combination of these actions, as necessary;

(B) changes to, or the addition of new or elimination of existing, categorical aid, as necessary;

(C) changes to income levels eligible for a property tax credit under section 6066 of this title;

(D) means to adjust the revenue sources for the Education Fund;

(E) means to improve equity, transparency, and efficiency in education funding statewide;

(F) the amount of the Education Fund stabilization reserve;

(G) school district use of reserve fund accounts;

(H) national best practices for addressing intra-school district effects of a foundation formula, including through the use of weighting factors;

(I) whether to transition from a cost-based foundation formula to an evidence-based foundation formula; and

(J) any other topic, factor, or issue the Committee deems relevant to its work and recommendations.

* * *

Sec. 58. 16 V.S.A. § 4001 is amended to read:

§ 4001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(16) “Base amount” means a per pupil ~~cost-factor~~ evidence-based amount of ~~\$15,033.00~~ 10,000.00, which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subdivision, “adjusted for inflation” means adjusting the base dollar amount by the National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) implicit price deflator for state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investment published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, and rounding upward to the nearest whole dollar amount.

* * *

Sec. 59. 16 V.S.A. § 4010 is amended to read:

§ 4010. DETERMINATION OF WEIGHTED LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP
AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY PAYMENT

* * *

(d) Determination of weighted long-term membership. For each weighting category, the Secretary shall compute the weighting count by using the long-term membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(7) of this title, in that category.

(1) [Repealed.]

(2) Each pupil included in long-term membership whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~1.02~~ 1.00.

(3) Each EL pupil included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the EL pupil’s English language proficiency level, of:

(A) ~~2.44~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 1;

(B) ~~1.44~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 2 or 3;

(C) ~~1.20~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 4; or

(D) ~~0.42~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 5 or 6.

(4) Each EL pupil that is a Newcomer or SLIFE included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~0.42~~ 1.00.

(5) Each child with a disability included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the cost level associated with the child's disability, of:

- (A) ~~0.79~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as low cost;
- (B) ~~1.35~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as medium cost; or
- (C) ~~2.49~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as high cost.

* * *

* * * Property Classification * * *

Sec. 60. 32 V.S.A. § 4152 is amended to read:

§ 4152. CONTENTS

(a) When completed, the grand list of a town shall be in such form as the Director prescribes and shall contain such information as the Director prescribes, including:

(1) In alphabetical order, the name of each real property owner and each owner of taxable personal property.

(2) The last known mailing address of all such owners.

(3) A brief description of each parcel of taxable real estate in the town, including a classification assigned pursuant to section 4152a of this title. "Parcel" As used in this subdivision, "parcel" means a separate and sellable lot or piece of real estate. Parcels may be combined to represent all contiguous land in the same ownership, together with all improvements thereon.

* * *

Sec. 61. 32 V.S.A. § 4152a is added to read:

§ 4152a. PROPERTY TAX CLASSIFICATIONS

(a) The grand list of a town shall include one or more tax classifications for each parcel of real estate. A parcel shall be classified using one of the general classes of real estate listed under subsection (b) of this section and based on the considerations set forth in this section and by guidance provided by the Division of Property Valuation and Review. The listers and assessors shall annually update the grand list to include a tax classification not later than June 1 of every year, using information submitted to the Department of Taxes pursuant to this section. The tax classification may be updated after June 1

when a taxpayer files, or corrects an erroneously filed, homestead declaration after June 1.

(b) A parcel shall be assigned one or more of the following general classes:

- (1) Homestead;
- (2) Nonhomestead apartment;
- (3) Nonhomestead nonresidential; and
- (4) Nonhomestead residential.

(c) As used in this section:

(1) "Homestead" means a parcel, or portion of a parcel, declared as a homestead on or before October 15 in accordance with section 5410 of this title for the current year.

(2) "Nonhomestead apartment" means a parcel, or portion of a parcel, with one or more dwelling units, for which a landlord certificate was filed in the previous year pursuant to section 6069 of this title, and the landlord attested that the unit would be leased to a long-term tenant for a minimum of six months in the current year.

(3) "Nonhomestead nonresidential" means a parcel, or portion of a parcel, that does not qualify as "homestead," "nonhomestead apartment," or "nonhomestead residential" under this section.

(4) "Nonhomestead residential" means a parcel, or portion of a parcel, with one or more dwelling units, habitable on a year-round basis, for which a homestead was not declared in accordance with section 5410 of this title for the current year, and a landlord certificate was not filed pursuant to section 6069 of this title in which the landlord attested that the unit would be leased to a long-term tenant for a minimum of six months in the current year.

(d) A parcel with two or more portions qualifying for different tax classifications under this section shall be classified proportionally based on the percentage of floor space used.

(1) In the case of a homestead with 25 percent or less of floor space used for a business purpose, the parcel shall be classified as a homestead pursuant to subdivision 5401(a)(7)(F) of this title.

(2) If a portion of floor space is used for more than one purpose, the use in which the floor space is most often used shall be considered the primary use and the floor space shall be dedicated to that use for purposes of tax classification.

(e) The Commissioner shall amend existing forms, and publish new forms, as needed to gather the necessary attestations and declarations required under this section.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the tax treatment or enrollment eligibility of property as it relates to use value appraisal under chapter 124 of this title.

(g) Persons aggrieved by a decision to classify property for taxation purposes under this section may appeal in the manner provided for property valuation appeals under this title.

Sec. 61a. PROPERTY TAX CLASSIFICATIONS; TRANSITION; DATA
COLLECTION

For calendar year 2028, the Commissioner of Taxes shall amend and create forms so that taxpayers report information on the use of their property for such property to be classified as homestead, nonhomestead residential, nonhomestead apartment, nonhomestead nonresidential, or a proportional classification of those uses. The information collected, and classifications determined, shall align with the definitions and requirements of section 61 of this act. The Commissioner shall use the information to determine and assign a tax classification for every grand list parcel and, on or before October 1, 2028, the Commissioner shall provide that information to the Joint Fiscal Office.

* * * Regional Assessment Districts * * *

Sec. 62. 32 V.S.A. chapter 121, subchapter 1A is added to read:

Subchapter 1A. Statewide and Regional Property Assessment

§ 3415. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly in adopting this subchapter to create regional assessment districts so that:

- (1) properties on grand lists are regularly reappraised;
- (2) property data collection is consistent and standardized across the State; and
- (3) property valuation is conducted by trained and certified individuals and firms.

§ 3416. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS; ESTABLISHMENT

(a) There are hereby established 12 regional assessment districts, whose member municipalities shall fully and jointly reappraise their grand lists every six years pursuant to subsection 3417(b) of this subchapter. Member

municipalities shall contract jointly with one or more third parties to conduct reappraisals.

(b) Each county shall constitute one regional assessment district, except that Franklin and Grand Isle Counties shall constitute one district and Essex and Orleans Counties shall constitute one district.

§ 3417. STANDARD GUIDELINES; PROCEDURES; RULEMAKING

(a) The Director of Property Valuation and Review shall establish standard guidelines and procedures, and may adopt rules, for regional assessment districts, including:

(1) guidelines for contracting with third parties to conduct or assist with reappraisals, including standard reappraisal contract terms;

(2) standards for the collection and recordation of parcel data;

(3) requirements relating to information technology, including standards for data software contracts and computer-assisted mass appraisal systems; and

(4) standardized practices for a full reappraisal, including cases in which physical inspections are unnecessary and how technology is to be utilized.

(b) The Director of Property Valuation and Review shall establish a schedule for each regional assessment district to fully reappraise every six years. The Director, at the Director's discretion, may alter the reappraisal schedule for a regional assessment district or for one or more of a regional assessment district's member municipalities.

* * * Transition to Regional Assessment Districts * * *

Sec. 63. TRANSITION; ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

(a) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 4041a or any other provision of law to the contrary:

(1) the Director of Property Valuation and Review shall not order any new municipal reappraisals of grand list properties on and after January 1, 2027;

(2) a reappraisal order for which a municipality does not have a contract in place before January 1, 2030 shall no longer have the force and effect of law on and after January 1, 2030; and

(3) a municipality shall not enter into a new reappraisal contract on or after January 1, 2027.

(b) On or before every January 15 from January 15, 2027 to January 15, 2030, the Commissioner of Taxes shall submit a report to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance relating to the progress made in preparing for the implementation of this act.

Sec. 64. REGIONAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT STAKEHOLDER
WORKING GROUP

On or before January 15, 2026, the Department of Taxes, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall submit recommendations to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance advising on the implementation of regional assessment districts and on the development of guidelines, procedures, and rules needed to effectuate a regionalized reappraisal system. The recommendations will include an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of having the State take full responsibility for regionalized appraisals. In making its recommendation, the Department of Taxes shall provide suggestions for legislative language that address:

(1) the authority or authorities who will contract for and conduct reappraisals;

(2) the authority or authorities who will hear and decide property valuation appeals;

(3) amendments necessary to conform statute to the change from an April 1 to January 1 grand list assessment date; and

(4) any other recommended revisions to achieve a regionalized reappraisal system.

* * * Grand List Assessment Date * * *

Sec. 65. 32 V.S.A. § 5405 is amended to read:

§ 5405. DETERMINATION OF EQUALIZED EDUCATION PROPERTY

TAX GRAND LIST AND COEFFICIENT OF DISPERSION

(a) Annually, on or before ~~April~~ January 1, the Commissioner shall determine the equalized education property tax grand list and coefficient of dispersion for each municipality in the State; provided, however, that for purposes of equalizing grand lists pursuant to this section, the equalized education property tax grand list of a municipality that establishes a tax increment financing district shall include the fair market value of the property in the district and not the original taxable value of the property, and further provided that the unified towns and gores of Essex County may be treated as one municipality for the purpose of determining an equalized education

property grand list and a coefficient of dispersion, if the Director determines that all such entities have a uniform appraisal schedule and uniform appraisal practices.

(b) The sum of all municipal equalized education property tax grand lists shall be the equalized education property tax grand list for the State.

(c) In determining the fair market value of property that is required to be listed at fair market value, the Commissioner shall take into consideration those factors required by section 3481 of this title. The Commissioner shall value property as of ~~April~~ January 1 preceding the determination and shall take account of all homestead declaration information available before October 1 each year.

* * *

Sec. 66. 32 V.S.A. § 3481(1)(B) is amended to read:

(B) For residential rental property that is subject to a housing subsidy covenant or other legal restriction, imposed by a governmental, quasi-governmental, or public purpose entity, on rents that may be charged, fair market value shall be determined by an income approach using the following elements:

(i) market rents with utility allowance adjustments for the geographic area in which the property is located as determined by the federal office of Housing and Urban Development or in the case of properties authorized under 42 U.S.C. § 1437, 12 U.S.C. § 1701q, 42 U.S.C. § 1485, 12 U.S.C. § 1715z-1, 42 U.S.C. § 1437f, and 24 CFR Part 882 Subpart D and E, the higher of contract rents (meaning the amount of federal rental assistance plus any tenant contribution) and HUD market rents;

(ii) actual expenses incurred with respect to the property that shall be provided by the property owner in a format acceptable to the Commissioner and certified by an independent third party, such as a certified public accounting firm or public or quasi-public funding agency;

(iii) a vacancy rate that is 50 percent of the market vacancy rate as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau with local review by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency; and

(iv) a capitalization rate that is typical for the geographic area determined and published annually prior to ~~April~~ January 1 by the Division of Property Valuation and Review after consultation with the Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

Sec. 67. 32 V.S.A. § 3482 is amended to read:

§ 3482. PROPERTY LISTED AT ONE PERCENT

Except as otherwise provided, all real and personal estate shall be set in the list at one percent of its listed value on ~~April~~ January 1, of the year of its appraisal.

Sec. 68. 32 V.S.A. § 3485 is amended to read:

§ 3485. RECORDS TO BE KEPT RELATING TO DEEDS AND
MORTGAGES

(a) Annually on ~~April~~ January 1, ~~town~~ municipal clerks shall furnish the listers with copies of the property tax returns filed by the clerk under section 9610 of this title relating to deeds that were filed for record during the year ending on the first day of such month. However, upon request in writing by the listers, on or before the 15th day of each month, ~~town~~ municipal clerks shall furnish the listers with copies of the property transfer tax returns to deeds that were filed for record during the next preceding calendar month.

(b) Failure on the part of the ~~town~~ municipal clerk to furnish the copies required under subsection (a) of this section shall not render the town liable in damages to any person. A ~~town~~ municipal clerk who willfully fails to furnish the copies required under subsection (a) of this section shall be fined \$10.00 for each offense.

Sec. 69. 32 V.S.A. § 3603(a) is amended to read:

(a) Construction equipment and other personal estate used in the construction or repair of highways, dams, reservoirs, public utilities, or buildings shall be listed and taxed on the same basis as other personal estate in the town in which it is located on ~~April~~ January 1. Such equipment brought into the State after ~~April~~ January 1 and prior to December 15 of any year shall be taxed as other personal estate for that year in the town in which it is first used for a normal full work shift. The owner or person in charge of any equipment enumerated in this section shall, upon request of the Treasurer or tax collector of any municipality, present evidence that it has been listed for tax purposes in a municipality in this State. The Transportation Board and other State agencies shall insert in all contracts for construction a term by which the contractor agrees to pay taxes assessed under this section and section 4151 of this title.

Sec. 70. 32 V.S.A. § 3610(b) is amended to read:

(b) The listers of each town and the appraisers of each unorganized town and gore shall list every perpetual lease in a separate record in which shall be

shown as to each lease a brief description of the leased land, the fair market value of the land as appraised by them, the name of the lessor, the annual rental payable under the lease, and as of ~~April~~ January 1 of each year the name and address of the lessee. If for any reason the lease is exempt under subsection (d) of this section, the reason for the exemption shall be noted.

Sec. 71. 32 V.S.A. § 3613 is amended to read:

The State of Vermont shall have the same right to appeal from the appraisal of the listers and assessors and from the decision of ~~the Board of Civil Authority~~ a regional property valuation board as is given to any interested individual as provided by ~~chapter 131~~ of this title.

Sec. 72. 32 V.S.A. § 3618(c)(2) is amended to read:

(2) "Net book value" of property means the cost less depreciation of the property as shown on the federal income tax return required to be filed with the federal authorities on or nearest in advance of ~~April~~ January 1 in any year.

Sec. 73. 32 V.S.A. § 3651 is amended to read:

§ 3651. GENERAL RULE

Taxable real estate shall be set in the list to the last owner or possessor thereof on ~~April~~ January 1 in each year in the town, village, school, and fire district where it is situated.

Sec. 74. 32 V.S.A. § 3691 is amended to read:

§ 3691. GENERAL RULE

Taxable tangible personal estate shall be set in the list to the last owner thereof on ~~April~~ January 1 in each year, in the town, village, school, and fire district where such property is situated, with the exception that such personal estate situated within this State owned by persons residing outside the State or by persons unknown to the listers shall be set in the list to the person having the same in charge, in the town, village, school, and fire district where the same is situated and shall be holden for all taxes assessed on such list. However, tangible personal estate owned by nonresident persons or corporation, and used in this State by the State or a department or institution thereof, under lease, contract or other agreement, written or oral, may be set in the list in the town where so used, to such nonresident owner.

Sec. 75. 32 V.S.A. § 3692(b) is amended to read:

(b) A trailer coach shall be taxed as real property by the town in which it is located notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section if it is situated in the town on the same trailer site or camp site for more than 180 days during the 365 days prior to ~~April~~ January 1. A trailer coach shall not be taxed as real

property if it is stored on property on which the owner resides in another dwelling as a permanent residence.

Sec. 76. 32 V.S.A. § 3708 is amended to read:

§ 3708. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES FOR LANDS HELD BY THE
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

* * *

(b) The State shall annually pay to each municipality a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) that shall be the base payment as set forth under this section, for all ANR land, excluding buildings or other improvements thereon, as of ~~April~~ January 1 of the current year.

(c) The State shall establish the base payment for all ANR land, excluding buildings or other improvements thereon, as follows;

(1) On parcels acquired before April 1, 2016, 0.60 percent of the fair market value as appraised by the Director of Property Valuation and Review as of April 1 of fiscal year 2015;

(2) On parcels acquired on or after April 1, 2016, the municipal tax rate of the fair market value as assessed on ~~April~~ January 1 in the year of acquisition by the municipality in which it is located.

* * *

Sec. 77. 32 V.S.A. § 3755 is amended to read:

§ 3755. ELIGIBILITY FOR USE VALUE APPRAISALS

* * *

(b) Managed forestland shall be eligible for use value appraisal under this chapter only if:

(1) The land is subject to a forest management plan, subject to a conservation management plan in the case of lands certified under 10 V.S.A. § 6306(b), that is filed in the manner and form required by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and that:

* * *

(D) Provides for continued conservation management, reserve forestland management, or forest crop production on the parcel for 10 years. An initial forest management plan or conservation management plan must be filed with the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation on or before October 1 and shall be effective for a 10-year period beginning the following ~~April~~ January 1. Prior to expiration of a 10-year plan and on or before ~~April~~

January 1 of the year in which the plan expires, the owner shall file a new conservation or forest management plan for the next succeeding 10 years to remain in the program.

* * *

(3) There has not been filed with the Director an adverse inspection report by the Department stating that the management of the tract is contrary to the forest management plan, conservation management plan, or contrary to the minimum acceptable standards for forest or conservation management. The management activity report shall be on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation in consultation with the Commissioner of Taxes and shall be signed by all the owners and shall contain the tax identification numbers of all the owners. All information contained within the management activity report shall be forwarded to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, except for any tax identification number included in the report. If any owner satisfies the Department that he or she was prevented by accident, mistake, or misfortune from filing an initial or revised management plan that is required to be filed on or before October 1, or a management plan update that is required to be filed on or before ~~April~~ January 1 of the year in which the plan expires, or a management activity report that is required to be filed on or before February 1 of the year following the year when the management activity occurred, the owner may submit that management plan or management activity report at a later date; provided, however, no initial or revised management plan shall be received later than December 31, and no management plan update shall be received later than one year after ~~April~~ January 1 of the year the plan expires, and no management activity report shall be received later than March 1.

* * *

Sec. 78. 32 V.S.A. § 3756(c) is amended to read:

(c) The Director shall notify the applicant not later than ~~April~~ January 15 of the Director's decision to classify or refusal to classify the applicant's property as eligible for use value appraisal. In the case of a refusal, the Director shall state the reasons therefor in the notification.

Sec. 79. 32 V.S.A. § 3758 is amended to read:

§ 3758. APPEALS

(a) Whenever the Director denies in whole or in part any application for classification as agricultural land or managed forestland or farm buildings, or grants a different classification than that applied for, or the Director or assessing officials fix a use value appraisal or determine that previously classified property is no longer eligible or that the property has undergone a

change in use, the aggrieved owner may appeal the decision of the Director to the Commissioner within 30 days of the decision, and from there to Superior Court in the county in which the property is located.

(b) Any owner who is aggrieved by the determination of the fair market value of classified land for the purpose of computing the land use change tax may appeal in the same manner as an appeal of a grand list valuation.

(c) Whenever the Director denies a request for an exemption from the terms of the definition of a “farmer” as provided in subsection 3756(j) of this title, the aggrieved person may appeal the decision of the Director to the Commissioner within 30 days of the decision, and from there to the Superior Court in the county in which the property is located.

* * *

Sec. 80. 32 V.S.A. § 3802a is amended to read:

§ 3802a. REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE INSURANCE INFORMATION

Before ~~April~~ January 1 of each year, owners of property exempt from taxation under subdivisions 3802(4), (6), (9), (12), and (15) and under subdivisions 5401(10)(D), (F), (G), and (J) of this title shall provide their local assessing officials with information regarding the insurance replacement cost of the exempt property or with a written explanation of why the property is not insured.

Sec. 81. 32 V.S.A. § 3850(d) is amended to read:

(d) If a dwelling unit is certified as blighted under subsection (b) of this section, the exemption shall take effect on the ~~April~~ January 1 following the certification of the dwelling unit.

Sec. 82. 32 V.S.A. § 4001(a) is amended to read:

(a) Annually on ~~April~~ January 1, at the expense of the State, the Director shall furnish to the several ~~town~~ municipal clerks and boards of appraisers for unorganized towns and gores inventory forms sufficient in number to meet the requirements of this chapter. Such forms shall be formulated by the Director and, among other things, shall contain suitable interrogatories requiring each taxpayer to furnish therein a brief statement of all of each taxpayer’s taxable property, real and personal, and such other information, including income and expense information with respect to any income-producing properties, as will enable the listers or appraisers to appraise such part thereof as is required by law to be by them appraised, and to make up the abstract of individual lists and grand list in the manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 83. 32 V.S.A. § 4041 is amended to read:

§ 4041. EXAMINATION OF PROPERTY; APPRAISAL

On ~~April~~ January 1, the listers and assessors shall proceed to take up such inventories and make such personal examination of the property that they are required to appraise as will enable them to appraise it at its fair market value. When a board of listers is of the opinion that expert advice or assistance is needed in making any appraisal required by law, it may, with approval of ~~selectboard~~ the legislative body of the municipality or by vote of the ~~town~~ municipality, employ such assistance.

Sec. 84. 32 V.S.A. § 4044 is amended to read:

§ 4044. APPRAISAL OF PERSONALTY ON ~~APRIL~~ JANUARY 1

Unless otherwise provided, the taxable personal estate contained in the inventory shall be appraised by the listers at its fair market value on ~~April~~ January 1.

Sec. 85. 32 V.S.A. § 4045 is amended to read:

§ 4045. APPRAISAL ON OTHER THAN ~~APRIL~~ JANUARY 1

If any business is normally operated for a period less than 12 consecutive months and is not in operation on ~~April~~ January 1, an inventory shall be filed with the listers at least 15 days prior to the anticipated annual suspension of such business and the stock in trade shall be appraised for the period of operation so as to represent an average of values of such property during that period in which the business has been carried on.

Sec. 86. 32 V.S.A. § 4052(c) is amended to read:

(c) The Director shall establish by rule reasonable qualifications for approval and training requirements, which shall include successful completion of educational and training courses approved by the Director and, in the case of an appraiser hired to do a ~~townwide~~ reappraisal in one or more municipalities, at least one year's experience with an appraiser who has satisfactorily completed ~~townwide~~ similar reappraisals.

Sec. 87. 32 V.S.A. § 5401(7) is amended to read:

(7) "Homestead":

(A) "Homestead" means the principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, owned and occupied by a resident individual as the individual's domicile or owned and fully leased on ~~April~~ January 1, provided the property is not leased for more than 182 days out of the calendar year or,

for purposes of the renter credit under subsection 6066(b) of this title, is rented and occupied by a resident individual as the individual's domicile.

* * *

(G) For purposes of homestead declaration and application of the homestead property tax rate, "homestead" also means a residence that was the homestead of the decedent at the date of death and, from the date of death through the next ~~April~~ January 1, is held by the estate of the decedent and not rented.

* * *

Sec. 88. 32 V.S.A. § 5404a(a)(6) is amended to read:

(6) An exemption of a portion of the value of a qualified rental unit parcel. An owner of a qualified rental unit parcel shall be entitled to an exemption on the education property tax grand list of 10 percent of the grand list value of the parcel, multiplied by the ratio of square footage of improvements used for or related to residential rental purposes to total square footage of all improvements, multiplied by the ratio of qualified rental units to total residential rental units on the parcel. "Qualified rental units" means residential rental units that are subject to rent restriction under provisions of State or federal law but excluding units subject to rent restrictions under only one of the following programs: Section 8 moderate rehabilitation, Section 8 housing choice vouchers, or Section 236 or Section 515 rural development rental housing. A municipality shall allow the percentage exemption under this subsection upon presentation by the taxpayer to the municipality, by ~~April~~ January 1, of a certificate of education grand list value exemption obtained from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA). VHFA shall issue a certificate of exemption upon presentation by the taxpayer of information that VHFA and the Commissioner shall require. A certificate of exemption issued by VHFA under this subsection shall expire upon transfer of the building, upon expiration of the rent restriction, or after 10 years, whichever first occurs; provided, however, that the certificate of exemption may be renewed after 10 years and every 10 years thereafter if VHFA finds that the property continues to meet the requirements of this subsection.

Sec. 89. 32 V.S.A. § 5406(b) is amended to read:

(b) Not later than ~~April~~ January 1 of each year, the Director shall certify to the Secretary of Education the equalized education property value and coefficient of dispersion for the prior year of every municipality of the State.

Sec. 90. 32 V.S.A. § 5410 is amended to read:

§ 5410. DECLARATION OF HOMESTEAD

(a) A homestead owner shall declare ownership of a homestead for purposes of education property tax.

(b) Annually, on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return, without extension, each homestead owner shall, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner, which shall be verified under the pains and penalties of perjury, declare the owner's homestead, if any, as of, ~~or expected to be as of, April~~ January 1 of the year in which the declaration is made.

(c) In the event that an unsigned but otherwise completed homestead declaration is filed with the declarant's signed State income tax return, the Commissioner may treat such declaration as signed by the declarant.

(d) The Commissioner shall provide a list of homesteads in each town to the ~~town~~ municipal listers and assessors by May 15. The listers and assessors shall notify the Commissioner by June 1 of any residences on the Commissioner's list that do not qualify as homesteads. The listers and assessors shall separately identify homesteads in the grand list.

* * *

* * * Miscellaneous Tax * * *

Sec. 91. 32 V.S.A. § 6066a(f)(1) is amended to read:

(f)(1) For taxpayers and amounts stated in the notice to towns on or before July 1, municipalities shall create and send to taxpayers a homestead property tax bill, instead of the bill required under subdivision 5402(b)(1) of this title, providing the total amount allocated to payment of homestead education property tax liabilities and notice of the balance due. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be interpreted as altering the requirement under subdivision 5402(b)(2) of this title that the statewide education homestead tax be billed in a manner that is stated clearly and separately from any other tax. Municipalities shall apply the amount allocated under this chapter to current year property taxes in equal amounts to each of the taxpayers' property tax installments that include education taxes. Notwithstanding section 4772 of this title, if a town issues a corrected bill as a result of the notice sent by the Commissioner under subsection (a) of this section, issuance of the corrected new bill does not extend the time for payment of the original bill nor relieve the taxpayer of any interest or penalties associated with the original bill. If the corrected bill is less than the original bill, and there are also no unpaid current year taxes, interest, or penalties, and no past year delinquent taxes or penalties

and interest charges, any overpayment shall be reflected on the corrected tax bill and refunded to the taxpayer.

Sec. 92. 32 V.S.A. § 5252 is amended to read:

§ 5252. LEVY AND NOTICE OF SALE; SECURING PROPERTY

(a) When the collector of taxes of a town or of a municipality within it has for collection a tax assessed against real estate in the town and the taxpayer owes a minimum of \$1,500.00 and is delinquent for a period longer than one year, the collector may extend a warrant on such land. However, no warrant shall be extended until a delinquent taxpayer is given an opportunity to enter a written reasonable repayment plan pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. If a collector receives notice from a mobile home park owner pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 6248(b), the collector shall, within 15 days after the notice, commence tax sale proceedings to hold a tax sale within 60 days after the notice. If the collector fails to initiate such proceedings, the town may initiate tax sale proceedings only after complying with 10 V.S.A. § 6249(f). If the tax collector extends the warrant, the collector shall:

* * *

Sec. 93. 32 V.S.A. § 4465 is amended to read:

§ 4465. APPOINTMENT OF PROPERTY VALUATION HEARING

OFFICER; OATH; PAY

When an appeal to the Director is not withdrawn or forwarded by the Director to Superior Court pursuant to subsection 4461(a) of this title, the Director shall refer the appeal in writing to a person not employed by the Director, appointed by the Director as hearing officer. The Director shall have the right to remove a hearing officer for inefficiency, malfeasance in office, or other cause. In like manner, the Director shall appoint a hearing officer to fill any vacancy created by resignation, removal, or other cause. Before entering into their duties, persons appointed as hearing officers shall take and subscribe the oath of the office prescribed in the Constitution, which oath shall be filed with the Director. The Director Commissioner of Taxes shall pay each hearing officer a sum not to exceed \$150.00 per diem for each day wherein hearings are held \$38.00 per hour plus a cost-of-living adjustment in an amount equal to any adjustment approved for exempt employees by the Secretary of Administration, together with reasonable expenses as the Director Commissioner may determine. A hearing officer may subpoena witnesses, records, and documents in the manner provided by law for serving subpoenas in civil actions and may administer oaths to witnesses.

Sec. 94. 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c)(2) is amended to read:

(2) The Secretary of Education shall determine each municipality's net nonhomestead education tax payment and its net homestead education tax payment to the State based on grand list information received by the Secretary not later than the March 15 prior to the June 1 net payment. Payment shall be accompanied by a return prescribed by the Secretary of Education. Each municipality may retain 0.225 of one percent of the total education tax collected, only upon timely remittance of net payment to the State Treasurer or to the applicable school district or districts. ~~Each municipality may also retain \$15.00 for each late property tax credit claim filed after April 15 and before September 2, as notified by the Department of Taxes, for the cost of issuing a new property tax bill.~~

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 95. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and the following sections shall take effect on passage:

- (1) Sec. 1 (findings; intent; plan);
- (2) Sec. 2 (Commission on the Future of Public Education),
- (3) Sec. 29 (16 V.S.A. § 4011(f));
- (4) Sec. 30 (adult education funding report);
- (5) Sec. 44 (transportation reimbursement guidelines);
- (6) Sec. 45 (inflationary measures; prekindergarten; reports);
- (7) Sec. 53 (homestead declaration sample form);
- (8) Sec. 61a (tax classification data; transition);
- (9) Sec. 63 (RAD transition; annual progress report);
- (10) Sec. 64 (RAD stakeholder working group);
- (11) Sec. 91 (correction of inadvertently removed language);
- (12) Sec. 92. (minimum debt for tax sales); and
- (13) Sec. 94. (property tax credit late fee).

(b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025:

- (1) Sec. 3 (scale; intent);
- (2) Sec. 6 (SBE rules; report);
- (3) Sec. 7 (school size; intent);
- (4) Sec. 8 (school closure);

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- (5) Sec. 11 (16 V.S.A. § 3443);
 - (6) Sec. 12 (School Construction Advisory Board sunset);
 - (7) Sec. 18 (16 V.S.A. § 828);
 - (8) Sec. 19 (tuition transition);
 - (9) Sec. 20 (statewide cohesion; intent);
 - (10) Sec. 21 (AOE report; school calendar; graduation requirements);
 - (11) Sec. 22 (State-level governance; intent);
 - (12) Sec. 23 (16 V.S.A. § 161);
 - (13) Sec. 24 (SBE appointments transition);
 - (14) Sec. 25 (16 V.S.A. § 162);
 - (15) Sec. 26 (SBE rule review; appropriation);
 - (16) Sec. 31 (special education report);
 - (17) Sec. 32 (AOE special education strategic plan);
 - (18) Sec. 33 (AOE position); and
 - (19) Sec. 93 (PVR hearing officer pay).
- (c) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2026:
- (1) Sec. 4 (class size minimums);
 - (2) Sec. 5 (failure to comply with class size minimums);
 - (3) Sec. 9 (school construction policy);
 - (4) Sec. 10 (16 V.S.A. § 3442);
 - (5) Sec. 13 (16 V.S.A. § 3444);
 - (6) Sec. 14 (16 V.S.A. § 3445);
 - (7) Sec. 15 (16 V.S.A. § 3446);
 - (8) Sec. 16 (transfer of rulemaking authority); and
 - (9) Sec. 17 (repeals).
- (d) Sec. 48 (December 1 letter) shall take effect on July 1, 2028.
- (e) The following sections shall take effect on January 1, 2029:
- (1) Sec. 60 (tax classifications; contiguous parcels on grand list); and
 - (2) Sec. 61 (property classification).

(f) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2029, provided that the new school districts contemplated by this act have assumed responsibility for the education of all resident students:

(1) Secs. 27 (16 V.S.A. § 823) and 28 (repeals);

(2) Secs. 34–43 (transition to cost-factor foundation formula);

(3) Secs. 46 and 47 and 49 and 50 (statewide education tax; supplemental district spending tax);

(4) Secs. 51 and 52 and 54–56 (property tax credit repeal; creation of homestead exemption); and

(5) Sec. 57 (Education Fund Advisory Committee; review of foundation formula).

(g) The following sections shall take effect on January 1, 2030:

(1) Sec. 62 (regional assessment districts); and

(2) Secs. 65–90 (grand list assessment date).

(h) Secs. 58 and 59 (transition to evidence-based foundation formula) shall take effect upon:

(1) development and review of an evidence-based foundation formula by professional judgment panels;

(2) compliance by 90 percent of Vermont classes with class-size minimum standards set in the education quality standards;

(3) compliance by 90 percent of Vermont school buildings with school size standards set in the education quality standards; and

(4) implementation of a multitiered system of supports in each classroom in each Vermont school.

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Education and when further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Education be amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, **Reps. Conlon of Cornwall, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond, Harple of Glover, Hunter of Manchester, Long of Newfane, and McCann of Montpelier** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Ways and Means

in Sec. 2, 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1, in subdivision (e)(2)(A)(iv), following “control at the State level;~~and~~” by inserting “, including whether there should be a process for the community served by an elementary school to have a voice in decisions regarding school closures and, if so, recommendations for what that process shall entail”

Which was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Education be amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended?, **Reps. Yacovone of Morristown and Olson of Starksboro** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Committee on Ways and Means, as amended, as follows:

First: By adding a new section to be Sec. 8a to read as follows:

Sec. 8a. 16 V.S.A. § 726 is added to read:

§ 726. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Before closing an elementary school that operates grades prekindergarten through grade eight, or any subset of such grades, a school district shall obtain the affirmative vote of the town in which the elementary school is located.

Second: In Sec. 95 effective dates, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025:

- (1) Sec. 3 (scale; intent);
- (2) Sec. 6 (SBE rules; report);
- (3) Sec. 7 (school size; intent);
- (4) Sec. 8 (school closure requiring designation);
- (5) Sec. 8a (elementary school closure);
- (6) Sec. 11 (16 V.S.A. § 3443);
- (7) Sec. 12 (School Construction Advisory Board sunset);
- (8) Sec. 18 (16 V.S.A. § 828);
- (9) Sec. 19 (tuition transition);
- (10) Sec. 20 (statewide cohesion; intent);
- (11) Sec. 21 (AOE report; school calendar; graduation requirements);
- (12) Sec. 22 (State-level governance; intent);
- (13) Sec. 23 (16 V.S.A. § 161);

- (14) Sec. 24 (SBE appointments transition);
- (15) Sec. 25 (16 V.S.A. § 162);
- (16) Sec. 26 (SBE rule review; appropriation);
- (17) Sec. 31 (special education report);
- (18) Sec. 32 (AOE special education strategic plan);
- (19) Sec. 33 (AOE position); and
- (20) Sec. 93 (PVR hearing officer pay).

Thereupon, **Rep. Yacovone of Morristown** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Education be amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended?, **Reps. Olson of Starksboro and Yacovone of Morristown** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended, as follows:

First: By adding a new section to be Sec. 8a to read as follows:

Sec. 8a. 16 V.S.A. § 726 is added to read:

§ 726. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

(a) Before closing an elementary school that operates grades prekindergarten through grade eight, or any subset of such grades, a school district shall:

(1) Provide notice of the district's intent to close the elementary school at least six months before the district's decision.

(2) Publish a report at least 90 days before the district's decision. The report shall include the district's conclusions, and the data, analysis, and other information supporting the conclusions concerning:

(A) the educational value to students of the school proposed to be closed;

(B) the long-term financial viability of the school proposed to be closed after considering all cost saving options;

(C) the ability of the school to meet regulatory requirements, including building maintenance and educational quality requirements;

(D) plans for student transportation;

(E) the disposition of elementary school buildings and other assets;

and

(F) the impact of closing the school on the community.

(3) Hold at least two hearings wherein the residents of the community served by the elementary school may offer comments, testimony, expert witnesses, and other relevant evidence.

(b) The district shall not close an elementary school unless the district determines, after notice and hearing, that:

(1) the elementary school proposed to be closed cannot offer an adequate and equitable educational opportunity for its students, and the school where the students will be moved will substantially improve student outcomes and offer an adequate and equitable educational opportunity for students;

(2) the elementary school proposed to be closed is not financially viable over the long term; and

(3) the elementary school closure is in the best interests of students and the community.

(c) The district's decision to close an elementary school may be appealed by five percent of the registered voters in the town or towns served by the school to the Superior Court.

(d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a district whose applicable articles of agreement require an affirmative vote of the town in which the elementary school is located before the elementary school is closed.

Second: In Sec. 95 effective dates, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025:

(1) Sec. 3 (scale; intent);

(2) Sec. 6 (SBE rules; report);

(3) Sec. 7 (school size; intent);

(4) Sec. 8 (school closure requiring designation);

(5) Sec. 8a (elementary school closure)

(6) Sec. 11 (16 V.S.A. § 3443);

(7) Sec. 12 (School Construction Advisory Board sunset);

(8) Sec. 18 (16 V.S.A. § 828);

(9) Sec. 19 (tuition transition);

(10) Sec. 20 (statewide cohesion; intent);

- (11) Sec. 21 (AOE report; school calendar; graduation requirements);
- (12) Sec. 22 (State-level governance; intent);
- (13) Sec. 23 (16 V.S.A. § 161);
- (14) Sec. 24 (SBE appointments transition);
- (15) Sec. 25 (16 V.S.A. § 162);
- (16) Sec. 26 (SBE rule review; appropriation);
- (17) Sec. 31 (special education report);
- (18) Sec. 32 (AOE special education strategic plan);
- (19) Sec. 33 (AOE position); and
- (20) Sec. 93 (PVR hearing officer pay).

Thereupon, **Rep. Olson of Starksboro** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Thereafter, the report of the Committee on Education was amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, as amended. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Education, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At five o'clock and one minute in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, April 11, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Mike Mrowicki and Amelia Struthers of Putney.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 504

By Reps. Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, and Maguire of Rutland City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Rutland

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 505

By Reps. Galfetti of Barre Town and McFaun of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the Town of Barre

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 506

By Rep. Waters Evans of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Charlotte

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Third Reading; Bill Passed in Concurrence**S. 3**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 293**

Rep. Eastes of Guilford, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to health equity data reporting and registry disclosure requirements

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Health Equity Data Reporting * * *

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 253 is amended to read:

§ 253. DATA RESPONSIVE TO HEALTH EQUITY INQUIRIES

* * *

(b)(1) The Department of Health shall systematically analyze such health equity data using the smallest appropriate units of analysis feasible to detect racial and ethnic disparities, as well as disparities along the lines of primary language, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status, and report the results of such analysis on the Department's website periodically, but not less than biannually. The Department's analysis shall be used to measure over time the impact of actions taken to reduce health disparities in Vermont. The data informing the Department's analysis shall be made available to the public in accordance with State and federal law.

(2) Annually Every three years beginning in 2028, on or before January 15, the Department shall submit a report containing the results of the analysis conducted pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services.

* * * Cancer Registry Disclosure Requirements * * *

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 155 is amended to read:

§ 155. DISCLOSURE

* * *

(b) The Commissioner may furnish confidential information to the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, other states' cancer registries, federal cancer control agencies, or health researchers in order to collaborate in a national cancer registry or to collaborate in cancer control and prevention research studies. However, before releasing confidential information, the Commissioner shall first obtain from such state registries, agencies, or researchers ~~an agreement in writing to keep~~ written assurances acceptable to the Commissioner that the identifying information shall be kept confidential and privileged as required by law. In the case of researchers, the Commissioner shall also first obtain written evidence of the approval of ~~their academic committee for the protection of human subjects established in accordance with 45 C.F.R. part 46~~ an institutional review board or privacy board in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (B).

* * * Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry Disclosure Requirements * * *

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 174 is amended to read:

§ 174. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a)(1) All identifying information regarding an individual patient or health care provider is exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Commissioner may enter into data sharing and protection agreements with researchers or state, regional, or national amyotrophic lateral sclerosis registries for bidirectional data exchange, provided access under such agreements is consistent with the privacy, security, and disclosure protections in this chapter. In the case of researchers, the Commissioner shall also first obtain written evidence of the approval of ~~their academic committee for the protection of human subjects established in accordance with 45 C.F.R. Part 46~~ an institutional review board or privacy board in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (B). The Commissioner shall disclose the minimum information necessary to accomplish a specified research purpose.

* * *

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Human Services agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Recess

At ten o'clock and two minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

Call to Order

At twelve o'clock and twenty-three minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

**Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Bill Amended;
Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Bill Amended; Amendment
Offered; Third Reading; Bill Passed**

H. 454

House bill, entitled

An act relating to transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Greer of Bennington** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 2, 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1, in subdivision (j)(1)(A)(viii), following "all grade levels from kindergarten through grade 12" by adding ", including use of a supervisory union structure where necessary to maintain existing tuition structures"

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 27a to read as follows:

Sec. 27a. TUITION PAYMENT; SCHOOL OPERATION; INTENT

(a) All governance transitions contemplated pursuant to this act shall preserve the ability of a district that, as of the effective date of this section, provides for the education of all resident students in one or more grades by paying tuition on the students' behalf, to continue to provide education by paying tuition on behalf of all students in the grade or grades if it chooses to do so and shall not result in the consolidation of any district into a merged entity with a dissimilar operating or tuitioning structure.

(b) Nothing in this act shall be construed to restrict or repeal, or to authorize, encourage, or contemplate the restriction or repeal of, the ability of a school district that, as of the effective date of this section, provides for the education of all resident students in one or more grades:

(1) by paying tuition on the students' behalf, to continue to provide education by paying tuition on behalf of all students in the grade or grades; or

(2) by operating a school offering the grade or grades, to continue to provide education by operating a school for all students in the grade or grades.

Third: In Sec. 95, effective dates, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025:

(1) Sec. 3 (scale; intent);

(2) Sec. 6 (SBE rules; report);

(3) Sec. 7 (school size; intent);

(4) Sec. 8 (school closure);

(5) Sec. 11 (16 V.S.A. § 3443);

(6) Sec. 12 (School Construction Advisory Board sunset);

(7) Sec. 18 (16 V.S.A. § 828);

(8) Sec. 19 (tuition transition);

(9) Sec. 20 (statewide cohesion; intent);

(10) Sec. 21 (AOE report; school calendar; graduation requirements);

(11) Sec. 22 (State-level governance; intent);

(12) Sec. 23 (16 V.S.A. § 161);

(13) Sec. 24 (SBE appointments transition);

(14) Sec. 25 (16 V.S.A. § 162);

(15) Sec. 26 (SBE rule review; appropriation);

(16) Sec. 27a (tuition payment; school operation; intent);

(17) Sec. 31 (special education report);

(18) Sec. 32 (AOE special education strategic plan);

(19) Sec. 33 (AOE position); and

(20) Sec. 93 (PVR hearing officer pay).

Thereupon, **Rep. Greer of Bennington** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Toof of St. Albans Town and Houghton of Essex Junction** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 2, 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1, by striking out subdivision (b)(2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (b)(2) to read as follows:

(2) Nonvoting members. The following nine members shall be nonvoting members of the Commission who shall be appointed on or before July 15, 2025:

(A) Nonlegislative members. There shall be five nonlegislative, nonvoting members, all of whom shall have extensive experience working within the Vermont public education system. Appointing authorities shall coordinate to ensure that, to the extent possible, each of the five nonvoting members represents a different geographic region of the State.

(i) Two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent of a supervisory union with multiple member school districts and one of whom shall be either a retired or former Vermont school business manager or a retired or former school board member.

(ii) Two members, appointed by the Committee on Committees, one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent and one of whom shall be a retired or former Vermont school business manager.

(iii) One member, appointed by the Governor, who shall be a retired or former Vermont superintendent.

(B) Legislative members. There shall be four legislative, nonvoting members.

(i) Two current members of the House of Representatives, not all from the same political party or same school district, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(ii) Two current members of the Senate, not all from the same political party or same school district, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

Second: In Sec. 2, 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 1, in subsection (j), following “to be composed of the” by striking out the word “five” and inserting in lieu thereof the word “nine”

Third: By adding a new reader assistance heading and section to be Sec. 2b to read as follows:

* * * School District Voting Ward Task Force * * *

Sec. 2a. SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTING WARD TASK FORCE; REPORT;
MAPS

(a) Creation. There is created the School District Voting Ward Task Force to create voting district wards within the new school districts contemplated by this act, to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the choice of school board members.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members who shall have substantial understanding of Vermont geography, trade, travel, social interaction, and Vermont's public education system:

(1) the Secretary of State or designee, who shall be the chair;

(2) three members, who shall be appointed by the Vermont Municipal Clerk Treasurer Association;

(3) two members, appointed by the Vermont School Boards Association;
and

(4) the Director of the Vermont Center for Geographic Information or designee.

(c) Powers and duties. On or before October 15, 2025, the Task Force shall consult with the school district boundary subcommittee created in Sec. 2 of this act to gain an understanding of the status of the work of the subcommittee and to determine whether the subcommittee has one or more boundary proposals ready for the Task Force to begin the work of creating voting wards. Using the boundary proposals of the subcommittee, the Task Force shall, following the principles of apportionment followed by the legislative apportionment board, make recommendations to the General Assembly to achieve voting districts within each school district that are compact, contiguous, and drawn to achieve substantially equal weighting of votes and that meet the requirements of applicable State and federal law. If at any time during the work of the Task Force the General Assembly enacts new school district boundaries, or it appears clear the General Assembly is focused on only one proposal, the Task Force shall focus its work and recommendations to align with the work of the General Assembly. The Task Force's recommendations shall include:

(1) the optimal number of school board members per school board to maximize public representation and democratic input while maintaining effective school board size; and

(2) boundaries for school district voting wards within each school district, with alternative options if necessary, including detailed maps clearly and unambiguously delineating ward boundaries that respect current municipal boundary lines.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Secretary of State's office and the technical assistance of the Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information. The Task Force may contract for such expert services as may be necessary to carry out its duties.

(e) Meetings.

(1) The Secretary of State shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before July 15, 2025.

(2) The Secretary of State shall be the chair.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2026.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 10 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Secretary of State's office.

Fourth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 61b to read as follows:

Sec. 61b. PROPERTY TAX CLASSIFICATIONS IMPLEMENTATION
REPORT

The Commissioner of Taxes shall study the implementation of new property tax classifications under this act and identify any further actions required by the Department of Taxes, Vermont municipalities, and the General Assembly to successfully implement the new tax classification system on the timeline established by this act. The issues considered by the Commissioner shall include any needed changes to existing forms, whether new forms or taxpayer filings are needed, and how the Department could identify parcels with dwelling units that do not have an affiliated homestead declaration or landlord certificate on file. On or before December 15, 2026, the Commissioner of Taxes shall submit a study report detailing the Commissioner's findings under this section to the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance.

Fifth: In Sec. 95, effective dates, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a) This section and the following sections shall take effect on passage:

- (1) Sec. 1 (findings; intent; plan);
- (2) Sec. 2 (Commission on the Future of Public Education);
- (3) Sec. 2a (School District Voting Ward Task Force);
- (4) Sec. 29 (16 V.S.A. § 4011(f));
- (5) Sec. 30 (adult education funding report);
- (6) Sec. 44 (transportation reimbursement guidelines);
- (7) Sec. 45 (inflationary measures; prekindergarten; reports);
- (8) Sec. 53 (homestead declaration sample form);
- (9) Sec. 61a (tax classification data; transition);
- (10) Sec. 61b (property tax classifications implementation report)
- (11) Sec. 63 (RAD transition; annual progress report);
- (12) Sec. 64 (RAD stakeholder working group);
- (13) Sec. 91 (correction of inadvertently removed language);
- (14) Sec. 92 (minimum debt for tax sales); and
- (15) Sec. 94 (property tax credit late fee).

Which was agreed to.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town** moved to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Findings and Intent * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) The study commissioned in 2024 titled “An Evidence-Based Approach to Identifying an Adequate Education Spending Level in Vermont” by Allan Odden and Lawrence O. Picus evaluated Vermont education spending against research-informed best practices. The evidence-based model is designed to identify an array of staffing and resources that high-performing schools need to provide every student with robust opportunities to meet college and career-ready standards. Performing to those standards would

substantially improve student achievement and reduce demographic related performance gaps.

(2) The evidence-based model represents an adequate model for the level of education funding necessary to improve student achievement. It was developed by experts in education funding with more than 25 years of experience across the United States in determining how to adequately fund schools, meaning providing a level of resources that would enable schools to provide every student with an equal opportunity to learn to high performance standards. The State has a Constitutional obligation to ensure that all students are provided a quality education on a reasonably equal basis, without regard to town of residence. Doing so will require significant change to the current system of education.

(3) Vermont's current funding model equalizes school district's ability to raise education taxes, leveling out the distinctions in property wealth among districts. The current funding system does not provide equalized education dollars to districts. The choice to spend or not spend equitable amounts of education funding per student across the State rests with individual districts. Spending patterns demonstrate that many districts do not utilize the tax equalization mechanisms to increase spending, even in the districts with the most demonstrated student need.

(4) Vermont's current school and school district sizes do not align with the Evidence-Based Model, and contribute to higher costs that are not fully addressed by the Model. In order to ensure the Model can be implemented in a way that improves education quality, the State must be organized into larger school districts that are responsible for approximately at minimum 3,900 students, a population that represents the minimum to achieve efficiency in delivering the Evidence-Based Model.

(5) Additionally, larger school districts, consistent with State-level guidance for school size, average class size, and budgetary priorities, must examine the appropriate number of schools for the student population, geography, student need, and community desires of the school district.

(6) The intent of the proposed five districts is to charge school boards to represent a diverse set of student and community needs to promote equitable budgeting and district policies and to create central offices that provide specialized resources and support for students and teachers in alignment with best practices for teaching and learning.

Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 43 is amended to read:

§ 43. FEDERAL EDUCATION AID FUNDS; ADMINISTRATION; LOCAL
EDUCATION AGENCY

(a) The Agency, as sole state agency, may administer federal funds made available to the State under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Public L. No. 89-10, as amended, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public L. No. 107-110. Those funds may be accepted and shall be distributed and accounted for by the State Treasurer in accordance with that law and rules and regulations of the United States issued under it if there is conflict between that law or those rules and regulations and the laws of this State.

(b) For purposes of distribution of funds under this section, a ~~supervisory union~~ school district shall be a local education agency as that term is defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(26).

(c) For purposes of determining student performance and application of consequences for failure to meet standards and for provision of compensatory and remedial services pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 6311–6318, a ~~supervisory union~~ school district shall be a local education agency.

Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 212 is amended to read:

§ 212. SECRETARY'S DUTIES GENERALLY

The Secretary shall articulate a long-term strategic vision for educational services in the State, through engagement of the education community; shall execute those policies adopted by the State Board in the legal exercise of its powers; and shall:

(1) Coordinate the educational work of the public schools with higher education in the State.

(2) Identify the educational goals of the public schools, provide alternative methods of attaining those goals, and promote education in the State.

(3) ~~Evaluate the program of instruction in the public schools~~ Establish, through rulemaking, education and district quality standards to evaluate the quality of instruction and operations in the public and school choice schools.

(4) Advise the General Assembly concerning proposed laws affecting the public schools.

(5) Supervise and direct the execution of the laws relating to the public schools and ensure compliance.

(6) Supervise the expenditure and distribution of all money appropriated by the State under the provisions of this title for public schools.

(7) Arrange conferences and summer schools for superintendents and teachers and employ suitable speakers, lecturers, and instructors for the same; fix the amount of tuition for the instruction; provide for educational gatherings, institutes, summer schools, and other supplementary educational activities; and provide for cooperation with the Board of Libraries established by 22 V.S.A. § 602 or the State Librarian.

(8) ~~Inform citizens of the condition of and opportunities within the public education system and provide other educational publicity for the enlightenment and well-being of the citizens of the State~~ Provide clear, transparent and high quality information to citizens regarding the condition and opportunities within the public education system.

(9) Establish requirements for information to be submitted by school districts, including necessary statistical data and other information, and ensure, to the extent possible, that data are reported in a uniform way. ~~Data collected under this subdivision shall include budget surplus amounts, reserve fund amounts, and information concerning the purpose and use of any reserve funds.~~

(10) Make recommendations to school boards regarding transportation policies.

(11) ~~Provide an educational facilities planning service to make available technical assistance and comprehensive information on school construction, school systems design, component technology and suppliers, and similar subjects to public schools, school districts, and independent schools, for the purpose of helping them to achieve flexibility and economy in construction, to retain the potential for modification and expansion of educational facilities, and to attain the lowest maintenance costs consistent with educational needs.~~ [Repealed.]

(12) Distribute at his or her the Secretary's discretion upon request to approved independent schools appropriate forms and materials relating to the education quality standards for elementary and secondary students.

(13) Ensure the provision of services to children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance in coordination with the Departments of Mental Health, for Children and Families, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living pursuant to the provisions of 33 V.S.A. chapter 43.

(14) Annually, communicate to each superintendent a list of information that ~~a supervisory union~~, a school board, a school district, a school, or a school district employee, ~~or a supervisory union employee~~ is required under State or

federal law to make available to the electorate, community members, parents, or students. It is the intent of this subdivision that the Secretary shall make a good faith effort to compile a complete list of the information to be made available. Due to the difficult nature of compiling such a list, it is also the intent that failure to include relevant information on the list shall not constitute grounds for an action against the Secretary.

(15) Annually, with the Commissioner of Health, shall jointly inform superintendents and principals of appropriate practices regarding students with life-threatening allergies and chronic illnesses; and prepare and distribute policies, training materials, and school guidelines for managing students with life-threatening allergies and chronic illnesses, including family responsibilities, school responsibilities, and student responsibilities.

(16) Annually, convene a meeting of directors of Vermont educator preparation programs and representatives of school boards, superintendents, principals, educators, and the Vermont Standards Board to determine subject and geographic areas in which there is a critical need for educators and to discuss ways to meet the need.

(17) Encourage and facilitate collaboration among school districts ~~and supervisory unions~~ to share information and expertise regarding low-incidence special education needs.

(18) Annually, inform superintendents and principals of regional resources available to assist schools to provide instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators and provide updated information to the education community regarding the provision of a comprehensive health education.

(19) Establish an information clearinghouse and accessible database to help districts share information about educational programs and practices that improve student performance. Educational programs and practices include those designed to create and sustain a safe learning environment.

(20) Develop, in consultation with the Secretary of State, and make available to school boards sample ballot language for issues that may be decided by Australian ballot and for which no statutory language exists.

(21) Prepare a budget for the Agency and submit it to the Governor after review by the State Board.

(22) Annually, prior to September 1, present the Governor's education policy priorities to the State Board.

(23) Make regulations governing the attendance and records of attendance of all students and the deportment of students attending public schools.

(24) Implement and continually update standards for student performance in appropriate content areas and at appropriate intervals in the continuum from kindergarten to grade 12 and methods of assessment to determine attainment of the standards for student performance. The standards shall be rigorous, challenging, and designed to prepare students to participate in and contribute to the democratic process and to compete in the global marketplace. The standards shall include a standard for reading level proficiency for students completing grade three.

(25) By rule, determine statewide graduation standards.

(26) Provide oversight for adult education and literacy programs and perform all the duties and powers prescribed by law pertaining to adult education and literacy and to act as the State approval agency for educational institutions conducting programs of adult education and literacy.

(27) Report annually on the condition of education statewide and on a school district basis. The report shall include information on attainment of standards for student performance adopted under subdivision (24) of this section, the number and types of complaints of hazing, harassment, or bullying made pursuant to chapter 9, subchapter 5 of this title and responses to the complaints; financial resources and expenditures; and community social indicators. The report shall be organized and presented in a way that is easily understandable by the general public and that enables each school and school district to determine its strengths and weaknesses. To the extent consistent with State and federal privacy laws and regulations, data on hazing, harassment, or bullying incidents shall be disaggregated by incident type, including disaggregation by ethnic groups, racial groups, religious groups, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and English language learner status. The Secretary shall use the information in the report to determine whether students in each school and school district are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other schools and school districts pursuant to subsection 165(b) of this title.

(28) Ensure that Vermont's students, including students enrolled in secondary career technical education, have access to a substantially equal educational opportunity by developing a system to evaluate the equalizing effects of Vermont's education finance system and education quality standards under section 165 of this title.

Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 164 is amended to read:

§ 164. STATE BOARD; GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES

The State Board shall engage local school board members ~~and the broader education community~~ and, consistent with the provisions of this title, its own rules, and rules adopted by the Secretary, ~~establish and regularly update~~ contribute to a long-term strategic vision articulated by the Secretary of Education for the delivery of educational services in Vermont; ~~advise the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Secretary of Education on high-priority educational policies and issues as they arise;~~ and act in accordance with legislative mandates, including ~~the adoption of rules and~~ executing special assignments. In addition to other specified duties, the Board shall:

(1) Establish such advisory commissions as in the judgment of the Board will be of assistance to it in carrying out its duties. Advisory commission members shall serve with or without compensation at the discretion of the Board but shall receive actual expenses incurred in pursuance of their duties.

(2) Have the authority to enter into agreements with school districts, municipalities, states, the United States, foundations, agencies, or individuals for service, educational programs, or research projects.

(3) Examine and determine all appeals that by law are made to it and prescribe rules of practice in respect thereto, not inconsistent with law.

(4) [Repealed.]

(5) [Repealed.]

(6) ~~Make regulations governing the attendance and records of attendance of all students and the deportment of students attending public schools.~~ [Repealed.]

(7) Adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to carry out the powers and duties of the Board as directed by the General Assembly, within the limitations of legislative intent.

(8) [Repealed.]

(9) ~~Implement and continually update standards for student performance in appropriate content areas and at appropriate intervals in the continuum from kindergarten to grade 12 and methods of assessment to determine attainment of the standards for student performance. The standards shall be rigorous, challenging, and designed to prepare students to participate in and contribute to the democratic process and to compete in the global marketplace. The~~

~~standards shall include a standard for reading level proficiency for students completing grade three. [Repealed.]~~

~~(10) [Repealed.]~~

~~(11) If deemed advisable, determine educational standards for admission to and graduation from the public schools. [Repealed.]~~

~~(12) [Repealed.]~~

~~(13) Be the State Board for the program of adult education and literacy and perform all the duties and powers prescribed by law pertaining to adult education and literacy and to act as the State approval agency for educational institutions conducting programs of adult education and literacy. [Repealed.]~~

~~(14) Adopt rules for approval of independent schools. [Repealed.]~~

~~(15) Establish criteria governing the establishment of a system for the receipt, deposit, accounting, and disbursement of all funds by supervisory unions and school districts. [Repealed.]~~

~~(16) In cooperation with the Secretary, ensure that the Agency develops information, plans, and assistance to aid in making technology and telecommunications available and coordinated in all school districts. The State Board shall develop guidelines for distribution of federal, State, or private funds designated for the development or expansion of distance learning technologies. The guidelines shall encourage, consistent with any terms or conditions established by the funding source, collaboration between schools and school districts to realize economic and educational efficiencies. [Repealed.]~~

~~(17) Report annually on the condition of education statewide and on a supervisory union and school district basis. The report shall include information on attainment of standards for student performance adopted under subdivision (9) of this section, number and types of complaints of hazing, harassment, or bullying made pursuant to chapter 9, subchapter 5 of this title and responses to the complaints, financial resources and expenditures, and community social indicators. The report shall be organized and presented in a way that is easily understandable by the general public and that enables each school, school district, and supervisory union to determine its strengths and weaknesses. To the extent consistent with State and federal privacy laws and regulations, data on hazing, harassment, or bullying incidents shall be disaggregated by incident type, including disaggregation by ethnic groups, racial groups, religious groups, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and English language learner status. The Secretary shall use the information in the report to determine whether students in each school, school district, and supervisory union are provided educational opportunities~~

~~substantially equal to those provided in other schools, school districts, and supervisory unions pursuant to subsection 165(b) of this title. [Repealed.]~~

~~(18) Ensure that Vermont's students, including students enrolled in secondary career technical education, have access to a substantially equal educational opportunity by developing a system to evaluate the equalizing effects of Vermont's education finance system and education quality standards under section 165 of this title. [Repealed.]~~

~~(19) [Repealed.]~~

~~(20) Pursuant to section 806g of this title, constitute the State Council for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and appoint to the Council a Compact Commissioner and Military Family Education Liaison, who may be the same person. The Board may appoint additional members.~~

~~(21) Report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress the Board has made on the development of education policy for the State in the execution of its enumerated duties.~~

~~(22) Administer a statewide contract to provide annual training to school board members on educational leadership and the roles and responsibilities of the school district board. The State Board will select an appropriate training vendor to speak to the Vermont context and to be informed by research-based best practices.~~

~~(23) Annually, review each school district's adopted equity budget policy, and coordinate with school districts on the content and implementation considerations for those policies.~~

~~(24) Annually, review the outcome of the District Quality Standards evaluation of school board proficiency published by the Agency of Education. The State Board shall convene public discussions with each school district to identify areas for improvement and to define the role of the school board in improving districtwide practices.~~

Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 165 is amended as follows:

§ 165. EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS; EQUAL EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES; INDEPENDENT SCHOOL MEETING
EDUCATION QUALITY STANDARDS

(a) In order to carry out Vermont's policy that all Vermont children will be afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, each Vermont public school, including each career technical center, shall meet the following education quality standards:

(1) The school, through a process including parents, teachers, students, and community members, develops, implements, and annually updates a continuous improvement plan to improve student performance within the school. The plan shall include goals and objectives for improved student learning and educational strategies and activities to achieve its goals. The plan shall also address the effectiveness of efforts made since the previous continuous improvement plan to ensure the school maintains a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment that is free from harassment, hazing, and bullying. The school shall assess student performance under the plan using a method or methods of assessment developed under subdivision 164(9) of this title.

(2) The school, at least annually, reports student performance results to community members in a format selected by the school board. In the case of a regional career technical center, the community means the school districts in the service region. The school report shall include:

(A) Information indicating progress toward meeting standards from the most recent measure taken.

(B) [Repealed.]

(C) Information indicating progress toward meeting the goals of an annual continuous improvement plan.

(D) Any other statistical information about the school or community that the school board deems necessary to place student performance results in context.

(E)–(G) [Repealed.]

(H) A description of how the school ensures that each student receives appropriate career counseling and program information regarding availability of education and apprenticeship program offerings at career technical centers.

(I) [Repealed.]

(J) If the school is a secondary school, information and supporting data presented in a manner designed to protect student confidentiality on the dropout and graduation rates.

(K) Data provided by the Secretary that enable a comparison with other schools, or school districts if school level data are not available, for cost-effectiveness. The Secretary shall establish which data are to be included pursuant to this subdivision and, notwithstanding that the other elements of the report are to be presented in a format selected by the school board, shall develop a common format to be used by each school in presenting the data to

community members. The Secretary shall provide the most recent data available to each school ~~no~~ not later than October 1 of each year. Data to be presented include student-to-teacher ratio, administrator-to-student ratio, administrator-to-teacher ratio, and cost per pupil.

(3) The school substantially meets standards adopted by rule of the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education regarding conditions, practices, and resources of schools. The standards shall address those aspects of the following that are most closely associated with improving student performance:

(A) school leadership, staffing, ~~and support services, and average minimum class sizes that shall require that for grades four through 12 average class sizes to be equivalent to a teacher to student ratio of 1:25 and for grades kindergarten through three shall be equivalent to a teacher to student ratio of 15:1;~~

(B) instructional practices and curriculum leadership, content, and coordination;

(C) educational materials and school facilities;

(D) access to current technology.

(4) The school shall provide for and the staff shall use needs-based professional development designed to improve the quality of education provided to the students and directly connected to standards for student performance established by the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education and any other educational performance goals established by the school board.

(5) The school uses staff evaluation to advance educational performance objectives.

(6) The school ensures that students receive appropriate career counseling and program information regarding the availability of education and apprenticeship program offerings at career technical centers. In addition, the school, if it is a secondary school, offers a genuine opportunity to access career technical education programs.

(7) The school ensures that students are furnished educational services in accordance with any State or federal entitlements and in a nondiscriminatory manner.

(8) The school maintains a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment that is free from hazing, harassment, and bullying, and is based on sound instructional and classroom management practices and clear discipline policies that are consistently and effectively enforced.

(b) Annually, the Secretary shall determine whether students in each Vermont public school are provided educational opportunities substantially equal to those provided in other public schools. If the Secretary determines that a school is not meeting the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section or that the school is making insufficient progress in improving student performance in relation to the standards for student performance set forth in subdivision 164(9) of this title, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary shall describe in writing actions that a district must take in order to meet either or both sets of standards and shall provide technical assistance to the school. If the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress within two years of the determination, the Secretary shall recommend to the State Board one or more of the following actions:

(1) the Agency continue to provide technical assistance for one more cycle of review;

(2) the State Board adjust ~~supervisory union boundaries or~~ responsibilities of the superintendency pursuant to section 242 of this title;

(3) the Secretary assume administrative control of an individual school, or school district, ~~or supervisory union~~, including budgetary control to ensure sound financial practices, only to the extent necessary to correct deficiencies;

(4) the State Board close an individual school or schools and require that the school district ~~pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school pursuant to chapter 21 of this title~~ assign students to a different school operated by the district; or

(5) the State Board require two or more school districts to consolidate their governance structures.

(c) The State Board, after offering the school board an opportunity for a hearing, shall either dismiss the Secretary's recommendation or order that one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section be taken. The action ordered by the State Board shall be the least intrusive consistent with the need to provide students attending the school substantially equal educational opportunities. A school board aggrieved by an order of the State Board may appeal the order in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to entitle any student to educational programs or services identical to those received by students in the same or any other school district. Further, nothing in this section shall create a private right of action.

(e) If the Secretary determines at any time that the failure of a school to meet the education quality standards listed in subsection (a) of this section is severe or pervasive, potentially results in physical or emotional harm to

students or significant deprivation of equal education opportunities, and the school has either unreasonably refused to remedy the problem or its efforts have proved ineffective, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may recommend to the State Board one or more of the actions listed in subsection (b) of this section. The State Board shall then follow the procedure of subsection (c) of this section.

(f) ~~In order to be designated an independent school meeting education quality standards, an independent school shall participate in the education quality standards process of subsection (b) of this section. An independent school shall receive technical assistance in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b), but shall not be subject to subdivisions (b)(2) (4) of this section. The school shall be an independent school meeting education quality standards unless the State Board, after opportunity for hearing, finds that:~~

~~(1) the school has discontinued its participation in the education quality standards process; or~~

~~(2) two or more years following a determination that the school is not meeting the education quality standards or that the school is making insufficient progress in improving student performance, the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress toward meeting the standards. [Repealed.]~~

(g) In addition to the education quality standards provided in subsection (a) of this section, each Vermont school district shall meet the school district quality standards adopted by rule of the Agency of Education regarding the business, facilities management, and governance practices of school districts. These standards shall include a process for school district quality reviews to be conducted by the Agency of Education. Annually, the Secretary shall publish metrics regarding the outcomes of school district quality reviews.

Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 166 is amended to read:

§ 166. ~~APPROVED AND RECOGNIZED INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS;~~

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SERVING AS SCHOOL CHOICE

SCHOOL FOR GRADES 9–12

(a) Authority. An independent school may operate and provide elementary education or secondary education if it is ~~either approved or recognized or designated as a school choice school~~ as set forth in this section.

(b) ~~Approved independent schools. On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers elementary or secondary education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school provides a minimum course of study pursuant to section 906 of this title and that it substantially complies with all statutory requirements for approved independent schools and~~

~~the Board's rules for approved independent schools. An independent school that intends to accept public tuition shall be approved by the State Board only on the condition that the school agrees, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, to enroll any student who requires special education services and who is placed in or referred to the approved independent school as an appropriate placement and least restrictive environment for the student by the student's individualized education program team or by the local education agency; provided, however, that this requirement shall not apply to an independent school that limits enrollment to students who are on an individualized education program or a plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, and who are enrolled pursuant to a written agreement between the local education agency and the school. Except as provided in subdivision (6) of this subsection, the Board's rules must at minimum require that the school have the resources required to meet its stated objectives, including financial capacity, faculty who are qualified by training and experience in the areas in which they are assigned, and physical facilities and special services that are in accordance with any State or federal law or regulation. Approval may be granted without State Board evaluation in the case of any school accredited by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accrediting purposes, provided that the State Board shall determine that the school complies with all student enrollment provisions required by law.~~

~~(1) On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers kindergarten but no other graded education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school substantially complies with the Board's rules for approved independent kindergartens. The State Board may delegate to another State agency the authority to evaluate the safety and adequacy of the buildings in which kindergartens are conducted but shall consider all findings and recommendations of any such agency in making its approval decision.~~

~~(2) Approvals under this subsection (b) shall be for a term established by rule of the Board but not greater than five years.~~

~~(3) A approved independent school shall provide to the parent or guardian responsible for each of its students, prior to accepting any money for a student, an accurate statement in writing of its status under this section and a copy of this section. Failure to comply with this provision may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.~~

~~(4) Each approved independent school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days of the termination of a student's~~

enrollment, the school choice school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.

(5) The State Board may revoke, suspend, or impose conditions upon the approval of an approved independent school, after having provided an opportunity for a hearing, for substantial failure to comply with the minimum course of study, for failure to demonstrate that the school has the resources required to meet its stated objectives, for failure to comply with statutory requirements or the Board's rules for approved independent schools, or for failure to report under subdivision (4) of this subsection (b). Upon that revocation or suspension, students required to attend school who are enrolled in that school shall become truant unless they enroll in a public school, an approved or recognized independent school, or a home study program.

(6) This subdivision (6) applies to an independent school located in Vermont that offers a distance learning program and that, because of its structure, does not meet some or all the rules of the State Board for approved independent schools. In order to be approved under this subdivision, a school shall meet the standards adopted by rule of the State Board for approved independent schools that can be applied to the applicant school and any other standards or rules adopted by the State Board regarding these types of schools. A school approved under this subdivision shall not be eligible to receive tuition payments from public school districts under chapter 21 of this title.

(7) Approval for independent residential schools under this subsection is also contingent upon proof of the school's satisfactory completion of an annual fire safety inspection by the Department of Public Safety or its designee pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, subchapter 2. A certificate executed by the inspecting entity, declaring satisfactory completion of the inspection and identifying the date by which a new inspection must occur, shall be posted at the school in a public location. The school shall provide a copy of the certificate to the Secretary of Education after each annual inspection. The school shall pay the actual cost of the inspection unless waived or reduced by the inspecting entity.

(8)(A) If an approved independent school experiences any of the following financial reporting events during the period of its approved status, the school shall notify the Secretary of Education within five days after its knowledge of the event unless the failure is de minimis:

(i) the school's failure to file its federal or State tax returns when due, after permissible extension periods have been taken into account;

~~(ii) the school's failure to meet its payroll obligations as they are due or to pay federal or State payroll tax obligations as they are due;~~

~~(iii) the school's failure to maintain required retirement contributions;~~

~~(iv) the school's use of designated funds for nondesignated purposes;~~

~~(v) the school's inability to fully comply with the financial terms of its secured installment debt obligations over a period of two consecutive months, including the school's failure to make interest or principal payments as they are due or to maintain any required financial ratios;~~

~~(vi) the withdrawal or conditioning of the school's accreditation on financial grounds by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accrediting purposes; or~~

~~(vii) the school's insolvency, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2286(a).~~

~~(B)(i) If the Secretary reasonably believes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, then the Secretary shall notify the school in writing of the reasons for this belief and permit the school a reasonable opportunity to respond.~~

~~(ii) If the Secretary, after having provided the school a reasonable opportunity to respond, does not find that the school has satisfactorily responded or demonstrated its financial capacity, the Secretary may establish a review team that, with the consent of the school, includes a member of the Council of Independent Schools, to:~~

~~(I) conduct a school visit to assess the school's financial capacity;~~

~~(II) obtain from the school such financial documentation as the review team requires to perform its assessment; and~~

~~(III) submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the State Board.~~

~~(iii) If the State Board concludes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, the State Board may take any action that is authorized by this section.~~

~~(iv) In considering whether an independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status and what actions the State Board should take if it makes this finding, the State~~

~~Board may consult with, and draw on the analytical resources of, the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation.~~

~~(C) Information provided by an independent school under this subsection that is not already in the public domain is exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential. [Repealed.]~~

(c) School Choice Schools. An independent school may be designated as a School Choice School to serve grades 9–12 by the school district in which it is geographically located. In order to be eligible for designation, an independent school shall be certified by the Agency of Education as meeting the following criteria:

- (1) use of State standardized assessments;
- (2) implementation of minimum State graduation requirements;
- (3) the provision of special education services to all enrolled students to the same extent as would be required of a public school operated by a school district;
- (4) completion of an annual single audit by a certified public accountant, which shall be submitted to the Agency of Education;
- (5) maintenance of minimum financial reserves, in an amount to be established by rules adopted by the Agency of Education;
- (6) compliance with the school choice school requirements of the Education Quality Standards as defined by the Secretary through rule making;
- (7) compliance with school safety requirements in chapter 33 of this title;
- (8) adherence in all policies and operations with nondiscrimination requirements of 9 V.S.A. chapter 139;
- (9) adoption of harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention policies required by chapter 9, subchapter 5 of this title; except that the board shall follow its own procedures for adopting policy;
- (10) the school annually announces a capacity for incoming students to attend on a publicly funded basis in the following school year;
- (11) the school was an approved independent school on July 1, 2025;
- (12) the school's enrollment is at least 51 percent comprised of students attending on a district-funded tuition basis as of July 1, 2025,

(13) the school has a policy to govern a nondiscriminatory lottery system for determining which students may enroll in the school on a publicly funded basis when student interest exceeds capacity; and

(14) the school offers due process protections prior to suspending or expelling a student attending on a publicly funded basis that are at least as comprehensive as those required of public schools in section 1162 of this title.

(e)(d) Recognized independent schools. Upon filing an enrollment notice, a recognized independent school may provide elementary or secondary education in Vermont. The enrollment notice shall be on a form provided by the Secretary and shall be filed with the Secretary no earlier than three months before the beginning of the school year for the public schools in the town in which the applicant proposes to locate.

(1) The enrollment notice shall contain the following information and assurances:

(A) a statement that the school will be in session an amount of time substantially equivalent to that required for public schools;

(B) a detailed description or outline of the minimum course of study for each grade level the school offers and how the annual assessment of each student will be performed; and

(C) assurances that:

(i) the school will prepare and maintain attendance records for each student enrolled or regularly attending classes;

(ii) at least once each year, the school will assess each student's progress, and will maintain records of that assessment, and present the result of that assessment to each student's parent or guardian;

(iii) the school's educational program will include the minimum course of study set forth in section 906 of this title;

(iv) the school will have teachers and materials sufficient to carry out the school's educational program; and

(v) the school will meet such State and federal laws and regulations concerning its physical facilities and health and safety matters as are applicable to recognized independent schools.

(2) If the Secretary has information that creates significant doubt about whether the school would be able to meet the requirements set forth in this subsection (e)(d), the Secretary may call a hearing. At the hearing, the school shall establish that it can meet the requirements for recognized independent schools. Failure to do so shall result in a finding by the Secretary that the

school must take specified action to come into compliance within a specified time frame or the children enrolled must attend another recognized independent school, a public school, an approved independent school, or a home study program, or be declared truant unless absent with legal excuse.

(3) A recognized independent school shall provide to each student's parent or guardian a copy of its currently filed statement of objectives and a copy of this section. The copy shall be provided when the student enrolls or before September 1, whichever comes later. Failure to comply with this subsection may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.

(4) A recognized independent school shall renew its enrollment notice annually. An independent school shall be recognized for a period not to exceed five years by the Secretary without need for filing an annual enrollment notice if:

(A) it is recognized by an organization approved by the State Board for the purpose of recognizing such school; or

(B) it is accredited by a private, state, or regional agency approved by the State Board for accrediting purposes; provided, however, nothing in this subdivision (4) shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from initiating a hearing under this subsection ~~(e)~~(d).

(5) If the Secretary has information that creates significant doubt about whether the school, once in operation, is meeting the requirements for recognized independent schools, the Secretary may call a hearing. At the hearing, the school shall establish that it has met the requirements for recognized independent schools. Failure to do so shall result in a finding by the Secretary that:

(A) the school may not be in operation for the remainder of the school year and that the children are truant unless absent with legal excuse or enrolled in a public school, ~~an independent school~~, another recognized independent school, or a home study program; or

(B) the school must take specified action to come into compliance within a specified time frame or the school will not be permitted to operate for the remainder of the school year.

(6) Each recognized independent school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days of the termination of a student's enrollment, the recognized independent school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.

(7) After the filing of the enrollment notice or at a hearing, if the school is unable to comply with any specific requirements due to deep religious conviction shared by an organized group, the Secretary may waive such requirements if ~~he or she~~ the Secretary determines that the educational purposes of this subsection are being or will be substantially met.

(8) A recognized independent school shall provide to the parent or guardian responsible for each of its students, prior to accepting any money for a student, an accurate statement in writing of its status under this section and a copy of this section. Failure to comply with this provision may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.

(9) Each school choice school designated by a school district pursuant to school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days following the termination of a student's enrollment, the school choice school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.

(10) Approval for independent residential schools under this subsection is also contingent upon proof of the school's satisfactory completion of an annual fire safety inspection by the Department of Public Safety or its designee pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, subchapter 2. A certificate executed by the inspecting entity, declaring satisfactory completion of the inspection and identifying the date by which a new inspection must occur, shall be posted at the school in a public location. The school shall provide a copy of the certificate to the Secretary of Education after each annual inspection. The school shall pay the actual cost of the inspection unless waived or reduced by the inspecting entity.

~~(d)(e) Council of Independent Schools. A Council of Independent Schools is created consisting of 11 members, no fewer than three of whom shall be representatives of recognized independent schools. The Secretary shall appoint nine members from within the independent schools' community. The Secretary shall appoint two members from the public-at-large. Each member shall serve for two years and may be reappointed for up to an additional two terms. The Council shall adopt rules for its own operation. A chair shall be elected by and from among the members. The duties of the Council shall include advising the Secretary on policies and procedures with respect to independent schools. No hearing shall be initiated under this section before the State Board or by the Secretary until the recommendations of the Council have been sought and received. The recommendations of the Council, including any minority reports, shall be admissible at the hearing. [Repealed.]~~

~~(e)(f)~~ Harassment, hazing, and bullying policies. The board of trustees of ~~an approved or a~~ recognized independent school operating in Vermont shall adopt harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention policies; establish procedures for dealing with harassment, hazing, and bullying of students; and provide notice of these. The provisions of chapter 9, subchapter 5 of this title for public schools shall apply to this subsection, except that the board shall follow its own procedures for adopting policy.

~~(f)(g)~~ Tuition bills. An approved independent school that accepts students for whom the district of residence pays tuition under chapter 21 of this title shall bill the sending district monthly for a State-placed student and shall not bill the sending district for any month in which the State-placed student was not enrolled. [Repealed.]

~~(g)(h)~~ Tuition students; assessments. An approved independent school that accepts students for whom the district of residence pays tuition under chapter 21 of this title shall use the assessment or assessments required under subdivision 164(9) of this title to measure attainment of standards for student performance of those students. In addition, the school shall provide data related to the assessment or assessments as required by the Secretary. [Repealed.]

Sec. 7. AGENCY OF EDUCATION STUDY OF COOPERATIVE

EDUCATION SERVICES AND THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS,

STATEWIDE SALARY SCHEDULE; REPORT

The Agency of Education shall convene superintendents, directors of therapeutic independent schools, special education directors and other experts in the opinion of the Agency to study the need for cooperative education services and the oversight of therapeutic schools within the governance framework created by this Act. The Agency shall submit a summary of its findings and recommended legislative language to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education on or before December 15, 2025. The Agency shall also submit recommendations for legislative language to implement a statewide salary schedule with its report.

Sec. 8. 16 V.S.A. § 241 is amended to read:

§ 241. APPOINTMENT

(a) Each ~~supervisory union~~ school district board, with the advice of the Secretary, ~~may~~ shall employ a superintendent of schools.

(b) A superintendent shall be employed by written contract for a term not to exceed five years nor less than one year and shall work the number of hours required by contract, performing the duties designated in the contract or

assigned by the board. A superintendent of schools may be dismissed for cause or as specified in the contract of employment.

(c) Not later than May 15 of a year in which an incumbent superintendent's contract of employment expires, the ~~supervisory union school district~~ board shall meet to renew or act otherwise upon the superintendent's contract. ~~If a supervisory union employs a superintendent, the supervisory union board shall specify and assign the duties of a superintendent. If the supervisory union board does not hire a superintendent, the board may assign any duties assigned to the superintendent under this title to the school principal or principals in the supervisory union or to other qualified persons designated by the board.~~

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 242 is amended to read:

§ 242. DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer for the ~~supervisory union board and for each school board within the supervisory union~~, and shall:

(1) Carry out the policies adopted by the school ~~boards~~ board relating to the educational or business affairs of the school district ~~or supervisory union~~, and develop procedures to do so.

(2) Prepare, for adoption by a ~~local~~ the school board, plans to achieve the educational goals and objectives established by the school district.

(3)(A) Nominate a candidate for employment by the school district ~~or supervisory union~~ if the vacant position requires a licensed employee; provided, if the ~~appropriate~~ board declines to hire a candidate, then the superintendent shall nominate a new candidate;

(B) select nonlicensed employees to be employed by the district ~~or supervisory union~~; and

(C) dismiss licensed and nonlicensed employees of a school district ~~or the supervisory union~~ as necessary, subject to all procedural and other protections provided by contract, collective bargaining agreement, or provision of State and federal law.

(4)(A) Provide data and information required by the Secretary and by using a format approved by the Secretary to:

(i) Report budgetary data for the subsequent school year and fiscal year.

(ii) Report all financial operations within the ~~supervisory union district~~ to the Secretary and ~~State Board~~ for the preceding school year on or before August 15 of each year.

(iii) Report all financial operations for ~~each member the~~ school district to the Secretary and State Board for the preceding school year on or before August 15 of each year.

~~(B) Prepare for each district an itemized report detailing the portion of the proposed supervisory union budget for which the district would be assessed for the subsequent school year identifying the component costs by category and explaining the method by which the district's share for each cost was calculated; and provide the report to each district at least 14 days before a budget, including the supervisory union assessment, is voted on by the electorate of the district. [Repealed.]~~

~~(5) Work with the school boards of the member districts to develop and board to implement policies regarding minimum and optimal average class sizes for regular and career technical education classes consistent with section 165 of this title and rules adopted by the Agency. The policies may be supervisory union-wide, may be course or grade-specific, and may reflect differences among school districts due to geography or other factors.~~

(6) Arrange for the provision of the professional training required in subsection 561(b) of this title.

(7) Provide for the general supervision of the public schools in the ~~supervisory union or~~ district.

* * * School Governance * * *

Sec. 10. REPEAL

16 V.S.A. chapter 7 (supervisory unions) is repealed on July 1, 2027.

Sec. 11. NEW UNION SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Vermont school districts and supervisory unions then in effect shall be dissolved on July 1, 2027 and succeeded by five unified union school districts. Not later than 30 days following the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Education shall certify the designation of the newly created school districts pursuant to section 713 of this title.

Sec. 12. 16 V.S.A. § 2 is added to read:

§ 2. MEMBERSHIP OF FIVE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICTS

As of July 1, 2027:

(1) The member districts of the Barre SD, Central Vermont SU, Harwood UUSD, Lamoille North MUUSD, Lamoille South UUSD, Montpelier Roxbury School District, Orange Southwest SU, Orleans Southwest SU, Orleans Southwest SU, Washington Central School District,

and White River Valley School District shall constitute the Winooski Valley UUSD.

(2) The member districts of the Bennington-Rutland SU, Greater Rutland County SU, Mill River UUSD, Rutland City SD, Rutland Northeast UUSD, Slate Valley UUSD, Southwest Vermont UUSD, and Southwest Tech Center shall constitute the Southwest Vermont UUSD.

(3) The member districts of Hartford SD, Mountain Views UUSD, River Valley Tech Center, Springfield SD, Two Rivers SD, Windham Central SU, Windham Northeast SU, Windham Southeast SU, Windham Southwest SU, and Windsor Southeast SU shall constitute the Southeast Vermont UUSD.

(4) The member districts of Caledonia Central SU, Essex North SU, Kingdom East UUSD, North Country SU, Orange East SU, Orleans Central UUSD, and St. Johnsbury SD shall constitute the Northeast Vermont UUSD.

(5) The Addison Central SD, Addison Northwest SD, Burlington SD, Champlain Valley SD, Colchester SD, Essex Westford ECUUSD, Franklin Northeast SU, Franklin West SU, Grand Isle SU, Lincoln School District, Maple Run SD, Milton SD, Franklin Northwest SU, Mount Mansfield SD, Patricia Hanaford Tech Center, South Burlington SD, and Winooski SD shall constitute the Champlain Valley UUSD.

Sec. 13. 16 V.S.A. § 563 is amended to read:

§ 563. POWERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS; FORM OF VOTE

The school board of a school district, in addition to other duties and authority specifically assigned by law:

(1) Shall determine the educational policies of the school district. Board policies shall be of general application to the district and shall be in writing, codified, and made available to the public. Board policies shall be adopted at regular or special school board meetings. A school board shall give public notice of its intent to adopt a board policy, stating the substance of the proposed policy, at least ten days prior to its adoption. A school board may also approve or disapprove rules and regulations proposed by the principal or superintendent for the conduct and management of public schools in the district.

(2) May take any action that is required for the sound administration of the school district. The Secretary, with the advice of the Attorney General, upon application of a school board, shall decide whether any action contemplated or taken by a school board under this subdivision is required for the sound administration of the district and is proper under this subdivision. The Secretary's decision shall be final.

(3) Shall have the possession, care, control, and management of the property of the school district, subject to the authority vested in the electorate or any school district official.

(4) [Repealed.]

(5) Shall keep the school buildings and grounds in good repair, suitably equipped, insured, and in safe and sanitary condition at all times. The school board shall regulate or prohibit firearms or other dangerous or deadly weapons on school premises. At a minimum, a school board shall adopt and implement a policy at least consistent with section 1166 of this title and 13 V.S.A. § 4004, relating to a student who brings a firearm to or possesses a firearm at school.

(6) Shall have discretion to furnish instruction to students who have completed a secondary education and to administer early educational programs.

(7) May relocate or discontinue use of a schoolhouse or facility, subject to the provisions of sections 821 and 822 of this title.

(8) Shall establish and maintain a system for receipt, deposit, disbursement, accounting, control, and reporting procedures that meets the criteria established by the ~~State Board pursuant to subdivision 164(15)~~ Agency pursuant to section 165(g) of this title and that ensures that all payments are lawful and in accordance with a budget adopted or amended by the school board. The school board may authorize a subcommittee, the superintendent of schools, or a designated employee of the school board to examine claims against the district for school expenses and draw orders for the payment of those claims. Such orders shall state definitely the purpose for which they are drawn and shall serve as full authority to the treasurer to make such payments. It shall be lawful for a school board to submit to its treasurer a certified copy of those portions of the board minutes, properly signed by the clerk and chair, or a majority of the board, showing to whom and for what purpose each payment is to be made by the treasurer, and such certified copy shall serve as full authority to the treasurer to make the payments as thus approved.

(9) Shall establish with the advice and consent of the Auditor of Accounts and the Secretary a system of accounts for the proper control and reporting of school district finances and for stating the annual financial condition of the school district.

~~(10) Shall prepare and distribute to the electorate, not less than ten days prior to the district's annual meeting, a report of the conditions and needs of the district school system, including the superintendent's, supervisory union treasurer's, and school district treasurer's annual report for the previous school year and the balance of any reserve funds established pursuant to 24 V.S.A.~~

~~§ 2804. At a school district's annual meeting, the electorate may vote to provide notice of availability of the report required by this subdivision to the electorate in lieu of distributing the report. If the electorate of the school district votes to provide notice of availability, it must specify how notice of availability shall be given, and such notice of availability shall be provided to the electorate at least 30 days before the district's annual or special meeting. [Repealed.]~~

(11)(A) Shall prepare and distribute publish annually a proposed budget for the next school year according to such major categories as may from time to time be prescribed by the Secretary. The board shall hold not fewer than two informational meetings at which the public can comment on the proposed budget.

(B) [Repealed.]

(C) ~~At a school district's annual or special meeting, the electorate may vote to provide notice of availability of the school budget required by this subdivision to the electorate in lieu of distributing the budget. If the electorate of the school district votes to provide notice of availability, it must specify how notice of availability shall be given, and such notice of availability shall be provided to the electorate at least 30 days before the district's annual meeting. The proposed budget shall be prepared and distributed at least ten days before a sum of money is voted on by the electorate. Any proposed budget shall show the following information in a format prescribed by the Secretary:~~

~~(i) all revenues from all sources, and expenses, including as separate items any assessment for a supervisory union of which it is a member and any tuition to be paid to a career technical center; and including the report required in subdivision 242(4)(D) of this title itemizing the component costs of the supervisory union assessment;~~

~~(ii) the specific amount of any deficit incurred in the most recently closed fiscal year and how the deficit was or will be remedied;~~

~~(iii) the anticipated homestead tax rate and the percentage of household income used to determine income sensitivity in the district as a result of passage of the budget, including those portions of the tax rate attributable to supervisory union assessments; and~~

~~(iv) the definition of "education spending," the number of pupils and number of equalized pupils in the school district, and the district's education spending per equalized pupil in the proposed budget and in each of the prior three years. [Repealed.]~~

(D) ~~The board shall present the budget to the voters by means of a ballot in the following form:~~

~~“Article #1 (School Budget):~~

~~Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$ _____, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?~~

~~The _____ District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$ _____, which is _____% higher/lower than per pupil education spending for the current year.”~~
~~[Repealed.]~~

(12) Shall employ such persons as may be required to carry out the work of the school district pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 242(3) of this title.

(13) [Repealed.]

(14) Shall provide, at the expense of the district, subject to the approval of the superintendent, all text books, learning materials, equipment, and supplies.

(15) Shall exercise the general powers given to a legislative branch of a municipality.

(16) May execute contracts on behalf of the school district, including contracts providing for binding arbitration, by its chair or any person designated whose appointment is recorded in the minutes of the board.

(17)-(18) [Repealed.]

(19) Shall allow any high school student who meets the academic requirements of the high school to graduate and receive a diploma in less than four years.

(20) Shall establish policies and procedures designed to avoid the appearance of board member conflict of interest.

(21) Shall have the authority to engage in short-term borrowing to cover the costs of those portions of projects approved by the State Board and that will be reimbursed by the State Board under sections 3447–3456 of this title but which payments will be delayed. However, the board shall borrow under this subdivision only amounts that it would receive if the State Board could fund its obligation and may borrow no earlier than the time it would have received the funds. The State shall not pay for costs of borrowing funds under this subdivision.

(22) May apply for grants and may accept and expend grants or gifts. The board shall include, in its annual report, a description of all grants or gifts accepted during the year and associated expenditures.

(23) May, at the expense of the district, present informational materials to the electorate on any matter to be voted. However, such materials shall be limited to those that are reasonably designed to inform, educate, and explain to the electorate the board's position on the matter.

(24) Shall adopt a policy that, in accordance with rules adopted by the ~~State Board of Education~~ Agency of Education, will integrate home study students into its schools through enrollment in courses, participation in cocurricular and extracurricular activities, and use of facilities.

(25) ~~Shall, if it is a school board of a school district that maintains a secondary school, upon request, award a high school diploma to any Vermont resident who served in the military in World War II, the Korean War, or during the Vietnam era, was honorably separated from active federal military service, and does not hold a high school diploma. The State Board~~ Agency of Education shall develop and make available an application form for veterans who wish to request a high school diploma.

(26) [Repealed.]

(27) Annually, shall inform each secondary student and the student's parents or guardians of the right to opt out of the federal requirement that student contact information be provided to military recruiters or institutions of higher education pursuant to 20 U.S.C. § 7908(a). A school board shall enable the secondary student and the student's parents or guardians to disallow provision of student contact information to either military recruiters or institutions of higher education, while allowing provision of information to the other. ~~For purposes of~~ As used in this subdivision, "secondary student" means a student in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12.

(28) Annually, shall inform students and their parents or guardians of their options for school choice under applicable laws or policy.

(29) Shall assign an employee to annually:

(A) inform parents of students with life-threatening allergies and life-threatening chronic illnesses of applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other applicable federal statutes, State statutes, federal regulations, and State rules;

(B) inform appropriate school staff of their responsibilities; and

(C) provide necessary training to carry out these responsibilities.

(30) May make available school facilities and equipment for specified public purposes if such purposes appear, in the judgment of the board, to be in the best interests of the district and are an efficient, economical, and appropriate use of the facilities and equipment.

(31) Subject to the requirements of section 571 of this title, may enter into contracts with other school boards to provide joint programs, services, facilities, and professional or other staff.

(32) May enter into a contract or contracts with a school offering a distance learning program that is approved by one or more accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or is approved in Vermont pursuant to subdivision 166(b)(6) of this title.

(33) Establish a district-wide curriculum. The curriculum shall meet the requirements adopted by the Agency of Education under subdivision 165(a)(3)(B) of this title.

(34) Assist each school in the district to follow the curriculum as adopted under the requirements of the Agency of Education pursuant to subdivision 165(a)(3)(B) of this title.

(35) In accordance with criteria established by the Agency of Education establish and implement a plan for receiving and disbursing federal and State funds distributed by the Agency of Education, including funds awarded under P.L. 89-10, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended.

(36) Provide professional development programs or arrange for the provision of them, or both, for teachers, administrators, and staff within the district, which may include programs offered solely to one school or other component of the entire district to meet the specific needs or interests of that component; a district has the discretion to provide financial assistance outside the negotiated agreements for teachers' professional development activities.

(37) Provide special education services to resident students and compensatory and remedial services and provide or coordinate the provision of other educational services as directed by the Agency.

(38) Employ a person or persons qualified to provide financial and student data management services.

(39) Provide the following services in a manner that promotes the efficient use of financial and human resources:

(A) manage a system to procure and distribute goods and operational services;

(B) manage construction projects;

(C) provide financial and student data management services, including grant writing and fundraising as requested;

(D) negotiate with teachers and administrators, pursuant to chapter 57 of this title, and with other school personnel, pursuant to 21 V.S.A. chapter 22;

(E) provide transportation or arrange for the provision of transportation, or both, to schools within the district, consistent with rules adopted by the Agency of Education; and

(F) provide human resources management support.

(40) Adopt district-wide truancy policies consistent with the model protocols developed by the Secretary.

* * * Transition to New Districts * * *

Sec. 14. 16 V.S.A. chapter 11 is amended to read:

Chapter 11. Union School Districts

§ 702. DEFINITIONS

(3) “Forming districts” means all school districts, including union school districts, that are located within the geographical boundaries of a proposed or voter-approved union school district, or districts that are named by the General Assembly to be merged into a new union district on July 1, 2027, prior to the operational date of the union school district, which will potentially merge or have merged to form the new union school district.

(15) “New union district” shall refer to a school district created by the General Assembly that shall assume operations on July 1, 2027.

§ 706. PROPOSAL TO FORM STUDY COMMITTEE; BUDGET AND

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2027–2028

~~(a) Establishment of committee. When the boards of two or more school districts vote to establish a study committee to study the advisability of forming a union school district or are petitioned to do so by at least five percent of voters in the school district, the boards shall meet with the superintendent or superintendents of each school district. With the advice of the superintendent or superintendents, the boards shall establish a budget for~~

~~the study committee's work and shall determine the number of persons to serve on the study committee pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.~~

~~(b) Budget and membership. Each participating school district's share of the established budget and membership on the study committee shall be the same as the proportion of the school district's equalized pupils to the total equalized pupils of all school districts intending to participate formally in the study committee. As used in this subsection, "equalized pupils" has the same meaning as in section 4001 of this title.~~

~~(c) Existing union school districts.~~

~~(1) Existing union elementary or union high school district; proposed unified union school district. If the board of an existing union elementary or union high school district votes to participate in a study committee to consider formation of a unified union school district, or is petitioned by the voters to do so, then:~~

~~(A) The interests of the existing union school district shall be represented by its member districts on the study committee.~~

~~(B) Any warning and vote on the study committee budget pursuant to section 707 of this chapter and the warning and vote on any resulting proposal to form a unified union school district pursuant to section 710 shall be at the member district level.~~

~~(C) If the existing union school district does not have any member districts because all towns for which it is organized are members of both a union elementary school district and a union high school district, then the existing union school district shall represent its own interests on the study committee, and the towns within it shall not participate on its behalf.~~

~~(D) If a town is a member of both a union elementary school district and a union high school district, is not independently organized as a district that is responsible for the education of students in any grade, and does not have a town school district board, then notwithstanding other provisions to the contrary:~~

~~(i) To the extent possible, the boards of the union elementary and union high school districts of which the town is a member shall make a reasonable attempt, jointly, to appoint a member to the study committee who resides in the town.~~

~~(ii) The legislative body or appropriate officer of the town shall perform electoral functions, including warning meetings and conducting the voting process, ordinarily performed by and in member districts on behalf of a union school district.~~

~~(2) Existing unified union school district; proposed unified union school district. If the board of a unified union school district votes to participate in a study committee to consider formation of a new unified union school district rather than the enlargement of the existing unified union school district pursuant to section 721 (joining an existing union school district) of this chapter, or is petitioned by the voters to do so, then:~~

~~(A) The existing unified union school district shall represent its own interests on the study committee, and the towns within it shall not participate on its behalf.~~

~~(B) To the extent possible, the board of the existing unified union school district shall make a reasonable attempt to appoint members to the study committee who reside in each town within the district.~~

~~(C) Any warning and vote on the study committee budget pursuant to section 707 of this chapter and the warning and vote of the electorate on any resulting proposal to form a new unified union school district pursuant to section 710 shall proceed pursuant to the provisions for commingled Australian ballot voting as set forth in subchapter 3 (unified union school districts) of this chapter.~~

~~(3) Existing union elementary or union high school district; proposed union elementary or union high school district. If the board of an existing union elementary or union high school district votes to participate in a study committee to consider formation of a new union elementary or union high school district rather than enlarging the existing union school district pursuant to section 721 (joining an existing union school district) of this chapter, or is petitioned by the voters to do so, then:~~

~~(A) The existing union school district shall represent its own interests on the study committee, and the member districts of the existing union school district shall not participate on its behalf.~~

~~(B) To the extent possible, the board of the existing union school district shall make a reasonable attempt to appoint members to the study committee who reside in each of the member districts within the existing union school district.~~

~~(C) Any warning and vote on the study committee budget pursuant to section 707 of this chapter and the warning and vote of the electorate on any resulting proposal to form a new union elementary or union high school district pursuant to section 710 of this chapter shall proceed pursuant to the provisions for commingled Australian ballot voting as set forth in subchapter 4 (union elementary and union high school districts) of this chapter.~~

In academic year 2027–2028, each student in the new union district will attend the school that a student residing in that town would have attended in academic year 2026–2027; provided, however, that the superintendent may grant a parent’s or guardian’s request for student enrollment in a different school operated by the new union district based on individual student circumstances and the superintendent’s determination of the school’s capacity to serve the child. Additionally, the superintendent may adjust student attendance locations to respond to unforeseen circumstances, such as facilities failures.

§ 707. APPROVAL OF STUDY BUDGET; APPOINTMENT OF STUDY COMMITTEE; PARTICIPATION FINANCES

(a) Proposed budget exceeding \$50,000.00.

(1) If the proposed budget established in section 706 of this chapter exceeds \$50,000.00, then subject to the provisions of that section the board of each potentially participating school district shall warn the district’s voters to meet at an annual or special school district meeting to vote whether to appropriate funds necessary to support the district’s financial share of a study committee’s costs. The meeting in each school district shall be warned for the same date. The warning in each school district shall contain an identical article in substantially the following form:

Shall the school district of _____ appropriate funds necessary to support the school district’s financial share of a study to determine the advisability of forming a union school district with some or all of the following school districts:
 _____,
 _____, _____ and
 _____? It is estimated that the
 _____ school district’s share, if all
 of the identified school districts vote to participate, will be
 \$ _____. The total proposed budget,
 to be shared by all participating school districts is
 \$ _____.”

(2) If the vote in subdivision (1) of this subsection is in the affirmative in two or more school districts, then the boards of the affirming school districts shall appoint a study committee consisting of the number of persons determined pursuant to section 706 (proposed study committee budget and membership) of this chapter. At least one current board member from each participating school district shall be appointed to the study committee. The board of a school district appointing more than one person to the study

committee may appoint residents of the school district who are not members of the board to any of the remaining seats.

~~(3) The sums expended for study purposes under this section shall be considered part of the approved cost of any project in which the union school district, if created, participates pursuant to chapter 123 of this title. Indebtedness, including capital debt. The new union district shall assume all indebtedness that may exist on June 30, 2027, including capital debt and including both principal and interest, of the forming districts.~~

~~(b) Proposed budget not exceeding \$50,000.00.~~

~~(1) If the proposed budget established in section 706 of this chapter does not exceed \$50,000.00, then the boards of the participating school districts shall appoint a study committee consisting of the number of persons determined under that section. At least one current board member from each participating school district shall be appointed to the study committee. The board of a school district appointing more than one person to the study committee may appoint residents of the school district who are not members of the board to any of the remaining seats.~~

~~(2) The sums expended for study purposes under this section shall be considered part of the approved cost of any project in which the union school district, if created, participates pursuant to chapter 123 of this title. Operating fund surpluses. The new union district shall assume all operating surpluses, deficits, and fund balances of the forming districts that may exist at the close of business on June 30, 2027.~~

~~(c) Additional costs.~~

~~(1) If the voters approve a budget that exceeds \$50,000.00 but the study committee later determines that its budget is likely to exceed the projected, voter-approved amount, then the boards of all participating school districts shall obtain voter approval for the amounts exceeding the previously approved budget in the manner set forth in subdivision (a)(1) of this section before the study committee obligates or expends sums in excess of the initial voter-approved amount.~~

~~(2) If a proposed budget does not exceed \$50,000.00 at the time the school boards appoint members to the study committee, but the study committee later determines that its total budget is likely to exceed \$50,000.00, then the boards of all participating school districts shall obtain voter approval for the amounts exceeding \$50,000.00 in the manner set forth in subdivision (a)(1) of this section before the study committee obligates or expends funds in excess of \$50,000.00. Reserve funds. The new union district shall apply any reserve~~

fund for the fund's specific purpose, if identified, unless otherwise determined through appropriate legal procedures.

(d) Grants. Costs to be paid by State, federal, or private grants shall not be included when calculating whether a study committee's budget or proposed budget exceeds \$50,000.00. Transfer of debt and funds. The forming districts shall transfer the debt and funds specified in this section to the new union district on or before June 30, 2027 in accordance with procedures and timelines established by the new union district board.

(e) Subsequent appointments of persons to the study committee; vacancy:

(1) Subject to the requirement that each school board appoint at least one current member of the board, the board of a participating school district shall appoint a person residing in the school district to the study committee if one of the school district's seats is vacant because a study committee member:

(A) is no longer a member of the school district's board and was the sole board member appointed by that school district;

(B) has resigned from or is no longer able to serve on the study committee; or

(C) has not attended three consecutive study committee meetings without providing notice to the study committee chair of the reason for each absence and obtaining a determination of the study committee members that the absences were reasonable.

(2) Notice under subdivision (1)(C) of this subsection shall be given in advance of absences whenever possible. [Repealed.]

(f) Formal participation in study committee:

(1) A school district shall not be a formal participant in and appoint members to more than one study committee created under this chapter at any one point in time.

(2) A school district shall not formally withdraw its participation in an existing study committee after the school district has appointed members to that committee until the study committee dissolves pursuant to subsection 708(e) of this chapter. [Repealed.]

(g) Additional formal participants:

(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (f) of this section, a school district may join as an additional formal participant in a study committee after creation of the committee if:

~~(A) — the school district's board has requested the committee's approval to participate after either a vote of the school district's board or a petition by five percent of the school district's voters and if the study committee votes to approve formal participation by the district; or~~

~~(B) — the study committee has voted to ask the school district to participate formally and either the board of the school district votes to approve formal participation or is petitioned by five percent of the school district's voters to do so.~~

~~(2) A school district that becomes a formal participant in an existing study committee pursuant to this subsection is subject to the provisions of section 706 (proposed study committee budget and membership) of this chapter regarding financial and representational proportionality and to all other requirements of study committees set out in this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

~~(h) Informal participation by other school districts.~~

~~(1) The board of a school district that is not a formal participant in an existing study committee may authorize one or more of the board's members to contact the study committee to discuss whether it may be advisable to include the school district within a proposal to form a new union school district as an "advisable" district, as described in section 708 (necessary and advisable districts) of this chapter.~~

~~(2) An existing study committee may authorize one or more of its members to contact the board of one or more additional school districts that are not formal participants in the committee to discuss whether it may be advisable to include the school district within a proposal to form a new union school district as an "advisable" district.~~

~~(3) An existing study committee may invite representatives of a nonparticipating school district's board to participate informally in the study committee's deliberations.~~

~~(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the board of a school district from authorizing informal exploration between and among the boards of school districts prior to the formation of a study committee. [Repealed.]~~

§ 708. STUDY COMMITTEE; NECESSARY AND ADVISABLE

~~DISTRICTS; CONTENTS OF STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT AND
PROPOSED ARTICLES; DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEE REAL
AND PERSONAL PROPERTY~~

~~(a) Study committee; process.~~

~~(1) The superintendent shall convene a study committee's first meeting when the committee's members are appointed. If the participating districts are members of more than one supervisory union, then the superintendents shall decide which of their number shall convene the meeting. The study committee members shall elect a chair who shall notify the Secretary in writing of the committee's creation and the chair's election within 30 days following the vote of the committee's creation.~~

~~(2) Staff of the supervisory union or unions shall provide administrative assistance to the study committee.~~

~~(3) The Secretary shall cooperate with the study committee and is authorized to make Agency staff available to provide technical assistance to the committee.~~

~~(4) The study committee is a public body pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 310(4) and is subject to the requirements of 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.~~

~~(5) Although a study committee should try to achieve consensus, committee decisions shall be reached by a majority of all committee members present and voting. Transfer of property to the new union district. Not later than June 30, 2027, the forming districts shall convey to the new union district, for the sum of one dollar and other good and valuable consideration, and subject to the encumbrances of record, all of their school-related real and personal property, including all land, buildings, and contents.~~

~~(b) Necessary and advisable school districts. If a study committee decides to recommend formation of a union school district, then it shall determine whether each school district included in the recommended formation is "necessary" or "advisable" to formation.~~

~~(1) "Necessary" school district.~~

~~(A) The study committee shall identify a school district as "necessary" to formation of the union school district only if the school district is a formal participant in the study committee.~~

~~(B) Subject to the provisions of subsection 706(c) of this chapter, the school board of a "necessary" school district is required to warn a vote of the electorate under sections 710 (vote to form union school district) and 711 (initial members of union school district board election) of this chapter.~~

~~(C) A proposed union school district is formed only if the voters voting in each "necessary" school district vote to approve formation.~~

~~(2) "Advisable" school district.~~

~~(A) The study committee may identify any school district as “advisable” to formation of the union school district even if the school district is not a formal participant in the study committee.~~

~~(B) The school board of an “advisable” school district is not required to warn a vote of the electorate under sections 710 (vote to form union school district) and 711 (initial members of union school district board election) of this chapter, except upon application of 10 percent of the voters in the school district.~~

~~(C) Voter approval in an “advisable” district is not required for formation of a new union school district.~~

~~(3) Existing union elementary or union high school district. Notwithstanding other provisions of this subsection, an existing union elementary or union high school district is “necessary” to the formation of a unified union school district even though its interests are represented by its member districts pursuant to subdivision 706(e)(1) (study committee budget and membership for existing union school districts) of this chapter. Subsequent sale of real property to town in which it is located, in any year in the future. Subject to any provision of law relating to duties of the new union district and to the sale of buildings in this title or any other title of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, if the new union district board determines, in its discretion, that the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by one or more of the forming districts will not be used for direct delivery of education in at least one grade or for any other purpose related to operation of the new union district, then the new union district shall offer for sale such real property to the town in which the real property is located, for the sum of one dollar, subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption or payment of all outstanding bonds and notes, and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants required by State law. The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the town owning and using the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. If the town elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, then the town shall compensate the new union district for all capital improvements and renovations initiated after July 1, 2027 and prior to the sale to the town. If a town elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, then the new union district shall sell the property pursuant to State law and upon such terms and conditions as established by the new union district board.~~

~~(c) Proposal to form union school district; report and proposed articles of agreement. If a study committee determines that it is advisable to propose formation of a union school district, then it shall prepare a report analyzing the strengths and challenges of the current structures of all “necessary” and~~

~~“advisable” school districts and outlining the ways in which a union school district promotes the State policy set forth in section 701 of this chapter. The study committee shall also prepare proposed articles of agreement that, if approved pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, shall serve as the operating agreement for the new union school district. At a minimum, articles of agreement shall state:~~

~~(1) The name of any school district the study committee considers “necessary” to formation of the proposed union school district.~~

~~(2) The name of any school district the study committee considers “advisable” to include in the proposed union school district.~~

~~(3) The legal name or temporary legal name by which the union school district shall be known.~~

~~(4) The grades, if any, that the proposed union school district will operate and the grades, if any, for which it will pay tuition.~~

~~(5) The cost and general location of any proposed new school buildings to be constructed and the cost and general description of any proposed renovations to existing school buildings.~~

~~(6) A plan for the first year of the union school district’s operation for transportation of students, assignment of staff, and use of curriculum that is consistent with existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other provisions of law. The board of the union school district, if formed, shall make all subsequent decisions regarding transportation, staff, and curriculum subject to existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other provisions of law.~~

~~(7) A list of the indebtedness of each “necessary” and “advisable” district, which the union school district shall assume.~~

~~(8) The specific pieces of real property of each “necessary” and “advisable” district that the union school district shall acquire, their valuation, and how the union school district shall pay for them.~~

~~(9) Consistent with the proportional representation requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, the method or methods of apportioning representation on the union school district board as set forth in subsections 711(d) (unified union school district), (e) (union elementary or union high school district), and (f) (weighted voting) of this chapter.~~

~~(10) The term of office for each member initially elected to the union school district board, to be arranged so that one-third expire on the day of the second annual meeting of the union school district, one-third on the day of the~~

third annual meeting, and one-third on the day of the fourth annual meeting, or as near to that proportion as possible.

~~(11) The date on which the proposal to create the union school district and the election of initial union school district board members will be submitted to the voters.~~

~~(12) The date on which the union school district will be solely responsible for the education of its resident students in the grades for which it is organized and will begin operating any schools, paying any tuition, and providing educational services.~~

~~(13) Whether the election of board members, election of school district officers, votes on the union school district budget, or votes on other public questions, or any two or more of these, shall be by Australian ballot.~~

~~(14) Any other matters that the study committee considers pertinent. Subsequent sale of real property conveyed by forming district that was a union school district, in any year in the future. Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section and any other provision of law to the contrary, if the new union district board determines, in its discretion, that the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by a forming district that was a union school district on June 30, 2027 will not be used for direct delivery of education in at least one grade or for any other purpose related to operation of the new union district, then the new union district shall sell the property pursuant to State law and upon such terms and conditions as are established by the new union district board.~~

~~(d) No proposal to form a union school district. If a study committee determines that it is inadvisable to propose formation of a union school district, then its members shall vote to dissolve the committee. If the study committee members vote to dissolve, then the chair shall notify the Secretary in writing of the vote. [Repealed.]~~

~~(e) Dissolution of study committee.~~

~~(1) If a study committee proposes formation of a union school district pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, then the committee shall cease to exist when the clerk of each school district voting on a proposal to establish the union school district has certified the results of the vote to the Secretary pursuant to subsection 713(a) of this chapter.~~

~~(2) If a study committee determines that it is inadvisable to propose formation of a union school district, then the committee shall cease to exist when the chair notifies the Secretary of the committee's vote pursuant to subsection (d) of this section. [Repealed.]~~

§ 709. ~~REVIEW BY LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARDS;~~
~~CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL BY STATE BOARD OF~~
~~EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION, EMPLOYEES, AND~~
~~CONTRACTS IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2027–2028~~

(a) ~~If a study committee determines that it is advisable to propose formation of a union school district, then the committee shall transmit its report and proposed articles of agreement to the school board of each school district that the report identifies as either “necessary” or “advisable” to formation of the proposed union school district. Each board may review the report and proposed articles and may provide its comments to the study committee. The study committee has sole authority to determine the contents of the report and proposed articles and to decide whether to submit them to the State Board under subsection (b) of this section. In academic year 2027–2028, the new union district shall provide for the transportation of students, assignment of staff, and implementation of curriculum in a manner that is consistent with the contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and provisions of law that are in effect during that academic year.~~

(b) ~~If a study committee determines that it is advisable to propose formation of a union school district, then the committee shall transmit the report and proposed articles of agreement to the Secretary who shall submit them with recommendations to the State Board. The new union district, through its board, shall comply with chapter 53, subchapter 3 of this title, regarding recognition of the representatives of employees of the respective forming districts, as the representatives of the employees of the new union district, and shall commence negotiations pursuant to chapter 57 of this title for teachers and 21 V.S.A. chapter 22 for other employees. In the absence of new collective bargaining agreements on July 1, 2027, the new union district shall comply with the pre-existing master agreements pursuant to chapter 53, subchapter 3 of this title.~~

(c)(1) ~~The State Board:~~

(A) ~~shall consider the study committee’s report and proposed articles of agreement and the Secretary’s recommendations;~~

(B) ~~shall provide the study committee an opportunity to be heard;~~

(C) ~~may ask the Secretary or the study committee, or both, to make further investigation and may consider any other information the State Board deems to be pertinent; and~~

(D) ~~may request that the study committee amend the report or the proposed articles of agreement, or both.~~

~~(2) If the State Board finds that formation of the proposed union school district is in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts, and aligns with the policy set forth in section 701 of this title, then it shall approve the study committee's report and proposed articles of agreement, together with any amendments, as the final report and proposed articles of agreement, and shall give notice of its action to the study committee. The new union district shall honor all individual employment contracts that are in place in the forming districts on June 30, 2027 until their respective termination dates; provided, however, that if a forming district enters into the contract on or after May 1, 2025, then this subsection shall apply only if the contract expires on or before July 1, 2029.~~

~~(d) The chair of the study committee shall file a copy of the approved final report and proposed articles of agreement with the clerk of each school district identified as "necessary" or "advisable" at least 30 days prior to the vote of the electorate on whether to form the union school district. [Repealed.]~~

~~§ 710. VOTE TO FORM UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSITIONAL
BOARD~~

~~Subject to the provisions of subsections 706(c) (proposal to form study committee; existing union school districts) and 708(b) (study committee; necessary and advisable districts) of this chapter, the voters of each school district identified as "necessary" or "advisable" shall vote whether to form the proposed union school district, as follows:~~

~~(1) The vote shall be held on the date specified in the final report.~~

~~(2) The vote shall be by Australian ballot.~~

~~(3) The vote shall be at separate school district meetings held on the same day.~~

~~(4) The opportunity for early and absentee voting pursuant to 17 V.S.A. §§ 2531-2550 shall be provided.~~

~~(5) The board of each school district voting on the proposal shall warn the vote either as a special meeting of the school district or as part of its annual meeting.~~

~~(a) Creation of transitional board; term of existence. Until the voters of the new union district elect the members of the initial board of directors as set forth in section 711 of this title, and those members are sworn in and assume their duties, the individuals serving on December 15, 2025 on the boards of the forming districts identified in section 2 of this title, including the board of any forming district that is a union school district on that date, shall designate one of their members to serve on a transitional board of directors for the new union~~

district (transitional board). The transitional board shall be comprised of the designee from each forming district.

(b) Initial meeting of transitional board. The superintendent of the supervisory union of which a majority of the forming districts are members shall convene the first meeting of the transitional board to occur no later than January 10, 2026. The agenda for this first meeting of the transitional board shall include the election by the transitional board members of one of their members to serve as chair of the transitional board and one of their members to serve as clerk of the transitional board.

(c) Purpose and authority of transitional board. During the period of its existence, the transitional board shall serve as the new union district's school board and shall perform all functions required of and have all authority granted to the transitional board in this chapter and the new union district board in this title and otherwise by law.

(d) Specific duties of transitional board.

(1) In addition to any responsibilities of the new union district board that can, should, or must be performed before the initial members of that board are elected and assume office, the transitional board shall perform the following functions:

(A) prepare a draft of the proposed fiscal year 2028 budget of the new union district, which the transitional board shall provide to the new union district board for consideration at the first meeting of the new union district board; and

(B) prepare a short list of superintendent candidates.

(2) With respect to the transitional board's duties in this section, the transitional board shall have the assistance of the Agency of Education, including dedicated resources to be paid by transitional funds set aside by the Agency for these purposes.

§ 711. VOTE TO ELECT INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD

~~(a) Election of initial members of union school district board. At the meeting warned to vote on formation of a union school district under section 710 of this chapter, the voters shall also elect the initial members who will serve on the board of the union school district if the voters approve the district's formation.~~

~~(1) The vote to elect the initial members shall be by Australian ballot.~~

~~(2) The opportunity for early and absentee voting pursuant to 17 V.S.A. §§ 2531–2550 shall be provided. Representation on new union district board. The new union district board shall be composed of five individuals elected from the district. The members shall be elected pursuant to proportionate voting districts. Petitions for candidates for initial school district board membership shall be submitted on the same timeline and in the same manner as candidates for the General Assembly. Elections for school board shall be held on general election day 2026. Each new union district board member shall serve for a period of four years or until his or her successor is elected and qualified, as required by State law.~~

~~(b) Representation and term length. Initial membership on a union school district board shall be pursuant to the method of representation set forth in the articles of agreement, for the terms specified in that document, and pursuant to the provisions of this section and subdivisions 708(e)(9) and (10) (study committee; proposed articles of agreement; apportionment and terms) of this chapter. Swearing-in and assumption of duties. Within 14 days after the initial board members are elected, the transitional board shall provide for a meeting of the initial board members. Prior to the date of the meeting, newly elected members shall be sworn in by a town clerk within the boundaries of the district and shall assume office upon being sworn in.~~

~~(c) Operational definitions. As used in subsections (d) and (e) of this section, any term not defined in section 702 of this chapter shall have its plain meaning, except as provided in this subsection.~~

~~(1) If, pursuant to section 425 (other town school district officers) of this title, the voters of a school district have elected a district clerk who is not also the clerk of the town served by the school district, then “town clerk” means the elected clerk of that school district.~~

~~(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, if a potential forming district is an existing unified union school district, then:~~

~~(A) Reference to the voters of the “school district” means the voters of each town within the existing unified union school district, who shall vote at a location in their town of residence that is identified in the warning issued by the existing unified union school district; provided, however, that the total of all votes cast in the towns shall determine the modified at-large and at-large election of initial board members pursuant to subdivisions (d)(2) (proposed unified union district; modified at-large), (d)(3) (proposed union district; at-large), (e)(2) (proposed union elementary or union high school district; modified at-large), and (e)(3) (proposed union elementary or union high school district; at-large) of this section, as well as whether the existing unified union school district approves formation of the new unified union school district.~~

~~(B) “Town clerk” means the clerk of each town within the existing unified union school district; provided, however, that the town clerk of each town shall transmit the name of each duly nominated candidate to the clerk of the existing unified union school district, who shall prepare the unified union school district ballot for that town and transmit the ballot to the town clerk to make available to the voters.~~

~~(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) (clerk of school district) of this subsection, if a town is a member of both a union elementary school district and a union high school district, is not independently organized as a district that is responsible for the education of students in any grade, and does not have a town school district board, then:~~

~~(A) reference to the voters of the “school district” means the voters of the town that is the member of both existing union school districts, who shall vote at a location in their town of residence that is identified in the warning issued by:~~

~~(i) the existing union elementary school district if the voters are voting on a proposed unified union school district or a proposed union elementary school district; or~~

~~(ii) the existing union high school district if the voters are voting on a proposed union high school district; and~~

~~(B) “town clerk” means the clerk of the town that is a member of both existing union school districts; provided, however, that the town clerk shall transmit the name of each duly nominated candidate to the clerk of the union school district identified in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), who shall prepare the ballot for that town and transmit the ballot to the town clerk to make available to the voters. First meeting. At the first meeting of initial members of the new union district board:~~

~~(1) The members shall elect a chair of the board and clerk of the board.~~

~~(2) The members of the former transitional board shall present the draft fiscal year 2028 budget to the new union district board together with any supporting data or other documentation.~~

~~(3) The members of the former transitional board shall present a summary of hiring actions and recommendations for the position of superintendent for the district.~~

~~(d) Proposed unified union school district. Subject to the provisions of subsections 706(c) (existing union school districts) and 708(b) (necessary and advisable school districts) of this chapter, the voters of each school district~~

~~identified as “necessary” or “advisable” shall vote whether to elect initial board members of a proposed unified union school district, as follows:~~

~~(1) Proportional to town population. When representation on the board of a proposed unified union school district is apportioned to each potential town within the proposed district in a number that is closely proportional to the town’s relative population:~~

~~(A) Voters of each school district identified as either “necessary” or “advisable” to formation of the proposed unified union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of unified union school district board member based on town population. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of the town;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 30 voters residing in the town or one percent of the legal voters in the town, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the voters file the petition with the town clerk of the town in which the candidate resides not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate’s name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) The town clerk shall place the name of each duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the school district.~~

~~(C) The voters of the school district for the town in which the candidate resides shall elect as many board members to the unified union school board as are apportioned based on the town’s population.~~

~~(2) Modified at-large model: allocation to town; at-large representation. When representation on the board of a proposed unified union school district is allocated to each potential town within the proposed district, but the allocation is not closely proportional to the town’s relative population and the board member is elected at-large:~~

~~(A) Voters of each school district identified as either “necessary” or “advisable” to formation of the proposed unified union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of unified union school district board member allocated to the voters’ town. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of the town;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 30 voters residing in the town or one percent of the legal voters in the town, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the voters file the petition with the town clerk of the town in which the candidate resides not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) Upon receipt of a petition for a unified union school district board member allocated to a potential town within the proposed district but to be elected at-large under the modified at-large model, the town clerk shall place the name of the duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the school district and shall notify the town clerks preparing the ballots for the voters of each of the other "necessary" school districts and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed unified union school district to place the candidate's name on the ballot presented to the voters in those districts. Alternatively, at their discretion, the town clerks may meet jointly to prepare a uniform ballot.~~

~~(C) The voters of each "necessary" school district and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed unified union school district shall vote for the board members to be elected at-large under the modified at-large model; provided, however, that ballots shall be included in the calculation of total votes cast pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 714(a)(2) (calculation of votes) of this chapter.~~

~~(3) At-large representation. When representation on the board of a proposed unified union school district is not apportioned or allocated to the potential towns within the proposed district pursuant to subdivision (1) (proportional to town population) or (2) (modified at-large) of this subsection and the board member is elected at-large:~~

~~(A) The voters of one or more school districts identified as "necessary" to formation of the proposed unified union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of unified union school district board member at-large. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of a school district identified as "necessary" to the formation of the proposed union school district;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 60 voters residing in one or more school districts identified as “necessary” to the formation of the proposed unified union school district or one percent of the legal voters residing in the combined “necessary” school districts that would form the proposed unified union school district, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the voters file the petition with the town clerk in the “necessary” school district in which the candidate resides not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate’s name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) Upon receipt of a petition for a unified union school district board member elected at-large, the town clerk shall place the name of the duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the school district and shall notify the town clerks preparing the ballots for the voters of each of the other “necessary” school districts and of each “advisable” school district voting on formation of the proposed unified union school district to place the candidate’s name on the ballot presented to the voters in those districts. Alternatively, at their discretion, the town clerks may meet jointly to prepare a uniform ballot.~~

~~(C) The voters of each “necessary” school district and of each “advisable” school district voting on formation of the proposed unified union school district shall vote for the members to be elected at-large; provided, however, that ballots shall be included in the calculation of total votes cast pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 714(a)(2) (calculation of votes) of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

~~(c) Proposed union elementary or union high school district. Subject to the provisions of subsections 706(c) (existing union school districts) and 708(b) (necessary and advisable school districts) of this chapter, the voters of each school district identified as “necessary” or “advisable” shall vote whether to elect initial board members of the proposed union school district, as follows:~~

~~(1) Proportional to town population. When representation on the board of a proposed union elementary or union high school district is apportioned to each potential member district of the proposed district in a number that is closely proportional to the potential member district’s relative population:~~

~~(A) Voters of each school district identified as either “necessary” or “advisable” to formation of the proposed union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of union school district board member representing the potential member district. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of the potential member district;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 30 voters residing in the potential member district or one percent of the legal voters in the district, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the petition is filed with the town clerk not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) The town clerk shall place the name of each duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the potential member district.~~

~~(C) The voters of the district shall elect as many board members as are apportioned to the potential member district based on population.~~

~~(2) Modified at-large model: allocation to town; at-large representation. When representation on the board of a proposed union elementary or union high school district is allocated to each potential member district, but the allocation is not closely proportional to the potential member district's relative population and the board member is elected at-large:~~

~~(A) Voters of each school district identified as either "necessary" or "advisable" to formation of the proposed union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of union school district board member allocated to the potential member district. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of the potential member district;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 30 voters residing in the potential member district or one percent of the legal voters in the district, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the petition is filed with the town clerk of the school district in which the candidate resides not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) Upon receipt of a petition for union school district board member allocated to a potential member district but to be elected at-large under the modified at-large mode, the town clerk shall place the name of the duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the potential member district and shall notify the town clerks preparing the ballots for the voters of each of the other "necessary" school districts and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed union school district to place the candidate's name on the ballot presented to the voters in those districts. Alternatively, at their discretion, the town clerks may meet jointly to prepare a uniform ballot.~~

~~(C) The voters of each "necessary" school district and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed unified union school district shall vote for the board members to be elected at-large under the modified at-large model; provided, however, that ballots shall be included in the calculation of total votes cast pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 714(a)(2) (calculation of votes) of this chapter.~~

~~(3) At-large representation. When representation on the board of a proposed union elementary or union high school district board is not apportioned or allocated to the potential member districts pursuant to subdivision (1) (proportional to town population) or (2) (modified at large) of this subsection and the board member is elected at-large:~~

~~(A) The voters of one or more school districts identified as "necessary" to the formation of the proposed union school district shall file a petition nominating a candidate for the office of union school district board member at-large. A petition shall be valid only if:~~

~~(i) the candidate is a current voter of a school district identified as "necessary" to the formation of the proposed union school district;~~

~~(ii) the petition identifies the term of office for which the candidate is nominated;~~

~~(iii) the petition is signed by at least 60 voters residing in one or more school districts identified as "necessary" to the formation of the proposed union school district or one percent of the legal voters residing in the combined "necessary" school districts that would form the proposed union school district, whichever is less;~~

~~(iv) the petition is filed with the town clerk in the "necessary" school district in which the candidate resides not later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election; and~~

~~(v) the candidate files with the town clerk a written consent to the printing of the candidate's name on the ballot.~~

~~(B) Upon receipt of a petition for a union school district board member to be elected at-large, the town clerk shall place the name of the duly nominated candidate on the ballot to be presented to the voters of the school district and shall notify the town clerks preparing the ballots for the voters of each of the other "necessary" school districts and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed union school district to place the candidate's name on the ballot presented to the voters in those districts. Alternatively, at their discretion, the town clerks may meet jointly to prepare a uniform ballot.~~

~~(C) The voters of each "necessary" school district and of each "advisable" school district voting on formation of the proposed union school district shall vote for the board members to be elected at-large; provided, however, that ballots shall be included in the calculation of total votes cast pursuant to the provisions of subdivision 714(a)(2) (calculation of votes) of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

~~(f) Weighted voting. If representation on a union school district board is apportioned based upon population pursuant to subdivision (d)(1) or (e)(1) of this section, then the union school district may achieve proportionality through a system of weighted voting. [Repealed.]~~

~~§ 712. CONTENTS OF WARNING ON VOTES TO ESTABLISH THE
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ELECT THE INITIAL
MEMBERS OF THE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD
PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED FISCAL
YEAR 2028 BUDGET~~

~~The warning for each school district meeting to vote on formation of a union school district shall contain two articles in substantially the following form. The language used in Article I shall be the same for each "necessary" and "advisable" district voting on formation of the new district. Article II of the warning shall not include names of candidates for the union school district board.~~

~~WARNING~~

~~The _____ voters _____ of _____ the

_____ School District are hereby notified and warned to meet at
_____ on the _____ day of _____~~

_____, 20_____, to vote by Australian ballot between the hours of _____, at which time the polls will open, and _____, at which time the polls will close, upon the following articles of business:

Article I. FORMATION OF UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Shall _____ the

_____ School District, which the proposed articles of agreement have identified as [“necessary” or “advisable”] to the formation of the proposed union school district, join with the school district[s] of _____ and _____, which are identified as “necessary” to formation, and potentially the school district[s] of _____ and _____, which are identified as “advisable” to formation, for the purpose of forming a union school district, as provided in Title 16, Vermont Statutes Annotated, upon the following conditions and agreements:

- (a) Grades. The union school district shall be organized to provide for the education of resident students in grades _____ through _____ and shall assume full and sole responsibility therefor on July 1, 20_____.
- (b) Operation of schools. The union school district shall operate and manage one or more schools offering instruction in grades _____ through _____. [Amend as necessary if the district will pay tuition for any or all grades for which it is organized.]
- (c) Union school district board. [State method by which representation of each member of the union school board is to be determined pursuant to section 711 (vote to elect initial members) of this chapter.]
- (d) Assumption of debts and ownership of school property. The union school district shall assume the indebtedness of forming districts, acquire the school properties of the forming districts, and pay for them, all as specified in the final report and proposed articles of agreement.
- (e) Final report. The provisions of the final report and proposed articles of agreement approved by the State Board of Education on the _____ day of _____, 20_____, which is on file in the office of the clerk of each school district named in this warning, shall govern the union school district.

Article II. ELECTION OF INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE UNION
SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD

To elect a total of _____ () member(s) to serve as initial members of the proposed union school district board for the terms established in the final report and proposed articles of agreement: [Amend as necessary to reflect method for determining school board membership pursuant to section 711 (vote to elect initial members) of this chapter.]

(a) _____ [Insert number] Board Member[s] to serve until the second annual meeting of the union school district, in 20_____.

(b) _____ [Insert number] Board Member[s] to serve until the third annual meeting of the union school district, in 20_____.

(c) _____ [Insert number] Board Member[s] to serve until the fourth annual meeting of the union school district, in 20_____. Pursuant to the provisions of chapter 133 of this title, the new union district board shall consider and adopt a proposed fiscal year 2028 budget to, based on the anticipated funding for fiscal year 2028, provide for the operations of the district.

§ 713. CERTIFICATION OF VOTES; DESIGNATION OF DISTRICT AS
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT; RECORDING BY SECRETARY OF
STATE

(a) Within 45 days after the vote or 15 days after a vote to reconsider the original vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2661, whichever is later, the clerk of each school district voting on the proposal to form a union school district shall certify the results of that vote to the Secretary of Education. The clerk shall submit the certification regardless of whether the district voters approved the proposed formation of a union school district. [Repealed.]

(b) If the voters voting in each school district identified as “necessary” to formation of the proposed union school district vote to form the district, then the “necessary” school districts constitute a union school district, together with any school district designated as “advisable” that votes to form the proposed union school district. [Repealed.]

(c) If the voters approve formation of a union school district pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, then upon receiving the certification of each clerk pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, but not sooner than 30 days after the initial vote, the Not later than July 1, 2025, the Secretary shall designate the newly formed district each of the new union districts as a union school district. The Secretary shall certify that designation and send the

certification together with ~~the clerks' certifications~~ a copy of this Act to the Secretary of State, who shall record the certification.

(d) When the Secretary of State records the certification of the Secretary of Education, the union school district shall be a body politic and corporate with the powers incident to a municipal corporation, shall be known by the name or number given in the recorded certification, by that name or number may sue and be sued, and may hold and convey real and personal property for the use of the union school district. The recorded certification shall be notice to all parties of the formation of the union school district with all the powers incident to such a district as provided in this title.

(e) The Secretary of State shall file a certified copy of the recorded certification with the clerk of each member district of a new union elementary or union high school district and with the town clerk of each town within a new unified union school district. The Secretary of State shall file the certified copies not later than 14 days after the date on which the Secretary of Education certifies the existence of the union school district to the Secretary of State. Filing a certified copy with each clerk shall be prima facie evidence of full compliance with the requirements for the formation of a union school district as set forth in this subchapter.

* * *

§ 715. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING; NOTICE; BUSINESS TO BE
TRANSACTIONED COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS

~~(a) Meeting. The union school district shall hold an organizational meeting within 60 days after the Secretary of State files the certified copy of the recorded certification with each clerk pursuant to subsection 713(e) of this chapter.~~

~~(b) Notice.~~

~~(1) The Secretary of Education shall prepare and execute a warning for the organizational meeting. The warning shall give notice of the day, hour, and location of the meeting and shall itemize the business to be transacted.~~

~~(2) The Secretary of Education shall transmit the signed warning to the superintendent, who shall post the warning in at least one public place in each town within the union school district and shall cause the warning to be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the towns within the union school district. Posting and publication shall be made not more than 40 days nor less than 30 days before the date of the meeting.~~

~~(3) The union school district shall bear the cost of posting and publishing the warning.~~

~~(c) Business to be transacted.~~

~~(1) The Secretary or a person designated by the Secretary shall call the organizational meeting to order and the registered voters shall consider the following items of business:~~

~~(A) Elect a temporary presiding officer and a temporary clerk of the union school district from among the voters present at the organizational meeting.~~

~~(B) Adopt Robert's or other rules of order, which shall govern the parliamentary procedures of the organizational meeting and all subsequent meetings of the union school district.~~

~~(C) Elect a moderator of the union school district from among the voters.~~

~~(D) Elect a clerk of the union school district from among the voters or vote to authorize the school board to appoint a clerk of the union school district from among the voters.~~

~~(E) Elect a treasurer of the union school district or vote to authorize the school board to appoint a treasurer of the union school district. The treasurer may also be the supervisory union treasurer and need not be a resident of the union school district.~~

~~(F) Determine the date and location of the union school district's annual meeting, which shall be not earlier than February 1 nor later than June 1, if not previously determined by the voter-approved articles of agreement.~~

~~(G) Determine whether compensation shall be paid to the moderator, clerk, and treasurer of the union school district elected at the organizational meeting and at subsequent annual meetings of the union school district and, if so, the amount to be paid to them.~~

~~(H) Determine whether compensation shall be paid to members of the union school district board and, if so, the amount to be paid to them.~~

~~(I) Establish provisions for payment by the union school district of any expense incurred or to be incurred by or on behalf of the district for the period between the date on which the voters approved formation of the union school district and the first annual meeting of the union district.~~

~~(J) Determine whether to authorize the initial board of the union school district to borrow money pending receipt of payments from the Education Fund by the issuance of its note payable not later than one year from the date of the note. Regardless of whether the voters provide this authorization, the initial board is authorized to borrow sufficient funds to meet~~

~~pending obligations until the voters approve a budget for the initial year of operation pursuant to subdivision 716(b)(3) of this chapter.~~

~~(K) Transact any other business, the subject matter of which has been included in the warning, that the voters have power to transact at any annual or special meeting and transact any nonbinding business that may legally come before the voters.~~

~~(2) When there is only one nominee for temporary presiding officer, temporary clerk, moderator, district clerk, or district treasurer, the voters may, by acclamation, instruct an officer to elect the nominee by casting one ballot, and upon the ballot being cast, the nominee shall be legally elected and shall thereupon be sworn.~~

~~(3) The elected officers listed in subdivisions (1)(A) (temporary presiding officer and temporary clerk), (C) (moderator of the union school district), (D) (clerk of the union school district), and (E) (treasurer of the union school district) of this subsection shall be sworn in before entering upon the duties of their offices and a record made by the district clerk. They shall assume office upon being sworn in. The officers listed in subdivisions (1)(C), (D), and (E) of this subsection shall serve terms as set forth in section 735 (unified union school districts; officers) or 753 (union elementary and union high school district; officers) of this chapter unless the voters extend the term length up to three years.~~

~~(4) Any member of the union school district board not sworn in before the organizational meeting pursuant to section 714 of this chapter may be sworn in at or after the organizational meeting. The new union district, through its board, has and shall exercise all of the authority that is necessary for it to prepare for full educational operations beginning on July 1, 2027. On or before June 30, 2027, the new union district board shall perform all planning, transitional, and other related duties necessary to begin operations of the new union district on July 1, 2027, including preparing for and negotiating contractual agreements, and transacting any other lawful business that comes before the board, provided however, that the exercise of such authority by the new union district shall not be construed to limit or alter the authority or responsibilities of each forming district, which shall remain responsible for providing for the education of its resident students until July 1, 2027.~~

~~§ 724. WITHDRAWAL FROM OR DISSOLUTION OF A UNIFIED
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT~~

~~(a) Definition. As used in this section, “petitioning town” means the town within a unified union school district that seeks to withdraw from the union district pursuant to the provisions of this section.~~

~~(b) Withdrawal study committee.~~

~~(1) To initiate the process set forth in this section, the voters residing in the petitioning town shall submit petitions to the clerk of the unified union school district indicating the petitioners’ desire to withdraw the petitioning town from the union district. Individual petitions shall be signed by at least five percent of the voters residing in each of the towns within the union school district, with each town having its own petition. The petitioners shall submit each petition to that town’s town clerk for verification of the voting registration status of the signors. On a form created by the Secretary of State’s Office, and appended to each petition, shall be the names of three voters residing in the petitioning town to serve on a withdrawal study committee and a signed statement by each of the three named voters consenting to serve. Once each petition has been verified by the subject town clerk, the petitioners shall submit the petitions to the clerk of the unified union school district.~~

~~(2) Within 30 days after receiving the petition, the board of the union district shall recognize the creation of the withdrawal study committee and shall appoint a board subcommittee to serve as a liaison between the board and the withdrawal study committee and to represent the interests of the union district.~~

~~(3) Within 30 days after the board’s appointment of the liaison subcommittee, the superintendent of the union district shall convene the first formal meeting of the withdrawal study committee. The study committee shall elect one committee member to serve as chair.~~

~~(4) Before beginning any analysis under subsection (c) of this section or seeking technical or analytical services from the union district staff or supervisory union staff, or both, the withdrawal study committee shall obtain a letter of commitment from a supervisory union board to explore the provision of supervisory union services if withdrawal is ultimately approved.~~

~~(5) The withdrawal study committee is a public body pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 310(4) and is subject to the requirements of chapter 5, subchapter 2 of that title.~~

~~(c) Analysis. The withdrawal study committee shall evaluate the strengths and challenges of the current union district structure and consider the ways in~~

which the union district promotes or fails to promote the State policy set forth in section 701 of this chapter. At a minimum, the withdrawal study committee shall evaluate:

~~(1) the educational advantages and disadvantages likely to result from the proposed withdrawal of the petitioning town from the union district:~~

~~(A) on the students residing in the proposed new school district; and~~

~~(B) on the students remaining in the union district if withdrawal is approved;~~

~~(2) the educational advantages and disadvantages likely to result from the continued inclusion of the petitioning town as a town within the union district:~~

~~(A) on the students residing in the petitioning town; and~~

~~(B) on the students residing in the other towns within the union district;~~

~~(3) the financial advantages and disadvantages likely to result from the proposed withdrawal of the petitioning town from the union district:~~

~~(A) on the taxpayers residing in the proposed new school district; and~~

~~(B) on the taxpayers remaining in the union district if withdrawal is approved;~~

~~(4) the financial advantages and disadvantages likely to result from the continued inclusion of the petitioning town as a town within the union district:~~

~~(A) on the taxpayers residing in the petitioning town; and~~

~~(B) on the taxpayers residing in the other towns within the union district;~~

~~(5) the likely operational and financial viability and sustainability of:~~

~~(A) the proposed new school district; and~~

~~(B) the union district if withdrawal is approved;~~

~~(6) any other advantages and disadvantages of withdrawal, including any advantages and disadvantages to the students and taxpayers of the region and the State; and~~

~~(7) the potential source of supervisory union services for the proposed new school district, including discussions with the board of any supervisory union to which the report of the withdrawal study committee might propose assignment.~~

~~(d) Report, including a plan for withdrawal; decision not to prepare report.~~

~~(1) Report supporting withdrawal.~~

~~(A) If, after conducting the analysis required by subsection (c) of this section, the withdrawal study committee votes to advance the withdrawal process as further outlined in this section, then the committee shall prepare a report, which it shall deliver electronically to the union district board and which the superintendent shall publish on the district's website.~~

~~(B) At a minimum, the report shall include:~~

~~(i) the analysis conducted pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, describing the ways in which the data and analysis:~~

~~(I) support withdrawal; and~~

~~(II) do not support the continuation of the union district in its current configuration;~~

~~(ii) the proposed financial terms of withdrawal, including the proposed ownership of buildings and other assets and the proposed responsibility for financial and other contractual obligations, including debts;~~

~~(iii) a plan, including a detailed timeline, for the actions the proposed new school district would take to ensure that, on a proposed operational date, it could provide for the education of its students in prekindergarten through grade 12 by operating all grades, tuitioning all grades, or operating some grades and tuitioning the remainder, in a manner that will meet educational quality standards as required by section 165 of this title, and including, if applicable, the process by which the proposed new school district would explore formation of a new union school district with one or more other school districts in the region and would integrate or condition any votes to withdraw with votes on formation of a new union district; and~~

~~(iv) a proposal, including analysis, for the potential source of supervisory union services for the proposed new school district, including, if applicable to the proposal:~~

~~(I) a recommendation of one or more potential supervisory unions to which the State Board could assign the proposed new school district; and~~

~~(II) a statement from the board of the potential supervisory union or unions regarding the ability and willingness to accept the proposed new school district as a member district.~~

~~(C) Within 45 days following receipt of the withdrawal study committee report, the union district board shall invite the members of the~~

~~withdrawal study committee to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the board to present the contents of its report and to answer any questions posed by the board. The board shall also invite the members of the liaison subcommittee to share any analysis and conclusions at the meeting. The withdrawal study committee has sole authority to determine the contents of its report.~~

~~(2) Decision not to propose withdrawal. If, after conducting the analysis required by subsection (c) of this section, the withdrawal study committee votes not to approve advancement of the withdrawal process, then:~~

~~(A) the withdrawal study committee shall prepare a brief written statement explaining the reasons underlying the votes supporting and not supporting advancement, which it shall deliver electronically to the union district board and which the superintendent shall publish on the district's website;~~

~~(B) within 45 days following receipt of the withdrawal study committee report, the union district board shall invite the members of the withdrawal study committee to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the board to present the contents of the written statement and to answer any questions posed by the board; and~~

~~(C) the withdrawal study committee shall cease to exist upon adjournment of the union district board's meeting.~~

~~(e) Secretary and State Board.~~

~~(1) Secretary. If the study committee voted to proceed pursuant to subdivision (d)(1) of this section, then within 30 days after attending the union district board meeting pursuant to subdivision (d)(1)(C) of this section, it shall deliver its report electronically to the Secretary for review. The liaison subcommittee may also submit a report outlining its analysis and conclusions. The Secretary shall submit the report or reports, with recommendations, to the State Board.~~

~~(2) State Board review. The State Board:~~

~~(A) shall consider the report or reports and the Secretary's recommendations;~~

~~(B) shall provide representatives of the withdrawal study committee and the liaison subcommittee an opportunity to be heard;~~

~~(C) may, in its discretion, take testimony from other individuals and entities;~~

~~(D) may ask the Secretary, the withdrawal study committee, or the liaison subcommittee to make further investigation and may consider any other information the State Board deems to be pertinent; and~~

~~(E) may request the members of the withdrawal study committee to amend the report.~~

~~(3) State Board action.~~

~~(A) Advisory opinion with positive recommendation. If the State Board finds that the withdrawal proposal contained in the report, including the most feasible options for the provision of supervisory union services to the proposed new school district, is in the best interests of the State, the region, the students, and the school districts and aligns with the policy set forth in section 701 of this title, then within 90 days after receiving the report of the study committee the State Board shall:~~

~~(i) issue an opinion recommending approval of the withdrawal proposal;~~

~~(ii) provide a preliminary assessment of most feasible options for the provision of supervisory union services to the proposed new school district if withdrawal is approved by the voters; and~~

~~(iii) make any other finding or declaration, and approve any other motion, related and necessary to the withdrawal proposal.~~

~~(B) Advisory opinion with negative recommendation. If the State Board finds that the withdrawal proposal contained in the report, including the most feasible options for the provision of supervisory union services to the proposed new school district, is not in the best interests of the State, the region, the students, and the school districts or does not align with the policy set forth in section 701 of this title, or both, then within 90 days after receiving the report of the study committee the State Board shall:~~

~~(i) issue an opinion recommending disapproval of the withdrawal proposal, including a written statement detailing the reasons supporting this conclusion;~~

~~(ii) provide a preliminary assessment of most feasible options for the provision of supervisory union services to the proposed new school district if withdrawal is approved by the voters; and~~

~~(iii) make any other finding or declaration and approve any other motion related and necessary to the withdrawal proposal.~~

~~(f) Vote of the electorate.~~

~~(1) Vote following positive recommendation of the State Board.~~

~~(A) Within 30 days after receipt of the State Board's written recommendation, the superintendent shall file the withdrawal study committee's report, the State Board's written recommendation, and any report of the liaison subcommittee with the clerk of the union district and the town clerk of each town within the union district.~~

~~(B) Within 90 days after the clerk of the union district receiving the reports and recommendations described in subdivision (A) of this subsection, the voters of the union district, including those residing in the petitioning town, shall vote whether to approve withdrawal as set forth in the report. The question shall be determined by Australian ballot and shall proceed pursuant to sections 737 (warnings of unified union school district meetings) and 739-741 (vote by Australian ballot) of this chapter. The ballots shall not be commingled.~~

~~(C) Withdrawal from the union district shall occur if the question is approved by a majority vote of the union district voters living in each town within the district, including the petitioning town. If a majority of the voters in one or more towns within the union district do not vote in favor of withdrawal, then the proposed withdrawal shall not occur.~~

~~(D) Within 45 days after the vote or 15 days after a vote to reconsider the original vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2661, whichever is later, the clerk of each town within the union district shall certify the results of the vote to the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary shall advise the State Board of the certified results. Each clerk shall submit the certification regardless of whether the voters in that town approved withdrawal. The withdrawal study committee shall cease to exist when each clerk has submitted a certification to the Secretary.~~

~~(2) Vote following negative recommendation of the State Board.~~

~~(A) The superintendent shall file the withdrawal study committee's report, the State Board's written recommendation, and any report of the liaison subcommittee with the clerk of the union district and with the town clerk of each town within the union district.~~

~~(B) The union district voters residing in the petitioning town shall vote whether to withdraw from the union district pursuant to the terms set forth in the report.~~

~~(i) The question shall be determined by Australian ballot and shall proceed pursuant to sections 737 (warnings of unified union school district meetings) and 739-741 (vote by Australian ballot) of this chapter.~~

~~(ii) The withdrawal proposal shall proceed to a vote in each of the other towns within the union district only if approved by a majority of the~~

~~union district voters residing in the petitioning town present and voting yes or no on the warned question. If a majority of the voters in the petitioning town do not vote in favor of withdrawal, then the proposed withdrawal shall not occur.~~

~~(C) Within 45 days after the vote in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (f)(2) or 15 days after a vote to reconsider the original vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2661, whichever is later, the clerk of the petitioning town shall certify the results of the vote to the Secretary of State who shall record the certificate and give notice of the vote to the clerk of the union district, the clerks of each of the other towns within the union district, and the Secretary of Education. The clerk of the petitioning town shall submit the certification regardless of whether the voters in the petitioning town approved withdrawal. The withdrawal study committee shall cease to exist upon submission of the certification.~~

~~(D) If the union district voters residing in the petitioning town approve the withdrawal proposal pursuant to subdivision (B) of this subdivision (f)(2), then, within 90 days after receiving notice of the certification as required in subdivision (C) of this subdivision (f)(2), the voters of the union district residing in each of the other towns shall vote on the same day whether to approve withdrawal of the petitioning town as set forth in the final report.~~

~~(i) The question shall be determined by Australian ballot and shall proceed pursuant to sections 737 (warnings of unified union school district meetings) and 739-741 (vote by Australian ballot) of this chapter. The ballots shall not be commingled.~~

~~(ii) Withdrawal from the union district shall occur if the question is approved by a majority vote of the union district voters living in each of the other towns within the union district. If a majority of the voters in one or more towns within the union district do not vote in favor of withdrawal, then the proposed withdrawal shall not occur.~~

~~(E) Within 45 days after the vote in subdivision (D) of this subdivision (f)(2) or 15 days after a vote to reconsider the original vote under 17 V.S.A. § 2661, whichever is later, the clerk of each of the other towns within the union district shall certify the results of the vote to the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary shall advise the State Board of the certified results. Each clerk shall submit the certification regardless of whether the voters in that town approved withdrawal. The withdrawal study committee shall cease to exist when each clerk has submitted a certification to the Secretary.~~

~~(g) Election of potential board members. On the day on which they vote whether to approve withdrawal, the union district voters residing in the petitioning town shall also vote for three individual registered voters from the petitioning town to serve as the initial members of the proposed new school district's board if withdrawal is approved. The nomination and election of the initial members shall proceed pursuant to subdivision 730(a)(1) of this chapter (election of board members under the proportional to town model by Australian ballot). The term of office for each initial member shall be arranged so that one term expires on the day of the second annual meeting of the proposed new school district, one term expires on the day of the third annual meeting, and one term expires on the day of the fourth annual meeting.~~

~~(h) State Board's duties if withdrawal is approved. If the union district voters approve withdrawal pursuant to subsection (f) of this section, then upon receiving notice from the Secretary pursuant to subdivision (f)(1)(D) or (f)(2)(E) of this section, the State Board shall:~~

~~(1) Declare the withdrawal approved as of the date of the Board's meeting; provided, however, that withdrawal shall not be final until the date identified in the voter-approved proposal of withdrawal.~~

~~(2) Declare the creation and existence of the new school district, effective on the date of the Board's declaration; provided, however, that:~~

~~(A) the new school district shall assume full and sole responsibility for the education of its resident students on the date identified in the voter-approved proposal of withdrawal; and~~

~~(B) until the identified operational date, the new school district shall exist for the sole purposes of:~~

~~(i) convening an organizational meeting of the voters of the new school district to prepare the district to assume its responsibilities;~~

~~(ii) organizing the school board of the new school district, which shall be responsible for preparing a proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning on the identified operational date;~~

~~(iii) approving the budget of the new school district for the fiscal year beginning on the identified operational date; and~~

~~(iv) taking any other actions necessary, as district voters or as a school board, for the new school district to assume full responsibility for providing for the education of the district's resident students in all grades, prekindergarten through grade 12, on the identified operational date.~~

~~(3) Determine or set a schedule for determining the manner in which supervisory union services will be provided to the new school district, to be effective on the district's identified operational date.~~

~~(A) In addition to the considerations set forth in section 261 of this title, when the State Board makes its determination, it shall consider the potential positive and negative consequences on all affected districts and supervisory unions if supervisory union services were provided to the new school district in a manner that required:~~

~~(i) a union district serving as its own supervisory district to become a member of a multidistrict supervisory union; or~~

~~(ii) a neighboring supervisory union to accept one or more additional districts that the supervisory union testifies it is not able to accommodate.~~

~~(B) If assigned to a multidistrict supervisory union, then the board of the new school district may appoint its members to the supervisory union board pursuant to section 266 of this title, where they may participate as nonvoting members of that board until the new school district's operational date.~~

~~(i) Certification; Secretary of State. If the State Board declares the creation and existence of a new school district pursuant to subdivision (h)(2) of this section, then within 30 days following such action the Secretary of Education shall certify the adjustment of the towns within the union district to the Secretary of State. When the Secretary of State records the certification of the Secretary of Education, the towns within the union district shall be adjusted accordingly; provided, however, that the voter-approved proposal of withdrawal shall establish the date on which withdrawal shall be final, the new school district shall assume full and sole responsibility for the education of its resident students, and the union school district shall no longer have responsibility for the education of those students. Not more than 14 days after the date the Secretary of Education certifies the adjustment, the Secretary of State shall file a certified copy of the recorded certification with the clerk of the union district and the clerk for the town in which the new school district is located. Filing a certified copy with the clerks shall be prima facie evidence of full compliance with the requirements for adjusting the union school district by withdrawal as set forth in this section.~~

~~(j) Timing of action.~~

~~(1) The voters residing in any town within a union district shall not initiate the withdrawal process set forth in this section within the first year after the latter of the operational date of a newly formed union district or, if~~

~~applicable, the operational date of a union district adjusted pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.~~

~~(2) If a petitioning town's action to withdraw from a union school district is unsuccessful, then the voters residing in that town shall not initiate a new withdrawal action under this section until two years after either a withdrawal study committee votes not to approve advancement of the withdrawal process or the vote by the voters that concluded the initial withdrawal action. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

Sec. 15. 16 V.S.A. § 564 is added to read:

§ 564. SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

(a) Each school district shall establish a local school advisory committee for each school. These committees shall have membership from parents, community members and students to represent the gender, racial, and socioeconomic diversity of the school community, and shall serve in an advisory role to the school administration.

(b) Building level principals will administer the application and membership process for the school advisory committees. School advisory committees shall provide input to the school board on equitable budgeting parameters and feedback on the proposed school district budget each year.

(c) A school advisory committee shall, through the administration of the building level principal, direct a designated portion of the funding allocated to the school it represents. Annually, the school board shall determine the amount that each school advisory committee will have authority to direct, which shall be equitable with respect to school size or school budget size. Before funds are expended, the school board shall approve the proposed plan developed by the school advisory committee.

Sec. 16. 16 V.S.A. § 821 is amended to read:

§ 821. SCHOOL DISTRICT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS OR PAY TUITION

(a) Each school district shall maintain one or more approved schools within the district in which elementary education for its resident students in kindergarten through grade six is provided ~~unless:~~

~~(1) the electorate authorizes the school board to provide for the elementary education of the students by paying tuition in accordance with law to one or more public elementary schools in one or more school districts;~~

~~(2) the school district is organized to provide only high school education for its students; or~~

~~(3) the General Assembly provides otherwise.~~

(b) A school board shall adopt a policy on intra-district grade K–8 choice and update the policy as appropriate. The policy shall state whether and to what extent resident students in elementary grades can choose a school operated by the school district other than the school designated by the district for the student’s town of residence.

~~(c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, without previous authorization by the electorate, a school board in a district that operates an elementary school may pay tuition for elementary students who reside near a public elementary school in an adjacent district upon request of the student’s parent or guardian, if in the board’s judgment the student’s education can be more conveniently furnished there due to geographic considerations. Within 30 days of the board’s decision, a parent or guardian who is dissatisfied with the decision of the board under this subsection may request a determination by the Secretary, who shall have authority to direct the school board to pay all, some, or none of the student’s tuition and whose decision shall be final. [Repealed.]~~

~~(d) Notwithstanding subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the electorate of a school district that does not maintain an elementary school may grant general authority to the school board to pay tuition for an elementary student at an approved independent elementary school or an independent school meeting education quality standards pursuant to sections 823 and 828 of this chapter upon notice given by the student’s parent or legal guardian before April 15 for the next academic year. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 17. 16 V.S.A. § 822 is amended to read:

§ 822. SCHOOL DISTRICT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS OR
PAY TUITION; SCHOOL CHOICE SCHOOLS

(a) Each school district shall maintain one or more approved high schools in which high school education is provided for its resident students unless:

~~(1) the electorate authorizes the school board to close an existing high school and to provide for the high school education of its students by paying tuition to a public high school, an approved independent high school, or an independent school meeting education quality standards, to be selected by the parents or guardians of the student, within or outside the State; or~~

~~(2) the school district is organized to provide only elementary education for its students.~~

~~(b) For purposes of this section, a school district that is organized to provide kindergarten through grade 12 and maintains a program of education for only the first eight years of compulsory school attendance shall be obligated to pay tuition for its resident students for at least four additional years. A school board shall designate at least one public or independent school that operates grades nine through 12 to receive incoming students. This school shall be known as a school choice school. The school board is not required to designate an independent school if it instead designates one or more public schools. If the school choice school designated by the district is an independent school, it shall first be certified by the Agency of Education as meeting the school choice school requirements in section 166 of this title. Any such designation shall be for a period of five years.~~

(1) After reviewing the portfolio of school options for grades nine through 12 in the district, the school board shall adopt a policy on grade nine through 12 school choice and update the policy as appropriate. The policy shall take into consideration historic patterns of attendance, capacity of schools, and attendance and geographic needs of the district, along with student interest for specialized educational programming. The policy shall state a number of resident students in grades nine through 12 that can participate in school choice, which shall be not less than 10 percent of the number of resident students in grades nine through 12 for a given year.

(2) If the district will operate one or more of its public schools as a school choice school, then the school board shall annually announce the capacity for incoming students to attend each such school or schools.

~~(c)(1) A school district may both maintain a high school and furnish high school education by paying tuition:~~

~~(A) to a public school as in the judgment of the school board may best serve the interests of the students; or~~

~~(B) to an approved independent school or an independent school meeting education quality standards if the school board judges that a student has unique educational needs that cannot be served within the district or at a nearby public school. Subject to the provisions of subsection (a)(1) of this section, if more than the allowable number of students wish to participate in school choice, then the district shall use a nondiscriminatory lottery system for determining which students may participate in school choice.~~

(2) The judgment of the board shall be final in regard to the institution the students may attend at public cost. Subject to the provisions of subdivision (a)(2) of this section, if more than the allowable number of students wish to transfer to a school choice school operated by the district, then the district shall

use a nondiscriminatory lottery system for determining which students may transfer to the school choice school.

(A) the district shall give preference to the school choice request of a student whose request to participate in school choice was denied in a prior year;

(B) the district shall give preference to siblings of students who are currently enrolled in the school choice school;

(C) the district shall give preference to students who reside closer to the school choice school than a different school operated by the district.

Sec. 18. REPEALS

16 V.S.A. § 822a (public high school choice) and 16 V.S.A. § 823 (elementary tuition) are repealed on July 1, 2027.

Sec. 19. 16 V.S.A. § 824 is amended to read:

§ 824. HIGH SCHOOL TUITION PAYMENT TO SCHOOL CHOICE SCHOOLS

(a) Tuition Payment for high school students attending a school choice school that is an independent school as defined in section 166 of this title shall be paid by the school district in which the student is a resident Agency of Education in an amount equal to the weighted base education amount per student as described in section 4001 of this title. The Agency of Education shall establish rules to govern the schedule and procedures for such payments.

(b) Except as otherwise provided for technical students, the district shall pay the full tuition charged its students attending a public high school in Vermont or an adjoining state or a public or approved independent school in Vermont functioning as an approved area career technical center, or an independent school meeting education quality standards; provided:

(1) If a payment made to a public high school or an independent school meeting education quality standards is three percent more or less than the calculated net cost per secondary pupil in the receiving school district or independent school for the year of attendance then the district or school shall be reimbursed, credited, or refunded pursuant to section 836 of this title.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection or of subsection 825(b) of this title, the board of the receiving public school district, public or approved independent school functioning as an area career technical center, or independent school meeting education quality standards may enter into tuition agreements with the boards of sending districts that have terms differing from the provisions of those subsections, provided that the receiving district or

~~school must offer identical terms to all sending districts, and further provided that the statutory provisions apply to any sending district that declines the offered terms. [Repealed.]~~

~~(c) The district shall pay an amount not to exceed the average announced tuition of Vermont union high schools for the year of attendance for its students enrolled in an approved independent school not functioning as a Vermont area career technical center, or any higher amount approved by the electorate at an annual or special meeting warned for that purpose. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 20. 16 V.S.A. § 1071 is amended to read:

§ 1071. SCHOOL YEAR AND SCHOOL DAY

(a) Minimum number of days. Except as provided in this section, each public school shall be maintained and operated for:

(1) At least ~~175~~ 180 student attendance days in each school year. For purposes of this section, a majority of students enrolled in a school must be recorded on the school roll as in attendance on any day counted as a student attendance day.

(2) At least five teacher in-service education days, during which time activities shall be conducted without students present in order to increase the competency of the staff, improve the curriculum of the school, enable teachers to attend State educational meetings, or disseminate student progress information to parents or the community.

(b) Hours of operation. Within the minimum set by the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education, the school board shall fix the number of hours that shall constitute a school day, ~~subject to change upon the order of the State Board.~~

(c) Unanticipated closings. When a public school is closed for cause beyond the control of the school board, it may petition the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education for a waiver of the requirements of this section. The petition shall be filed with the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education within 10 days of each occurrence and not later than June 15 of the school year involved; and the ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education shall act on the petition at its next meeting Agency on a form provided by the Agency. If the petition is approved and a waiver granted, the school district shall be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of this section. ~~If the State Board fails to act at that meeting, the petition shall be deemed to have been approved and the waiver granted.~~

(d) [Repealed.]

~~(e) Regional calendar. Before April 1 of each year, the superintendents of schools and the headmasters of public schools not managed by school boards in an area shall meet, and by majority vote, establish a uniform calendar within that area for the following school year. The Secretary shall establish a single statewide calendar. The calendar shall be published before May 1 of each year for the following school year. The calendar shall include student attendance days, periods of vacation, holidays, and teacher in-service education days and shall comply with subsection (a) of this section. Unless permitted by the Secretary, no area served by a regional career technical center shall be divided into two or more calendar regions.~~

(f) Additional days. Nothing in this section prohibits a school from scheduling additional days for student attendance or teacher in-service education. However, those days shall not conflict with any applicable school calendar.

(g) Upon application of one or more school districts, after approval by the voters of each such district, the State Board Agency may grant a waiver of the requirements of subsection (a) of this section if it is satisfied that equivalent educational programming will be maintained or improved. The waiver may be granted for any purpose, including the conservation of energy.

Sec. 21. 16 V.S.A. § 1121 is amended to read:

§ 1121. ATTENDANCE BY CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE REQUIRED

A person having the control of a child between the ages of ~~six~~ five and 16 years shall cause the child to attend a public school, an approved or recognized independent school, an approved education program, or a home study program for the full number of days for which that school is held, unless the child:

(1) is mentally or physically unable so to attend; or

(2) has completed the tenth grade; or

(3) is excused by the superintendent or a majority of the school directors as provided in this chapter; or

(4) is enrolled in and attending a postsecondary school, as defined in subdivision 176(b)(1) of this title, which is approved or accredited in Vermont or another state.

* * * State Funding of Public Education * * *

Sec. 22. TRANSITION YEAR ONE FUNDING

In fiscal year 2026, each school district shall receive the funding approved by its electorate pursuant to 16 V.S.A. chapter 133.

Sec. 23. TRANSITION YEAR TWO FUNDING

In fiscal year 2027, each school district shall receive an amount equal to the funding received in fiscal year 2026, multiplied by three percent. Payments shall be made consistent with 16 V.S.A. § 4011.

Sec. 24. 16 V.S.A. chapter 133 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 133. STATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

§ 4000. STATEMENT OF POLICY

(a) The intent of this chapter is to make educational opportunity available to each student in each town on substantially equal terms, in accordance with the Vermont Constitution and the Vermont Supreme Court decision of February 5, 1997, *Brigham v. State of Vermont*.

(b) [Repealed.]

§ 4001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Average daily membership” of a school district ~~or, if needed in order to calculate the appropriate homestead tax rate, of the municipality as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(9), in any year means:~~

(A) The full-time equivalent enrollment of students, as defined by the ~~State Board~~ Agency by rule, who are legal residents of the district or municipality attending a school owned and operated by the district, ~~attending a public school outside the district under section 822a of this title, or for whom the district pays tuition to one or more approved independent schools or public schools outside the district during the annual census period.~~ The census period consists of the 11th day through the 30th day of the school year in which school is actually in session.

(B) The full-time equivalent enrollment in the year before the last census period, of any State-placed students as defined in subdivision 11(a)(28) of this title. ~~A school district that provides for the education of its students by paying tuition to an approved independent school or public school outside the district shall not count a State-placed student for whom it is paying tuition for purposes of determining average daily membership.~~ A school district that is receiving the full amount, as defined by the ~~State Board~~ Agency by rule, of the student’s education costs under subsection 2950(a) of this title shall not count the student for purposes of determining average daily membership. A State-placed student who is counted in average daily membership shall be counted as a student for the purposes of determining weighted student count.

(C) The full-time equivalent enrollment for each prekindergarten child as follows: If a child is enrolled in 10 or more hours of prekindergarten education per week or receives 10 or more hours of essential early education services per week, the child shall be counted as one full-time equivalent pupil. If a child is enrolled in six or more but fewer than 10 hours of prekindergarten education per week or if a child receives fewer than 10 hours of essential early education services per week, the child shall be counted as a percentage of one full-time equivalent pupil, calculated as one multiplied by the number of hours per week divided by ten. A child enrolled in prekindergarten education for fewer than six hours per week shall not be included in the district's average daily membership. There is no limit on the total number of children who may be enrolled in prekindergarten education or who receive essential early education services.

(2) "Equalized grand list" has the same meaning that equalized education property tax grand list has in 32 V.S.A. chapter 135.

(3), (4), (5) [Repealed.]

~~(6) "Education spending" "means the amount of the school district budget, any assessment for a joint contract school, career technical center payments made on behalf of the district under subsection 1561(b) of this title, and any amount added to pay a deficit pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1523(b) that is paid for by the school district, but excluding any portion of the school budget paid for from any other sources such as endowments, parental fundraising, federal funds, nongovernmental grants, or other State funds such as special education funds paid under chapter 101 of this title.~~

~~(A) [Repealed.]~~

~~(B) For all bonds approved by voters prior to July 1, 2024, voter-approved bond payments toward principal and interest shall not be included in "education spending" for purposes of calculating excess spending pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5401(12). [Repealed.]~~

(7) "Long-term membership" of a school district in any school year means the:

(A) average of the district's average daily membership, excluding full-time equivalent enrollment of State-placed students, over two school years, the latter of which is the current school year, plus

(B) full-time equivalent enrollment of State-placed students for the most recent of the two years.

(8) [Repealed.]

(9) "Public school" means an elementary school or secondary school for which the governing board is publicly elected. A public school may maintain evening or summer school for its students and it shall be considered a public school.

(10) "School district" means ~~a town school district, city school district, incorporated school district, the member school districts of an interstate school district, a union school district, a unified union district, or an unorganized town or gore.~~

(11) "School year" means a year beginning on July 1 and ending on the following June 30.

(12) "Weighted long-term membership" of a school district in any school year means the long-term membership adjusted pursuant to section 4010 of this title.

(13) ~~"Base education amount"~~ Categorical base amount means a number used to calculate categorical grants awarded under this title that is equal to \$6,800.00 per equalized pupil, adjusted as required under section 4011 of this title.

(14) ~~"Per pupil education spending" of a school district in any school year means the per pupil education spending of that school district as determined under subsection 4010(f) of this title. [Repealed.]~~

(15) "Prekindergarten child" means a three- or four-year-old child who is enrolled in a prekindergarten program offered by or through a school district pursuant to rules adopted under section 829 of this title or who is receiving essential early education services offered pursuant to section 2956 of this title. Prekindergarten child also means a five-year-old child who otherwise meets the terms of this definition if that child is not yet eligible for ~~or enrolled in~~ kindergarten.

(16) "Base amount" means a per pupil amount of \$13,200.00 in fiscal year 2025, which shall be adjusted for inflation annually on or before November 15 by the Secretary of Education. As used in this subdivision, "adjusted for inflation" means adjusting the base dollar amount by the most recent New England Economic Project cumulative price index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined.

(17) "Foundation formula amount" means the base amount multiplied by the school district's weighted long-term membership as determined under 16 V.S.A. § 4010.

§ 4002. PAYMENT; ALLOCATION

(a) State and federal funds appropriated for services delivered by the ~~supervisory union~~ school district and payable through the Agency shall be paid to the order of the ~~supervisory union~~ school district and administered in accordance with the plan adopted under subdivision 261a(4) of this title. Funding for special education services under section 2969 of this title shall be paid to the ~~supervisory unions~~ school districts in accordance with that section.

(b) The Secretary shall notify the superintendent or chief executive officer of each ~~supervisory union~~ school district in writing of federal or State funds disbursed to ~~member~~ school districts.

§ 4003. CONDITIONS

(a) No school district shall receive any aid under this chapter unless that school district complies with the provisions of law relative to teachers' salaries, appointment of superintendents, detailed financial reports to the Agency, and any other requirements of law.

(b) Aid to any district shall not be denied unless the district unreasonably refuses to comply with the requirements of law. Any school district denied aid by reason of the provisions of this section shall have the right within 60 days from the date of such denial to appeal to the Superior Court in the county where the district is situated.

Subchapter 2. General State Funding of Public Education

§ 4010. DETERMINATION OF WEIGHTED LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP
AND PER PUPIL EDUCATION SPENDING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "EL pupils" means pupils described under section 4013 of this title.

(2) "FPL" means the Federal Poverty Level.

(3) "Weighting categories" means the categories listed under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Determination of average daily membership and weighting categories. On or before the first day of December during each school year, the Secretary shall determine the average daily membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(1) of this title, of each school district for the current school year and shall perform the following tasks.

(1) Using average daily membership, list for each school district the number of:

(A) pupils in prekindergarten;

(B) pupils in kindergarten through grade five;

(C) pupils in grades six through eight;

(D) pupils in grades nine through 12;

(E) pupils whose families are at or below 185 percent of FPL, using the highest number of pupils in the district:

(i) that meet this definition under the universal income declaration form; or

(ii) who are directly certified for free and reduced-priced meals; and

(F) EL pupils.

(2)(A) Identify all school districts that have low population density, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, equaling:

(i) fewer than 36 persons per square mile;

(ii) 36 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 55 persons per square mile; or

(iii) 55 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 100 persons per square mile.

(B) Population density data shall be based on the best available U.S. Census data as provided to the Agency of Education by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

(C) Using average daily membership, list for each school district that has low population density the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(iii) of this subdivision (2).

~~(3)(A) Identify all school districts that have one or more small schools, which are schools that have an average two-year enrollment of:~~

~~(i) fewer than 100 pupils; or~~

~~(ii) 100 or more pupils but fewer than 250 pupils~~ For each school district, identify any school with fewer than 450 students.

~~(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), “average two-year enrollment” means the average enrollment of the two most recently completed school years, and “enrollment” means the number of pupils who are enrolled in a school operated by the district on October 1. A pupil shall be~~

~~counted as one whether the pupil is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student.~~
~~[Repealed.]~~

~~(C) Using average two-year enrollment, list for each school district that has a small school the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(ii) of this subdivision (3).~~ ~~[Repealed.]~~

(c) Reporting on weighting categories to the Agency of Education. Each school district shall annually report to the Agency of Education by a date established by the Agency the information needed in order for the Agency to compute the weighting categories under subsection (b) of this section for that district. ~~In order to fulfill this obligation, a school district that pays public tuition on behalf of a resident student (sending district) to a public school in another school district, an approved independent school, or an out-of-state school (each a receiving school) may request the receiving school to collect this information on the sending district's resident student, and if requested, the receiving school shall provide this information to the sending district in a timely manner.~~

(d) Determination of weighted long-term membership. For each weighting category except the small schools weighting category under subdivision (b)(3) of this section, the Secretary shall compute the weighting count by using the long-term membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(7) of this title, in that category.

(1) ~~The Secretary shall first apply grade level weights. Each pupil included in long-term membership shall count as one, multiplied by the following amounts:~~

~~(A) prekindergarten—negative 0.54;~~

~~(B) grades six through eight—0.36; and~~

~~(C) grades nine through 12—0.39.~~ ~~[Repealed.]~~

(2) The Secretary shall ~~next~~ apply a weight for pupils whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL. Each pupil included in long-term membership whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~1.03~~ 0.75.

(3) The Secretary shall next apply a weight for EL pupils. Each EL pupil included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~2.49~~ 1.50.

(4) The Secretary shall then apply a weight for pupils living in low population density school districts. Each pupil included in long-term membership residing in a low population density school district, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the

geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, shall receive an additional weighting amount of:

(A) 0.15, where the number of persons per square mile is fewer than 36 persons;

(B) 0.12, where the number of persons per square mile is 36 or more but fewer than 55 persons; or

(C) 0.07, where the number of persons per square mile is 55 or more but fewer than 100.

(5) The Secretary shall lastly apply a weight for pupils who attend a an eligible small school. ~~If the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of a school district as of July 1 of the year of determination is 55 or fewer, then, for~~ For each pupil listed under subdivision (b)(3)(C) of this section (pupils who attend small schools):

~~(A) where the school has fewer than 100 pupils in average two-year enrollment, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.21 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment; or~~

~~(B) where the small school has 100 or more but fewer than 250 pupils, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.07 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment, each student in an eligible small school will receive a weighted FTE that is the result of applying the following formula to each eligible small school: $(-0.158 * \text{natural log of (school enrollment)}) + 0.964$ with the result rounded to two decimal places.~~

(6) A school district's weighted long-term membership shall equal long-term membership plus the cumulation of the weights assigned by the Secretary under this subsection.

~~(e) Hold harmless. A district's weighted long-term membership shall in no case be less than 96 and one-half percent of its actual weighted long-term membership the previous year prior to making any adjustment under this subsection. [Repealed.]~~

~~(f) Determination of per pupil education spending. As soon as reasonably possible after a school district budget is approved by voters, the Secretary shall determine the per pupil education spending for the next fiscal year for the school district. Per pupil education spending shall equal a school district's education spending divided by its weighted long-term membership. [Repealed.]~~

(g) Guidelines. The Secretary shall develop guidelines to enable clear and consistent identification of pupils to be counted under this section.

(h) Updates to weights, base education amount and transportation payments. On or before January 1, 2027 and on or before January 1 of every fifth year thereafter, the Agency of Education and the Joint Fiscal Office shall calculate, based on their consensus view, updates to the weights and the base education amount to account for cost changes underlying those weights and the cost of providing a high quality education and shall issue a written report on their work to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance. The General Assembly shall update the weights under this section, the base education amount, and transportation ~~reimbursement~~ categorical aid amounts under section 4016 of this title not less than every five years and the implementation date for the updated weights and transportation ~~reimbursement~~ categorical aid amount shall be delayed by a year in order to provide school districts with time to prepare their budgets. Updates to the weights may include recalibration, recalculation, adding or eliminating weights, or any combination of these actions.

(i) On or before July 1, 2026 the Secretary shall, through rule-making, establish eligibility criteria for students that may receive the small school adjustment as defined in subdivision (d)(5) of this section.

§ 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS

(a) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate funds to pay for ~~statewide education spending~~ the foundation formula amount as defined under subdivision 4001(17) of this title and the State guarantee as defined under 32 V.S.A. § 5401(19) and a portion of the base education categorical aid amount for each adult education and secondary credential program student as defined in subsection (f) of this section.

(b) For each fiscal year, the categorical aid ~~base education~~ amount shall be \$6,800.00, increased by the most recent New England Economic Project Cumulative Price Index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services from fiscal year 2005 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, plus an additional one-tenth of one percent.

(c) Annually, each school district shall receive ~~an education spending payment~~ its foundation formula amount as defined under subdivision 4001(17) of this title and its State guarantee, if applicable to that school district, as defined under 32 V.S.A. § 5401(19) for support of education costs. ~~An unorganized town or gore shall receive an amount equal to its per pupil~~

~~education spending for that year for each student. No school district shall receive more than its education spending the amount under this subsection.~~

(d) [Repealed.]

(e) [Repealed.]

(f) Annually, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program an amount equal to 26 percent of the categorical aid amount for each student who completes the diagnostic portions of the program, based on an average of the previous two years; 40 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the Education Fund and 60 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the General Fund.

~~(g) The Secretary shall pay to a school district a percentage of the base education amount for each resident student for whom the district is paying a technical tuition to a regional career technical center but who is not enrolled in the district and therefore not counted in the average daily membership of the district. The percentage of the base education amount to be paid shall be the percentage of the student's full-time equivalent attendance at the career technical center multiplied by 87 percent. [Repealed.]~~

(h) The Secretary shall make all payments required by subchapter 5 of chapter 23 of this title.

(i) Annually, on or before October 1, the Secretary shall send to school boards for inclusion in town reports and publish on the Agency website the following information:

~~(1) the statewide average district per pupil education spending for the current fiscal year; and~~

~~(2) a statewide comparison of student-teacher ratios among schools that are similar in number of students and number of grades.~~

* * *

§ 4013. ENGLISH LEARNERS SERVICES; STATE AID

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Applicable federal laws" mean the Equal Education Opportunities Act (20 U.S.C. § 1703), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq.), and Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 et seq. and 20 U.S.C. §§ 6801 et seq.), each as amended.

(2) “EL services” mean instructional and support personnel and services that are required under applicable federal laws for EL students and their families.

(3) “EL students” or “EL pupils” mean students who have been identified as English learners through the screening protocols required under 20 U.S.C. § 6823(b)(2).

(b) Required EL services. Each school district shall:

(1) screen students to determine which students are EL students and therefore qualify for EL services;

(2) assess and monitor the progress of EL students;

(3) provide EL services;

(4) budget sufficient resources through a combination of State and federal categorical aid and local education spending to provide EL services;

(5) report expenditures on EL services annually to the Agency of Education through the financial reporting system as required by the Agency; and

(6) evaluate the effectiveness of their EL programs and report educational outcomes of EL students as required by the Agency and applicable federal laws.

(c) Agency of Education support and quality assurance. The Agency of Education shall:

(1) provide guidance and program support to all school districts with EL students as required under applicable federal law, including:

(A) professional development resources for EL teachers and support personnel; and

(B) information on best practices and nationally recognized language development standards; and

(2) prescribe, collect, and analyze financial and student outcome data from school districts to ensure that districts are providing high-quality EL services and expending sufficient resources to provide these services.

~~(d) Categorical aid. In addition to the EL weight under section 4010 of this title, a school district that has, as determined annually on October 1 of the year:~~

~~(1) one to five EL students enrolled shall receive State aid of \$25,000.00 for that school year; or~~

~~(2) six to 25 EL students enrolled shall receive State aid of \$50,000.00 for that school year. [Repealed.]~~

~~(c) Annual appropriation. Annually, the General Assembly shall include in its appropriation for statewide education spending under subsection 4011(a) of this title an appropriation to provide aid to school districts for EL services under this section. [Repealed.]~~

~~(f) Payment. On or before November 1 of each year, the State Treasurer shall withdraw from the Education Fund, based on warrant of the Commissioner of Finance and Management, and shall forward to each school district the aid amount it is owed under this section. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 4015. ~~MERGER SUPPORT FOR MERGED DISTRICTS~~

~~(a) A school district that was voluntarily formed under 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156, or 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, each as amended, and received a merger support grant shall continue to receive that merger support grant, subject to the provisions in subsection (c) of this section.~~

~~(b) A school district that was involuntarily formed under the Final Report of Decisions and Order on Statewide School District Merger Decisions Pursuant to Act 46, Sees. 8(b) and 10 dated November 28, 2018 and that received a small schools grant in fiscal year 2020 shall receive an annual merger support grant in that amount, subject to the provisions in subsection (c) of this section.~~

~~(c)(1) Payment of a merger support grant under this section shall not be made in any year that the school district receives a small school weight under section 4010 of this title.~~

~~(2) Payment of a merger support grant under this section shall continue annually unless explicitly repealed by the General Assembly; provided, however, that the Secretary shall discontinue payment of the grant in the fiscal year following the cessation of operations of the school that made the district originally eligible for the grant, and further provided that if the building that houses the school that made the district originally eligible for the grant is consolidated with another school into a renovated or new school building, then the Secretary shall continue to pay the grant during the repayment term of any bonded indebtedness incurred in connection with the consolidation-related renovation or construction. [Repealed.]~~

§ 4016. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES

(a) A school district ~~or supervisory union~~ that incurs allowable transportation expenditures shall receive a transportation reimbursement grant each year. The grant shall be equal to ~~50~~ 100 percent of allowable transportation expenditures; ~~provided, however, that in any year the total amount of grants under this subsection shall not exceed the total amount of adjusted base year transportation grant expenditures. The total amount of base year transportation grant expenditures shall be \$10,000,000.00 for fiscal year 1997, increased each year thereafter by the annual price index for state and local government purchases of goods and services. If in any year the total amount of the grants under this subsection exceed the adjusted base year transportation grant expenditures, the amount of each grant awarded shall be reduced proportionately. Transportation grants paid under this section shall be paid from the Education Fund and shall be added to education spending payment receipts paid under section 4011 of this title.~~

(b) ~~In~~ As used in this section, “allowable transportation expenditures” means the costs of transporting students to and from school for regular classroom services and shall not include expenditures for transporting students participating in curricular activities that take place off the school grounds or for transporting students participating in cocurricular activities. ~~The State Board Agency of Education, through rulemaking, shall further define allowable transportation expenditures by rule.~~

(c) A district ~~or supervisory union~~ may apply and the Secretary may pay for extraordinary transportation expenditures incurred due to geographic or other conditions ~~such as the need to transport students out of the school district to attend another school because the district does not maintain a public school.~~ The State Board Agency of Education shall define extraordinary transportation expenditures by rule. The total amount of base year extraordinary transportation grant expenditures shall be \$250,000.00 for fiscal year 1997, increased each year thereafter by the annual price index for state and local government purchases of goods and services. Extraordinary transportation expenditures shall not be paid out of the funds appropriated under subsection (b) of this section for other transportation expenditures. Grants paid under this section shall be paid from the Education Fund and shall be added to education spending payment receipts paid under section 4011 of this title.

* * *

§ 4025. EDUCATION FUND

(a) The Education Fund is established to comprise the following:

(1) all revenue paid to the State from the statewide education tax on nonhomestead and homestead property under 32 V.S.A. chapter 135, which shall not include any revenue raised from the school district spending tax under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(f);

* * *

(b) Monies in the Education Fund shall be used for the following:

(1) To make payments to school districts ~~and supervisory unions~~ for the support of education in accordance with the provisions of section 4028 of this title, other provisions of this chapter, the provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 135, and the Flexible Pathways Initiative established by section 941 of this title, but excluding adult education and literacy programs under section 945 of this title.

(2) To cover the cost of fund auditing, accounting, revenue collection, and of short-term borrowing to meet fund cash flow requirements.

~~(3) To make payments required under 32 V.S.A. § 6066(a)(1) and only that portion attributable to education taxes, as determined by the Commissioner of Taxes, of payments required under 32 V.S.A. § 6066(a)(3). The State Treasurer shall withdraw funds from the Education Fund upon warrants issued by the Commissioner of Finance and Management based on information supplied by the Commissioner of Taxes. The Commissioner of Finance and Management may draw warrants for disbursements from the Fund in anticipation of receipts. All balances in the Fund at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried forward and remain a part of the Fund. Interest accruing from the Fund shall remain in the Fund. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 4026. EDUCATION FUND BUDGET STABILIZATION RESERVE;

CREATION AND PURPOSE

* * *

~~(e) The enactment of this chapter and other provisions of the Equal Educational Opportunity Act of which it is a part have been premised upon estimates of balances of revenues to be raised and expenditures to be made under the act for such purposes as education spending payments, categorical State support grants, provisions for property tax income sensitivity, payments in lieu of taxes, current use value appraisals, tax stabilization agreements, the stabilization reserve established by this section, and for other purposes. If the stabilization reserve established under this section should in any fiscal year be~~

less than 5.0 percent of the prior fiscal year's appropriations from the Education Fund, as defined in subsection (b) of this section, the Joint Fiscal Committee shall review the information provided pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5402b and provide the General Assembly its recommendations for change necessary to restore the stabilization reserve to the statutory level provided in subsection (b) of this section.

§ 4027. EDUCATION FUND TRANSFER AMOUNTS

~~(a) [Repealed.]~~

~~(b) Annually, on or before June 1, each superintendent shall report to the Agency, on a form prescribed by the Secretary, each education budget that was adopted by May 1 for the following fiscal year by the member districts of the supervisory union and for which no petition for reconsideration has been filed. A superintendent shall report a budget adopted following May 1, to the Agency, between 30 to 40 days following adoption or, if a petition for reconsideration has been filed, within 10 days of final adoption of the budget the final adopted budget approved by the district school board.~~

§ 4028. FUND PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

~~(a) On or before September 10, December 10, and April 30 of each school year, one-third of the education spending payment under section 4011 of this title base amount as determined under subdivision 4001(17) of this title and any State guarantee as defined under 32 V.S.A. § 5401(19) shall become due to school districts, except that districts that have not adopted a budget by 30 days before the date of payment under this subsection shall receive one-quarter of the base education amount and upon adoption of a budget shall receive additional amounts due under this subsection.~~

~~(b) Payments made for special education under chapter 101 of this title, for career technical education under chapter 37 of this title, and for other aid and categorical grants paid for support of education shall also be from the Education Fund.~~

~~(c)(1) Any district that has adopted a school budget that includes high spending, as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(12), shall, upon timely notice, be authorized to use a portion of its high spending penalty to reduce future education spending:~~

~~(A) by entering into a contract with an operational efficiency consultant or a financial systems consultant to examine issues such as transportation arrangements, administrative costs, staffing patterns, and the potential for collaboration with other districts;~~

~~(B) by entering into a contract with an energy or facilities management consultant; or~~

~~(C) by engaging in discussions with other school districts about reorganization or consolidation for better service delivery at a lower cost.~~

~~(2) To the extent approved by the Secretary, the Agency shall pay the district from the property tax revenue to be generated by the high spending increase to the district's spending adjustment as estimated by the Secretary, up to a maximum of \$5,000.00. For the purposes of this subsection, "timely notice" means written notice from the district to the Secretary by September 30 of the budget year. If the district enters into a contract with a consultant pursuant to this subsection, the consultant shall not be an employee of the district or of the Agency. A copy of the consultant's final recommendations or a copy of the district's recommendations regarding reorganization, as appropriate, shall be submitted to the Secretary, and each affected town shall include in its next town report an executive summary of the consultant's or district's final recommendations and notice of where a complete copy is available. No district is authorized to obtain funds under this section more than one time in every five years. [Repealed.]~~

(d) The Joint Fiscal Office shall prepare a fiscal note for any legislation that requires a ~~supervisory union~~ or school district to perform any action with an associated cost, but does not provide money or a funding mechanism for fulfilling that obligation. Any fiscal note prepared under this subsection shall be completed not later than the date that the legislation is considered for a vote in the first committee to which it is referred.

* * *

§ 4030. DATA SUBMISSION; CORRECTIONS

(a) Upon discovering an error or change in data submitted to the Secretary for the purpose of determining payments to or from the Education Fund, a school district shall report the error or change to the Secretary as soon as possible. Any budget deficit or surplus due to the error or change shall be carried forward to the following year.

(b) The Secretary shall use data submitted on or before January 15 prior to the fiscal year that begins the following July 1 in order to calculate the amounts due each school district for any fiscal year for transportation aid due under section 4016 of this title.

(c) The Secretary shall use data corrections regarding approved district budget amounts submitted on or before June 15 prior to the fiscal year that begins the following July 1, in order to calculate the education payments due under section 4011 of this title. However, the Secretary may use data

submitted after June 15 and prior to July 15 due to unusual or exceptional circumstances as determined by the Secretary.

(d) The Secretary shall not use data corrected due to an error submitted following the deadlines to recalculate weighted long-term membership under section 4010 of this title. The Secretary shall not adjust average daily membership counts if an error or change is reported more than three fiscal years following the date that the original data was due.

(e) The ~~State Board~~ Agency of Education may adopt rules as necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

§ 4031. ~~UNORGANIZED TOWNS AND GORES~~

~~(a) For a municipality that, as of January 1, 2004, is an unorganized town or gore, its education property tax spending adjustment under 32 V.S.A. § 5401(13) shall be one for purposes of determining the tax rate under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(a)(2).~~

~~(b) For purposes of a claim for property tax credit under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154 by a taxpayer in a municipality affected under this section, the applicable percentage shall not be multiplied by a spending adjustment under 32 V.S.A. § 5401(13). [Repealed.]~~

* * * Education Property Tax Rate Formula * * *

Sec. 25. 32 V.S.A. § 5401 is amended to read:

§ 5401. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(7) “Homestead”:

(A) “Homestead” means the principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, owned and occupied by a resident individual as the individual’s domicile or owned and fully leased on April 1, provided the property is not leased for more than 182 days out of the calendar year or, for purposes of the renter credit under subsection 6066(b) of this title, is rented and occupied by a resident individual as the individual’s domicile.

* * *

(8) “Education spending” means “education spending” as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6).

* * *

(12) ~~“Excess spending” means:~~

~~(A) The per pupil spending amount of the district's education spending, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), plus any amount required to be added from a capital construction reserve fund under 24 V.S.A. § 2804(b).~~

~~(B) In excess of 118 percent of the statewide average district per pupil education spending increased by inflation, as determined by the Secretary of Education on or before November 15 of each year based on the passed budgets to date. As used in this subdivision, "increased by inflation" means increasing the statewide average district per pupil education spending for fiscal year 2025 by the most recent New England Economic Project cumulative price index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services, from fiscal year 2025 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined. [Repealed.]~~

~~(13)(A) "Education property tax spending adjustment" means the greater of one or a fraction in which:~~

~~(i)(A) the numerator is the district's per pupil education spending plus excess spending for the school year, and~~

~~(ii)(B) the denominator is the property dollar equivalent yield for the school year, as defined in subdivision (15) of this section, multiplied by the statewide adjustment.~~

~~(B) "Education income tax spending adjustment" means the greater of one or a fraction in which the numerator is the district's per pupil education spending plus excess spending for the school year, and the denominator is the income dollar equivalent yield for the school year, as defined in subdivision (16) of this section. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

~~(15) "Property dollar equivalent yield" means the amount of per pupil education spending that would result in a district having a homestead tax rate of \$1.00 per \$100.00 of equalized education property value. [Repealed.]~~

~~(16) "Income dollar equivalent yield" means the amount of per pupil education spending that would result in a district having an income percentage in subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title of 2.0 percent. [Repealed.]~~

~~(17) "Statewide adjustment" means the ratio of the aggregate education property tax grand list of all municipalities to the aggregate value of the equalized education property tax grand list of all municipalities. [Repealed.]~~

~~(18) "School district-approved spending" means the spending that a school district approves in excess of the foundation formula amount as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(17) for the fiscal year and for which no existing revenue source is available, provided that no school district shall approve spending in~~

excess of a certain percentage, to be determined annually, of the school district's foundation formula amount for the fiscal year.

(19) "State guarantee" means an amount equal to the school district's State guarantee rate multiplied by the school district's approved spending.

(20) "State guarantee rate" means one minus the ratio of the anticipated aggregate equalized education property tax grand list of the municipal members of a school district per the average daily membership as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 4001(1) of that school district in the following fiscal year to the anticipated aggregate equalized education property tax grand list of the municipal members of a school district per the average daily membership as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 4001(1) of that school district that is the median in the State in the following fiscal year, provided that no school district's State guarantee rate under this subdivision shall be less than zero.

Sec. 26. 32 V.S.A. § 5402 is amended to read:

§ 5402. EDUCATION PROPERTY TAX LIABILITY

(a) A statewide education tax is imposed on all nonhomestead and homestead property at the following rates:

~~(1) The tax rate for nonhomestead property shall be \$1.59 per \$100.00 divided by the statewide adjustment.~~

~~(2) The tax rate for homestead property shall be \$1.00 multiplied by the education property tax spending adjustment for the municipality per \$100.00 of equalized education property value as most recently determined under section 5405 of this title. The homestead property tax rate for each municipality that is a member of a union or unified union school district shall be calculated as required under subsection (e) of this section a rate sufficient to raise the foundation formula amount for the school district for the fiscal year after accounting for the forecasted available revenues and the State guarantee. It is the intention of the General Assembly that the statewide education tax rate under this section shall be adopted for each fiscal year by act of the General Assembly.~~

(b) The statewide education tax shall be calculated as follows:

(1) The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine for each municipality the education tax ~~rates~~ rate under subsection (a) of this section divided by the ~~number resulting from dividing the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal by the statewide adjustment.~~ The legislative body in each municipality shall then bill each property taxpayer at the ~~homestead or nonhomestead~~ rate determined by the Commissioner under this subdivision, multiplied by the education property tax grand list value of the property,

properly classified as homestead or nonhomestead property and without regard to any other tax classification of the property. Statewide education property tax bills shall show the tax due and the calculation of the rate determined under subsection (a) of this section, divided by ~~the number resulting from dividing~~ the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal ~~by the statewide adjustment~~, multiplied by the current grand list value of the property to be taxed. Statewide education property tax bills shall also include language provided by the Commissioner pursuant to subsection 5405(g) of this title.

(2) Taxes assessed under this section shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title with no tax classification other than as homestead or nonhomestead property; provided, however, that the tax levied under this chapter shall be billed to each taxpayer by the municipality in a manner that clearly indicates the tax is separate from any other tax assessed and collected under chapter 133, including an itemization of the separate taxes due. The bill may be on a single sheet of paper with the statewide education tax and other taxes presented separately and side by side.

(3) If a district has not voted a budget by June 30, an interim ~~homestead~~ education tax shall be imposed at the base rate determined under ~~subdivision (a)(2) subsection (a)~~ of this section, divided by ~~the number resulting from dividing~~ the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal ~~by the statewide adjustment, but without regard to any spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title.~~ Within 30 days after a budget is adopted and the deadline for reconsideration has passed, the Commissioner shall determine the municipality's ~~homestead~~ tax rate as required under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(c)(1) The treasurer of each municipality shall by December 1 of the year in which the tax is levied and on June 1 of the following year pay to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Education Fund one-half of the municipality's statewide ~~nonhomestead tax and one-half of the municipality's homestead~~ education tax, as determined under subdivision (b)(1) of this section.

(2) The Secretary of Education shall determine each municipality's net ~~nonhomestead~~ education tax payment ~~and its net homestead education tax payment~~ to the State based on grand list information received by the Secretary not later than the March 15 prior to the June 1 net payment. Payment shall be accompanied by a return prescribed by the Secretary of Education. Each municipality may retain 0.225 of one percent of the total education tax collected, only upon timely remittance of net payment to the State Treasurer or to the applicable school district or districts. ~~Each municipality may also retain \$15.00 for each late property tax credit claim filed after April 15 and before~~

September 2, as notified by the Department of Taxes, for the cost of issuing a new property tax bill.

(d) [Repealed.]

(c) ~~The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine a homestead education tax rate for each municipality that is a member of a union or unified union school district as follows:~~

~~(1) For a municipality that is a member of a unified union school district, use the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based upon the per pupil education spending of the unified union.~~

~~(2) For a municipality that is a member of a union school district:~~

~~(A) Determine the municipal district homestead tax rate using the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based on the per pupil education spending in the municipality who attends a school other than the union school.~~

~~(B) Determine the union district homestead tax rate using the base rate determined under subdivision (a)(2) of this section and a spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13) of this title based on the per pupil education spending of the union school district.~~

~~(C) Determine a combined homestead tax rate by calculating the weighted average of the rates determined under subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (2), with weighting based upon the ratio of union school long-term membership, as defined in 16 V.S.A. § 4001(7), from the member municipality to total long-term membership of the member municipality; and the ratio of long-term membership attending a school other than the union school to total long-term membership of the member municipality. Total long-term membership of the member municipality is based on the number of pupils who are legal residents of the municipality and attending school at public expense. If necessary, the Commissioner may adopt a rule to clarify and facilitate implementation of this subsection (c). [Repealed.]~~

(f)(1) A school district spending tax is imposed on all homestead and nonhomestead property in each member municipality of a school district that approves spending pursuant to subdivision 5401(18) of this chapter. The Commissioner of Taxes shall determine the school district spending tax rate for each school district at a rate sufficient to raise the amount of the school district's approved spending as certified by the Secretary of Education after accounting for any State guarantee due to the school district. The legislative body in each member municipality shall then bill each property taxpayer at the

rate determined by the Commissioner under this subsection multiplied by the current grand list value of the property to be taxed. The bill shall show the tax due and the calculation of the rate.

(2) The school district spending tax assessed under this subsection shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title with no tax classification other than as homestead or nonhomestead property; provided, however, that the tax levied under this chapter shall be billed to each taxpayer by the municipality in a manner that clearly indicates the tax is separate from any other tax assessed and collected under chapter 133 and the statewide education property tax under this section, including an itemization of the separate taxes due. The bill may be on a single sheet of paper with the school district spending tax, the statewide education tax, and other taxes presented separately and side by side.

(3) The treasurer of each municipality shall pay all revenue raised from the school district spending tax imposed under this subsection to its school district pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 426.

Sec. 27. 32 V.S.A. § 5402b is amended to read:

§ 5402b. BASE AMOUNT; STATEWIDE EDUCATION TAX YIELDS

RATE; RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMISSIONER

(a) Annually, not later than December 1, the Commissioner of Taxes, after consultation with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Administration, and the Joint Fiscal Office, shall estimate the base amount as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 4001(16) for the following fiscal year and calculate and recommend a property dollar equivalent yield, an income dollar equivalent yield, and a nonhomestead property tax rate statewide education property tax rate pursuant to subdivision 5402(a)(1) of this chapter for the following fiscal year. In making these calculations, the Commissioner shall assume the statutory reserves are maintained at five percent pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 4026:

~~(1) the homestead base tax rate in subdivision 5402(a)(2) of this title is \$1.00 per \$100.00 of equalized education property value;~~

~~(2) the applicable percentage in subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title is 2.0;~~

~~(3) the statutory reserves under 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and this section were maintained at five percent;~~

~~(4) the percentage change in the average education tax bill applied to nonhomestead property and the percentage change in the average education tax bill of homestead property and the percentage change in the average education~~

tax bill for taxpayers who claim a credit under subsection 6066(a) of this title are equal;

(5) ~~the equalized education grand list is multiplied by the statewide adjustment in calculating the property dollar equivalent yield; and~~

(6) ~~the nonhomestead rate is divided by the statewide adjustment.~~

(b) ~~For each fiscal year, the property dollar equivalent yield and the income dollar equivalent yield shall be the same as in the prior fiscal year, unless set otherwise by the General Assembly. [Repealed.]~~

(c) Annually, on or before December 1, the Joint Fiscal Office shall prepare and publish an official, annotated copy of the Education Fund Outlook. The Emergency Board shall review the Outlook at its meetings. As used in this section, "Education Fund Outlook" means the projected revenues and expenses associated with the Education Fund for the following fiscal year, including projections of different categories of educational expenses and costs.

(d) Along with the recommendations made under this section, the Commissioner shall include the range of per pupil school district-approved spending between all districts in the State for the previous year.

* * *

* * * Conforming Revisions; Statewide Property Tax Rate * * *

Sec. 28. 32 V.S.A. § 5404a(b)(1) is amended to read:

(b)(1) An agreement affecting the education property tax grand list defined under subsection (a) of this section shall reduce the municipality's education property tax liability under this chapter for the duration of the agreement or exemption without extension or renewal, and for a maximum of 10 years. A municipality's property tax liability under this chapter shall be reduced by any difference between the amount of the education property taxes collected on the subject property and the amount of education property taxes that would have been collected on such property if its fair market value were taxed at the equalized ~~nonhomestead~~ rate for the tax year.

Sec. 29. 32 V.S.A. § 5405(g) is amended to read:

(g) The Commissioner shall provide to municipalities for the front of property tax bills the district ~~homestead~~ property tax rate before equalization, ~~the nonresidential tax rate before equalization~~, and the calculation process that creates the equalized ~~homestead and nonhomestead tax rates~~ rate. The Commissioner shall further provide to municipalities for the back of property tax bills an explanation of the common level of appraisal, including its origin and purpose.

Sec. 30. 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g) is amended to read:

~~(g) If the property identified in a declaration under subsection (b) of this section is not the taxpayer's homestead or if the owner of a homestead fails to declare a homestead as required under this section, the Commissioner shall notify the municipality, and the municipality shall issue a corrected tax bill that may, as determined by the governing body of the municipality, include a penalty of up to three percent of the education tax on the property. However, if the property incorrectly declared as a homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower homestead tax rate than the nonhomestead tax rate or if an undeclared homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower nonhomestead tax rate than the homestead tax rate, then the governing body of the municipality may include a penalty of up to eight percent of the education tax liability on the property. If the Commissioner determines that the declaration or failure to declare was with fraudulent intent, then the municipality shall assess the taxpayer a penalty in an amount equal to 100 percent of the education tax on the property, plus any interest and late-payment fee or commission that may be due. Any penalty imposed under this section and any additional property tax interest and late-payment fee or commission shall be assessed and collected by the municipality in the same manner as a property tax under chapter 133 of this title. Notwithstanding section 4772 of this title, issuance of a corrected bill issued under this section does not extend the time for payment of the original bill nor relieve the taxpayer of any interest or penalties associated with the original bill. If the corrected bill is less than the original bill and there are also no unpaid current year taxes, interest, or penalties and no past year delinquent taxes or penalties and interest charges, any overpayment shall be reflected on the corrected tax bill and refunded to the taxpayer. [Repealed.]~~

* * * Statewide Property Tax Credit Repeal; Homestead Exemption

Created * * *

Sec. 31. 32 V.S.A. § 5400 is amended to read:

§ 5400. STATUTORY PURPOSES

* * *

(c) The statutory purpose of the exemption for qualified housing in subdivision 5404a(a)(6) of this title is to ensure that taxes on this rent-restricted housing provided to Vermonters of low and moderate income are more equivalent to property taxed ~~using the State as a homestead rate property~~ and to adjust the costs of investment in rent-restricted housing to reflect more accurately the revenue potential of such property.

* * *

(j) The statutory purpose of the homestead property tax exemption in subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this title is to reduce the property tax liability for Vermont households with low and moderate household income.

Sec. 32. 32 V.S.A. chapter 154 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 154. HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION,
MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT, AND RENTER CREDIT

§ 6061. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter ~~unless the context requires otherwise:~~

(1) ~~“Property Municipal property tax credit” means a credit of the prior tax year’s statewide or municipal property tax liability or a homestead owner credit, as authorized under section subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title, as the context requires chapter.~~

* * *

(8) ~~“Annual tax levy” means the property taxes levied on property taxable on April 1 and without regard to the year in which those taxes are due or paid. [Repealed.]~~

(9) “Taxable year” means the calendar year preceding the year in which the claim is filed.

(10) [Repealed.]

(11) “Housesite” means that portion of a homestead, as defined under subdivision 5401(7) of this title but not under subdivision 5401(7)(G) of this title, that includes as much of the land owned by the claimant surrounding the dwelling as is reasonably necessary for use of the dwelling as a home, but in no event more than two acres per dwelling unit, and, in the case of multiple dwelling units, not more than two acres per dwelling unit up to a maximum of 10 acres per parcel.

(12) “Claim year” means the year in which a claim is filed under this chapter.

(13) “Homestead” means a homestead as defined under subdivision 5401(7) of this title, but not under subdivision 5401(7)(G) of this title, and declared on or before October 15 in accordance with section 5410 of this title.

(14) ~~“Statewide education tax rate” means the homestead education property tax rate multiplied by the municipality’s education spending adjustment under subdivision 5402(a)(2) of this title and used to calculate taxes assessed in the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(21) “Homestead property tax exemption” means a reduction in the amount of housesite value subject to the statewide education tax and the school district spending tax in the claim year as authorized under sections 6066 and 6066a of this chapter.

§ 6062. NUMBER AND IDENTITY OF CLAIMANTS; APPORTIONMENT

* * *

(d) Whenever a housesite is an integral part of a larger unit such as a farm or a multi-purpose or multi-dwelling building, property taxes paid shall be that percentage of the total property tax as the value of the housesite is to the total value. Upon a claimant's request, the listers shall certify to the claimant the value of ~~his or her~~ the claimant's homestead and housesite.

* * *

§ 6063. CLAIM AS PERSONAL; CREDIT AND EXEMPTION AMOUNT

AT TIME OF TRANSFER

(a) The right to file a claim under this chapter is personal to the claimant and shall not survive ~~his or her~~ the claimant's death, but the right may be exercised on behalf of a claimant by ~~his or her~~ the claimant's legal guardian or attorney-in-fact. When a claimant dies after having filed a timely claim, the municipal property tax credit and the homestead exemption amount shall be ~~credited~~ applied to the ~~homestead~~ property tax liability of the claimant's estate as provided in section 6066a of this title.

(b) In case of sale or transfer of a residence, after April 1 of the claim year:

(1) any municipal property tax credit ~~amounts~~ amount related to that residence shall be allocated to the ~~seller~~ transferor at closing unless the parties otherwise agree;

(2) any homestead property tax exemption related to that residence based on the transferor's age and household income under subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this chapter shall cease to be in effect upon transfer; and

(3) a transferee who is eligible to declare the residence as a homestead but for the requirement to own the residence on April 1 of the claim year shall, notwithstanding subdivision 5401(7) and subsection 5410(b) of this title, be eligible to apply for a homestead property tax exemption in the claim year when the transfer occurs by filing with the Commissioner of Taxes a homestead declaration pursuant to section 5410 of this title and a claim for exemption on or before the due date prescribed under section 6068 of this chapter.

* * *

§ 6065. FORMS; TABLES; NOTICES

(a) In administering this chapter, the Commissioner shall provide suitable claim forms with tables of allowable claims, instructions, and worksheets for claiming a homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit.

(b) Prior to June 1, the Commissioner shall also prepare and supply to each town in the State notices describing the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit for inclusion in property tax bills. The notice shall be in simple, plain language and shall explain how to file for a homestead property tax exemption and a municipal property tax credit, where to find assistance filing for a credit or an exemption, or both, and any other related information as determined by the Commissioner. The notice shall direct taxpayers to a resource where they can find versions of the notice translated into the five most common non-English languages in the State. A town shall include such notice in each tax bill and notice of delinquent taxes that it mails to taxpayers who own in that town a residential property, without regard for whether the property was declared a homestead pursuant to subdivision 5401(7) of this title.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, towns that use envelopes or mailers not able to accommodate notices describing the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit may distribute such notices in an alternative manner.

§ 6066. COMPUTATION OF HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAXEXEMPTION, MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT, AND
RENTER CREDIT

(a) ~~An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the year in which the claim is filed shall be entitled to a credit for the prior year's homestead property tax liability amount determined as follows:~~

~~(1)(A) For a claimant with household income of \$90,000.00 or more:~~

~~(i) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year;~~

~~(ii) minus (if less) the sum of:~~

~~(I) the income percentage of household income for the taxable year; plus~~

~~(H) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$225,000.00.~~

~~(B) For a claimant with household income of less than \$90,000.00 but more than \$47,000.00, the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year, minus (if less) the sum of:~~

~~(i) the income percentage of household income for the taxable year; plus~~

~~(ii) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$400,000.00.~~

~~(C) For a claimant whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00, the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year, minus the lesser of:~~

~~(i) the sum of the income percentage of household income for the taxable year plus the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year in excess of \$400,000.00; or~~

~~(ii) the statewide education tax rate, multiplied by the equalized value of the housesite in the taxable year reduced by \$15,000.00.~~

~~(2) "Income percentage" in this section means two percent, multiplied by the education income tax spending adjustment under subdivision 5401(13)(B) of this title for the property tax year that begins in the claim year for the municipality in which the homestead residence is located~~

(1) An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the claim year shall be entitled to a homestead property tax exemption in the claim year in an amount determined as follows:

(A) for a claimant whose household income is equal to or less than \$47,000.00 and who is 65 years of age or more as of December 31 of the year in which the claimant's household income is taken into account, the exemption shall be 70 percent of the claimant's housesite value, provided the exempt amount of housesite value shall not exceed \$200,000.00;

(B) for a claimant whose household income is equal to or less than \$47,000.00 and who is less than 65 years of age as of December 31 of the year in which the claimant's household income is taken into account, the exemption shall be 60 percent of the claimant's housesite value, provided the exempt amount of housesite value shall not exceed \$200,000.00;

(C) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$47,000.00 but equal to or less than \$90,000.00, the exemption shall be 50 percent of the claimant's housesite value, provided the exempt amount of housesite value shall not exceed \$200,000.00;

(D) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$90,000.00 but equal to or less than \$125,000.00, the exemption shall be 10 percent of the claimant's housesite value, provided the exempt amount of housesite value shall not exceed \$50,000.00; and

(E) for a claimant whose household income is greater than \$125,000.00, no amount of housesite value shall be exempt under this section.

~~(3)(2)~~ A An eligible claimant who owned the homestead on April 1 of the claim year and whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00 shall also be entitled to an additional a credit amount from against the claimant's municipal taxes for the upcoming fiscal year that is equal to the amount by which the municipal property taxes for the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year upon the claimant's housesite exceeds a percentage of the claimant's household income for the taxable year as follows:

If household income (rounded to the nearest dollar) is:	then the taxpayer is entitled to credit for the
	reduced property tax in excess of this percent of that income:
\$0.00 — 9,999.00	1.50
\$10,000.00 — 47,000.00	3.00

~~(4) A claimant whose household income does not exceed \$47,000.00 shall also be entitled to an additional credit amount from the claimant's statewide education tax for the upcoming fiscal year that is equal to the amount by which the education property tax for the municipal fiscal year that began in the taxable year upon the claimant's housesite, reduced by the credit amount determined under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, exceeds a percentage of the claimant's household income for the taxable year as follows:~~

If household income (rounded to the nearest dollar) is:	then the taxpayer is entitled to credit for the reduced property tax in excess of this percent of that income:

\$0.00—9,999.00	0.5
\$10,000.00—24,999.00	1.5
\$25,000.00—47,000.00	2.0

~~(5)(3)~~ In no event shall the homestead property tax exemption provided for in subdivision (1) of this subsection reduce the housesite value below zero. In no event shall the municipal property tax credit provided for in subdivision ~~(3) or (4)~~ (2) of this subsection exceed the amount of the reduced municipal property tax. ~~The credits under subdivision (4) of this subsection shall be calculated considering only the tax due on the first \$400,000.00 in equalized housesite value.~~

(b)(1) An eligible claimant who rented the homestead shall be entitled to a credit for the taxable year in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.00, to be calculated as follows:

* * *

(c) to be eligible for an ~~adjustment~~ exemption or credit under this chapter, the claimant:

(1) must have been domiciled in this State during the entire taxable year;

(2) may not be a person claimed as a dependent by any taxpayer under the federal Internal Revenue Code during the taxable year; and

(3) in the case of a renter, shall have rented property for at least six calendar months, which need not be consecutive, during the taxable year.

(d) The owner of a mobile home that is sited on a lot not owned by the homeowner may include an amount determined under subdivision 6061(7) of this title as allocable rent paid on the lot with the amount of property taxes paid by the homeowner on the home for the purpose of computation of ~~credits~~ the municipal property tax credit under subdivision ~~(a)(3)(2)~~ (a)(3)(2) of this section, unless the homeowner has included in the claim an amount of property tax on common land under the provisions of subsection (e) of this section.

(e) Property taxes paid by a cooperative, not including a mobile home park cooperative, allocable to property used as a homestead shall be attributable to the co-op member for the purpose of computing the ~~credit~~ of property tax liability of the co-op member under this section. Property owned by a cooperative declared as a homestead may only include the homestead and a pro rata share of any common land owned or leased by the cooperative, not to exceed the two-acre housesite limitation. The share of the cooperative's assessed value attributable to the housesite shall be determined by the

cooperative and specified annually in a notice to the co-op member. Property taxes paid by a mobile home park cooperative, allocable to property used as a housesite, shall be attributed to the owner of the housesite for the purpose of computing the ~~credit~~ of property tax liability of the housesite owner under this section. Property owned by the mobile home park cooperative and declared as a housesite may only include common property of the cooperative contiguous with at least one mobile home lot in the park, not to exceed the two-acre housesite limitation. The share attributable to any mobile home lot shall be determined by the cooperative and specified in the cooperative agreement. A co-op member who is the housesite owner shall be entitled to a property tax credit in an amount determined by multiplying the property taxes allocated under this subsection by the percentage of the exemption for which the housesite owner's household income qualifies under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(f) [Repealed.]

(g) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, if the land surrounding a homestead is owned by a nonprofit corporation or community land trust with tax exempt status under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3), the homeowner may include an allocated amount as property tax paid on the land with the amount of property taxes paid by the homeowner on the home for the purposes of computation of ~~the credit~~ property tax liability under this section. The allocated amount shall be determined by the nonprofit corporation or community land trust on a proportional basis. The nonprofit corporation or community land trust shall provide to that homeowner, by January 31, a certificate specifying the allocated amount. The certificate shall indicate the proportion of total property tax on the parcel that was assessed for municipal property tax and for statewide property tax and the proportion of total value of the parcel. A homeowner under this subsection shall be entitled to a property tax credit in an amount determined by multiplying the property taxes allocated under this subsection by the percentage of the exemption for which the homeowner's household income qualifies under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(h) A homestead owner shall be entitled to an additional property tax credit equal to one percent of the amount of income tax refund that the claimant elects to allocate to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax under section 6068 of this title.

(i) ~~Adjustments~~ The homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit under subsection (a) of this section shall be calculated without regard to any exemption under subdivision 3802(11) of this title.

§ 6066a. DETERMINATION OF HOMESTEAD PROPERTY TAXEXEMPTION AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX CREDIT

(a) Annually, the Commissioner shall determine the homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit amount under section 6066 of this title, related to a homestead owned by the claimant, based on the prior taxable year's income and for the municipal property tax credit, crediting property taxes paid in the prior year, and for the homestead property tax exemption, exempting the housesite value in the claim year. The Commissioner shall notify the municipality in which the housesite is located of the amount of the homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit for the claimant for ~~homestead~~ property tax liabilities on a monthly basis. The municipal property tax credit of a claimant who was assessed property tax by a town that revised the dates of its fiscal year, however, is the excess of the property tax that was assessed in the last 12 months of the revised fiscal year, over the adjusted property tax of the claimant for the revised fiscal year, as determined under section 6066 of this title, related to a homestead owned by the claimant.

(b) The Commissioner shall include in the total homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amount determined under subsection (a) of this section, for credit to the taxpayer for ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax and school district spending tax liabilities, any income tax overpayment remaining after allocation under section 3112 of this title and setoff under section 5934 of this title, which the taxpayer has directed to be used for payment of property taxes.

(c) The Commissioner shall notify the municipality of any claim and refund amounts unresolved by November 1 at the time of final resolution, including adjudication, if any; provided, however, that towns will not be notified of any additional credit amounts after November 1 of the claim year, and such amounts shall be paid to the claimant by the Commissioner.

(d) [Repealed.]

(e) At the time of notice to the municipality, the Commissioner shall notify the taxpayer of the homestead property tax credit exemption amount determined under subdivision 6066(a)(1) of this title, ~~the amount determined under subdivision 6066(a)(3) of this title;~~ any additional municipal property credit amounts amount due the homestead owner under ~~section~~ subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title; the amount of income tax refund, if any, allocated to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax liabilities; and any late-claim reduction amount.

(f)(1) For taxpayers and amounts stated in the notice to towns on or before July 1, municipalities shall create and send to taxpayers a ~~homestead~~ property tax bill, instead of the bill required under subdivision 5402(b)(1) of this title, providing the total amount allocated to payment of ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax liabilities and notice of the balance due. Municipalities shall apply the amount of the homestead property tax exemption allocated under this chapter to current year property taxes in equal amounts to each of the taxpayers' property tax installments that include education taxes and the amount of the municipal property tax credit allocated under this chapter to current year municipal property taxes in equal amounts to each of the taxpayers' property tax installments that include municipal taxes. Notwithstanding section 4772 of this title, if a town issues a corrected bill as a result of the notice sent by the Commissioner under subsection (a) of this section, issuance of the corrected new bill does not extend the time for payment of the original bill nor relieve the taxpayer of any interest or penalties associated with the original bill. If the corrected bill is less than the original bill, and there are also no unpaid current year taxes, interest, or penalties, and no past year delinquent taxes or penalties and interest charges, any overpayment shall be reflected on the corrected tax bill and refunded to the taxpayer.

(2) For homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amounts for which municipalities receive notice after November 1, municipalities shall issue a new ~~homestead~~ property tax bill with notice to the taxpayer of the total amount allocated to payment of ~~homestead~~ property tax liabilities and notice of the balance due.

(3) The homestead property tax exemption and municipal property tax credit amount determined for the taxpayer shall be allocated first to current year housesite value and property tax on the homestead parcel, next to current-year homestead parcel penalties and interest, next to any prior year homestead parcel penalties and interest, and last to any prior year housesite value and property tax on the homestead parcel. No homestead property tax exemption or municipal credit shall be allocated to a housesite value or property tax liability for any year after the year for which the claim or refund allocation was filed. No municipal tax-reduction incentive for early payment of taxes shall apply to any amount allocated to the property tax bill under this chapter.

(4) If the homestead property tax exemption or the municipal property tax credit amount as described in subsection (e) of this section exceeds the property tax, penalties, and interest due for the current and all prior years, the municipality shall refund the excess to the taxpayer, without interest, within 20 days of the first date upon which taxes become due and payable or 20 days

after notification of the exemption or credit amount by the Commissioner of Taxes, whichever is later.

(g) The Commissioner of Taxes shall pay monthly to each municipality the amount of municipal property tax credit of which the municipality was last notified related to municipal property tax on homesteads within that municipality, as determined by the Commissioner of Taxes.

§ 6067. CREDIT CLAIM LIMITATIONS

(a) Claimant. Only one individual per household per taxable year shall be entitled to a a homestead exemption claim or property tax credit claim, or both, under this chapter.

(b) Other states. An individual who received a homestead exemption or credit with respect to property taxes assessed by another state for the taxable year shall not be entitled to receive a credit under this chapter.

(c) Dollar amount. No ~~taxpayer~~ claimant shall receive a renter credit under subsection 6066(b) of this title in excess of \$2,500.00. No ~~taxpayer~~ claimant shall receive a municipal property tax credit under subdivision 6066(a)(3)(2) of this title greater than \$2,400.00 ~~or cumulative credit under subdivisions 6066(a)(1)-(2) and (4) of this title greater than \$5,600.00.~~

§ 6068. APPLICATION AND TIME FOR FILING

(a) A homestead property tax exemption or municipal property tax credit claim or request for allocation of an income tax refund to ~~homestead~~ statewide education property tax payment shall be filed with the Commissioner on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return, without extension, and shall describe the school district in which the homestead property is located and shall particularly describe the homestead property for which the exemption or credit ~~or allocation~~ is sought, including the school parcel account number prescribed in subsection 5404(b) of this title. A renter credit claim shall be filed with the Commissioner on or before the due date for filing the Vermont income tax return, without extension.

(b)(1) If ~~the~~ a claimant files a municipal property tax credit claim after October 15 but on or before March 15 of the following calendar year, the municipal property tax credit under this chapter:

(1)(A) shall be reduced in amount by \$150.00, but not below \$0.00;

(2)(B) shall be issued directly to the claimant; and

(3)(C) shall not require the municipality where the claimant's property is located to issue an adjusted ~~homestead~~ property tax bill.

(2) If a claimant files a homestead property tax exemption claim under this chapter after October 15 but on or before March 15 of the following calendar year, the claimant shall pay a penalty of \$150.00 and the municipality where the claimant's property is located shall not be required to issue an adjusted property tax bill.

(c) No request for allocation of an income tax refund or for a renter credit claim may be made after October 15. No homestead property tax exemption or municipal property tax credit claim may be made after March 15 of the calendar year following the due date under subsection (a) of this section.

* * *

§ 6070. DISALLOWED CLAIMS

A claim shall be disallowed if the claimant received title to ~~his or her~~ the claimant's homestead primarily for the purpose of receiving benefits under this chapter.

§ 6071. EXCESSIVE AND FRAUDULENT CLAIMS

(a) In any case in which it is determined under the provisions of this title that a claim is or was excessive and was filed with fraudulent intent, the claim shall be disallowed in full and the Commissioner may impose a penalty equal to the amount claimed. A disallowed claim may be recovered by assessment as income taxes are assessed. The assessment, including assessment of penalty, shall bear interest from the date the claim was credited against property tax or income tax or paid by the State until repaid by the claimant at the rate per annum established from time to time by the Commissioner pursuant to section 3108 of this title. The claimant in that case, and any person who assisted in the preparation of filing of such excessive claim or supplied information upon which the excessive claim was prepared, with fraudulent intent, shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 or be imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(b) In any case in which it is determined that a claim is or was excessive, the Commissioner may impose a 10 percent penalty on such excess, and if the claim has been paid or credited against property tax or income tax otherwise payable, the municipal property tax credit or homestead exemption shall be reduced or canceled and the proper portion of any amount paid shall be similarly recovered by assessment as income taxes are assessed, and such assessment shall bear interest at the rate per annum established from time to time by the Commissioner pursuant to section 3108 of this title from the date of payment or, in the case of credit of a municipal property tax bill under section 6066a of this title, from December 1 of the year in which the claim is filed until refunded or paid.

(c) ~~In any case in which a homestead is rented by a person from another person under circumstances deemed by the Commissioner to be not at arms-length, the Commissioner may determine the rent constituting property tax for purposes of this chapter. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

§ 6073. REGULATIONS RULES OF THE COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner may, from time to time, issue adopt, amend, and withdraw ~~regulations~~ rules interpreting and implementing this chapter.

§ 6074. AMENDMENT OF CERTAIN CLAIMS

At any time within three years after the date for filing claims under subsection 6068(a) of this chapter, a claimant who filed a claim by October 15 may file to amend that claim with regard to housesite value, ~~housesite education tax~~, housesite municipal tax, and ownership percentage or to correct the amount of household income reported on that claim.

* * * Conforming Revisions; Property Tax Credit Repeal * * *

Sec. 33. 11 V.S.A. § 1608 is amended to read:

§ 1608. ELIGIBILITY FOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Members of cooperative housing corporations shall be eligible to apply for and receive a homestead property tax ~~adjustment~~ exemption and municipal property tax credit under 32 V.S.A. § 6066, subject to the conditions of eligibility set forth therein.

Sec. 34. 32 V.S.A. § 3102(j) is amended to read:

(j) Tax bills prepared by a municipality under subdivision 5402(b)(1) of this title showing only the amount of total tax due shall not be considered confidential return information under this section. For the purposes of calculating ~~credits~~ the homestead property tax exemption and the municipal property tax credit under chapter 154 of this title, information provided by the Commissioner to a municipality under subsection 6066a(a) of this title and information provided by the municipality to a taxpayer under subsection 6066a(f) shall be considered confidential return information under this section.

Sec. 35. 32 V.S.A. § 3206(b) is amended to read:

(b) As used in this section, “extraordinary relief” means a remedy that is within the power of the Commissioner to grant under this title, ~~a remedy that compensates for the result of inaccurate classification of property as homestead or nonhomestead pursuant to section 5410 of this title through no fault of the taxpayer,~~ or a remedy that makes changes to a taxpayer’s

homestead property tax exemption, municipal property tax credit, or renter credit claim necessary to remedy the problem identified by the Taxpayer Advocate.

* * * Education Fund Advisory Committee * * *

Sec. 36. REPEAL; EDUCATION FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The following are repealed on July 1, 2025:

- (1) 32 V.S.A. § 5414 (Creation; Education Fund Advisory Committee).
- (2) 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 12 (Education Fund Advisory Committee sunset).

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 37. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) The following sections shall take effect on passage:

- (1) Sec. 1 (findings and intent);
- (2) Sec. 2 (16 V.S.A. § 43);
- (3) Sec. 3 (16 V.S.A. § 212);
- (4) Sec. 4 (16 V.S.A. § 164);
- (5) Sec. 5 (16 V.S.A. § 165);
- (6) Sec. 7 (therapeutic schools and salary schedule report);
- (7) Sec. 10 (repeal of 16 V.S.A. chapter 7);
- (8) Sec. 11 (new union school districts);
- (9) Sec. 12 (16 V.S.A. § 2);
- (10) Sec. 14 (16 V.S.A. chapter 11);
- (11) Sec. 18 (repeals of 16 V.S.A. §§ 822a and 823);
- (12) Sec. 22 (transition year one funding);
- (13) Sec. 23 (transition year two funding);
- (14) Sec. 36 (Education Fund Advisory Committee); and
- (15) Sec. 37 (effective dates).

(b) The following sections shall take effect on July 1, 2027:

- (1) Sec. 6 (16 V.S.A. § 166);
- (2) Sec. 8 (16 V.S.A. § 241);

- (3) Sec. 9 (16 V.S.A. § 242);
- (4) Sec. 13 (16 V.S.A. § 563);
- (5) Sec. 15 (16 V.S.A. § 564);
- (6) Sec. 16 (16 V.S.A. § 821);
- (7) Sec. 17 (16 V.S.A. § 822);
- (8) Sec. 19 (16 V.S.A. § 824);
- (9) Sec. 20 (16 V.S.A. § 1071);
- (10) Sec. 21 (16 V.S.A. § 1121);
- (11) Sec. 24 (16 V.S.A. chapter 133);
- (12) Sec. 25 (32 V.S.A. § 5401);
- (13) Sec. 26 (32 V.S.A. § 5402);
- (14) Sec. 27 (32 V.S.A. § 5402b);
- (15) Sec. 28 (32 V.S.A. § 5404a);
- (16) Sec. 29 (32 V.S.A. § 5405);
- (17) Sec. 30 (32 V.S.A. § 5410);
- (18) Sec. 31 (32 V.S.A. § 5400);
- (19) Sec. 32 (32 V.S.A. chapter 154);
- (20) Sec. 33 (11 V.S.A. § 1608);
- (21) Sec. 34 (32 V.S.A. § 3102); and
- (22) Sec. 35 (32 V.S.A. § 3206).

Thereupon, **Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Wood of Waterbury, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Bishop of Colchester, Cole of Hartford, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Maguire of Rutland City, McGill of Bridport, and Noyes of Wolcott** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 35, 16 V.S.A. § 4010, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 35 to read as follows:

Sec. 35. 16 V.S.A. § 4010 is amended to read:

§ 4010. DETERMINATION OF WEIGHTED LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP
AND PER PUPIL EDUCATION SPENDING EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITY PAYMENT

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “EL pupils” means pupils described under section 4013 of this title.

(2) “FPL” means the Federal Poverty Level.

(3) “Weighting categories” means the categories listed under subsection (b) of this section.

(4) “Child with a disability” has the same meaning as in section 2942 of this title.

(5) “Disability” means any of:

(A) a specific learning disability or a speech or language impairment, each of which is identified as “Category A”;

(B) an emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, developmental delay, or other health impairment, each of which is identified as “Category B”;
or

(C) autism spectrum disorder, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment, each of which is identified as “Category C.”

(6) “English language proficiency level” means each of the English language proficiency levels published as a standardized measure of academic language proficiency in WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and available to members of the WIDA consortium of state departments of education.

(7) “Newcomer or SLIFE” means a pupil identified as a New American or as a student with limited or interrupted formal education.

(b) Determination of average daily membership and weighting categories. On or before the first day of December during each school year, the Secretary shall determine the average daily membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(1) of this title, of each school district for the current school year and shall ~~perform the following tasks:~~

~~(1) Using~~ using average daily membership, list for each school district the number of:

~~(A) pupils in prekindergarten;~~

~~(B) pupils in kindergarten through grade five;~~

~~(C) pupils in grades six through eight;~~

~~(D) pupils in grades nine through 12;~~

~~(E)(1) pupils whose families are at or below 185 percent of FPL, using the highest number of pupils in the district:~~

~~(i)(A) that meet this definition under the universal income declaration form; or~~

~~(ii)(B) who are directly certified for free and reduced-priced meals; and~~

~~(F)(2) EL pupils that have been most recently assessed at an English language proficiency level of:~~

~~(A) Level 1;~~

~~(B) Level 2 or 3;~~

~~(C) Level 4; or~~

~~(D) Level 5 or 6;~~

~~(3) EL pupils that are identified as Newcomer or SLIFE; and~~

~~(4) Children with a disability whose disability is identified as:~~

~~(A) Category A;~~

~~(B) Category B; or~~

~~(C) Category C, provided that a child with multiple disabilities shall be counted solely under this subdivision (C).~~

~~(2)(A) Identify all school districts that have low population density, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, equaling:~~

~~(i) fewer than 36 persons per square mile;~~

~~(ii) 36 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 55 persons per square mile; or~~

~~(iii) 55 or more persons per square mile but fewer than 100 persons per square mile.~~

~~(B) Population density data shall be based on the best available U.S. Census data as provided to the Agency of Education by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.~~

~~(C) Using average daily membership, list for each school district that has low population density the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(iii) of this subdivision (2).~~

~~(3)(A) Identify all school districts that have one or more small schools, which are schools that have an average two-year enrollment of:~~

~~(i) fewer than 100 pupils; or~~

~~(ii) 100 or more pupils but fewer than 250 pupils.~~

~~(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), “average two-year enrollment” means the average enrollment of the two most recently completed school years, and “enrollment” means the number of pupils who are enrolled in a school operated by the district on October 1. A pupil shall be counted as one whether the pupil is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student.~~

~~(C) Using average two-year enrollment, list for each school district that has a small school the number of pupils in each of subdivisions (A)(i)–(ii) of this subdivision (3).~~

(c) Reporting on weighting categories to the Agency of Education. Each school district shall annually report to the Agency of Education by a date established by the Agency the information needed in order for the Agency to compute the weighting categories under subsection (b) of this section for that district. In order to fulfill this obligation, a school district that pays public tuition on behalf of a resident student (sending district) to a public school in another school district, an approved independent school, or an out-of-state school (each a receiving school) may request the receiving school to collect this information on the sending district’s resident student, and if requested, the receiving school shall provide this information to the sending district in a timely manner.

(d) Determination of weighted long-term membership. For each weighting category ~~except the small schools weighting category under subdivision (b)(3) of this section~~, the Secretary shall compute the weighting count by using the long-term membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(7) of this title, in that category.

(1) ~~The Secretary shall first apply grade level weights. Each pupil included in long-term membership shall count as one, multiplied by the following amounts:~~

~~(A) prekindergarten—negative 0.54;~~

~~(B) grades six through eight—0.36; and~~

~~(C) grades nine through 12—0.39. [Repealed.]~~

(2) ~~The Secretary shall next apply a weight for pupils whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL. Each pupil included in long-term membership whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL shall receive an additional weighting amount of 1.03~~ 1.02.

(3) ~~The Secretary shall next apply a weight for EL pupils. Each EL pupil included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the EL pupil's English language proficiency level, of 2.49:~~

(A) 2.11, if assessed as Level 1;

(B) 1.41, if assessed as Level 2 or 3;

(C) 1.20, if assessed as Level 4; or

(D) 0.12, if assessed as Level 5 or 6.

(4) ~~The Secretary shall then apply a weight for pupils living in low population density school districts. Each EL pupil that is a Newcomer or SLIFE included in long-term membership residing in a low population density school district, measured by the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of the district as of July 1 of the year of determination, shall receive an additional weighting amount of:~~
0.42

(A) ~~0.15, where the number of persons per square mile is fewer than 36 persons;~~

(B) ~~0.12, where the number of persons per square mile is 36 or more but fewer than 55 persons; or~~

(C) ~~0.07, where the number of persons per square mile is 55 or more but fewer than 100.~~

(5) ~~The Secretary shall lastly apply a weight for pupils who attend a small school. If the number of persons per square mile residing within the land area of the geographic boundaries of a school district as of July 1 of the year of determination is 55 or fewer, then, for each pupil listed under subdivision (b)(3)(C) of this section (pupils who attend small schools) Each child with a disability included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the categorization of the child's disability, of:~~

(A) ~~where the school has fewer than 100 pupils in average two-year enrollment, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.21 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment~~
0.79, if the disability is identified as Category A; or

~~(B) where the small school has 100 or more but fewer than 250 pupils, the school district shall receive an additional weighting amount of 0.07 for each pupil included in the small school's average two-year enrollment 1.89, if the disability is identified as Category B; or~~

~~(C) 2.49, if the disability is identified as Category C.~~

(6) A school district's weighted long-term membership shall equal long-term membership plus the cumulation of the weights assigned by the Secretary under this subsection.

(e) Hold harmless. A district's weighted long-term membership shall in no case be less than 96 and one-half percent of its actual weighted long-term membership the previous year prior to making any adjustment under this subsection.

~~(f) Determination of per pupil education spending educational opportunity payment. As soon as reasonably possible after a school district budget is approved by voters, the Secretary shall determine the per pupil education spending for the next fiscal year for the school district. Per pupil education spending shall equal a school district's education spending divided by its weighted long-term membership. The Secretary shall determine each school district's educational opportunity payment by multiplying the school district's weighted long-term membership determined under subsection (d) of this section by the base amount.~~

* * *

(h) Updates to weights, base amount, and transportation reimbursement. On or before January 1, ~~2027~~ 2026 and on or before January 1 of every fifth year thereafter, the Agency of Education and the Joint Fiscal Office shall calculate, based on their consensus view, updates to the weights and the base amount, including any inflationary measure, to account for cost changes underlying those weights and shall issue a written report on their work to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Senate Committee on Finance. The General Assembly shall update the weights under this section, the base amount, and transportation reimbursement under section 4016 of this title not less than every five years and the implementation date for the updated weights and transportation reimbursement shall be delayed by a year in order to provide school districts with time to prepare their budgets. Updates to the weights may include recalibration, recalculation, adding or eliminating weights, or any combination of these actions.

Second: By striking out Sec. 59, 16 V.S.A. § 4010, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 59 to read as follows:

Sec. 59. 16 V.S.A. § 4010 is amended to read:

§ 4010. DETERMINATION OF WEIGHTED LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP
AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY PAYMENT

* * *

(d) Determination of weighted long-term membership. For each weighting category, the Secretary shall compute the weighting count by using the long-term membership, as defined in subdivision 4001(7) of this title, in that category.

(1) [Repealed.]

(2) Each pupil included in long-term membership whose family is at or below 185 percent of FPL shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~1.02~~ 1.00.

(3) Each EL pupil included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the EL pupil's English language proficiency level, of:

(A) ~~2.11~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 1;

(B) ~~1.41~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 2 or 3;

(C) ~~1.20~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 4; or

(D) ~~0.12~~ 1.00, if assessed as Level 5 or 6.

(4) Each EL pupil that is a Newcomer or SLIFE included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount of ~~0.42~~ 1.00.

(5) Each child with a disability included in long-term membership shall receive an additional weighting amount, based on the categorization of the child's disability, of:

(A) ~~0.79~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as Category A;

(B) ~~1.35~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as Category B; or

(C) ~~2.49~~ 1.00, if the disability is identified as Category C.

* * *

Which was agreed to.

Pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** moved to amend the bill in Sec. 1, findings; intent; plan, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) Intent; plan.

(1) To ensure each student is provided substantially equal educational opportunities that will prepare them to thrive in a 21st-century world, it is the intent of the General Assembly to work strategically, intentionally, and thoughtfully to ensure that each incremental change made to Vermont's public education system provides strength and support to its only constitutionally required governmental service.

(2) It is further the intent of the General Assembly to:

(A) in the 2026 session:

(i) enact new, larger school district boundaries that would be effective July 1, 2026;

(ii) enact updates to career and technical education governance systems, both at the local and statewide levels, that are reflective of the larger public education governance transformation to new, larger school districts;

(iii) create a coordinated and coherent statewide strategy for career and technical education that is responsive to students and the State's workforce needs and that provides opportunities for more integration between career and technical education and traditional high school work;

(iv) enact student-centered updates to career and technical education funding within a foundation formula that does not create competition between sending schools and career and technical education programs for available funds; and

(v) create voting wards within each school district to ensure school board membership is apportioned in such a manner as to achieve substantially equal weighting of the votes of all voters in the election of school board members;

(B) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, the Secretary of State's Office, town clerks, and other integral parties to the election system to hold the first school board member elections within the newly created school districts in a special election in March 2027; and

(C) provide or enable the provision of the necessary staffing, resources, and support to the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and other integral parties to ensure that the necessary guidance and funding is

in place to allow for a smooth and successful transition between the operation of Vermont's current 119 school districts to the new, larger school districts, with new school districts assuming responsibility for the education of all resident students on July 1, 2028.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Donahue of Northfield?, **Rep. McCoy of Poultney** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Donahue of Northfield?, was decided in the negative. Yeas, 60. Nays, 83.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Gregoire of Fairfield	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Hango of Berkshire	Nelson of Derby
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	North of Ferrisburgh
Boyden of Cambridge	Higley of Lowell	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Randolph	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Howland of Rutland Town	Page of Newport City
Burt of Cabot	Kascenska of Burke	Parsons of Newbury
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Pinsonault of Dorset
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Powers of Waterford
Charlton of Chester	Laroche of Franklin	Pritchard of Pawlet
Coffin of Cavendish	Lipsky of Stowe	Quimby of Lyndon
Demar of Enosburgh	Luneau of St. Albans City	Sibilia of Dover
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Southworth of Walden
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Marcotte of Coventry	Steady of Milton
Donahue of Northfield *	McCoy of Poultney *	Tagliavia of Corinth
Feltus of Lyndon	McFaun of Barre Town	Taylor of Milton
Galfetti of Barre Town	Micklus of Milton	Toof of St. Albans Town
Goslant of Northfield	Morgan, L. of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Greer of Bennington	Morgan, M. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow

Those who voted in the negative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Eastes of Guilford	Mihaly of Calais
Austin of Colchester	Emmons of Springfield	Minier of South Burlington
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Morrow of Weston
Berbeco of Winooski	Goldman of Rockingham	Mrowicki of Putney
Birong of Vergennes	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Bishop of Colchester	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Black of Essex	Harple of Glover	Nugent of South Burlington
Bluemle of Burlington	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Brady of Williston *	Hooper of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Brown of Richmond	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Howard of Rutland City	Priestley of Bradford
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Rachelson of Burlington
	James of Manchester	Satcowitz of Randolph

Burrows of West Windsor	Kimbell of Woodstock	Scheu of Middlebury
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Kleppner of Burlington	Sheldon of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Squirrell of Underhill
Casey of Montpelier	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Lalley of Shelburne	Stone of Burlington
Cina of Burlington	LaLonde of South Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall	LaMont of Morristown	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cooper of Pownal	Logan of Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Corcoran of Bennington	Long of Newfane	Torre of Moretown
Cordes of Bristol	Masland of Thetford	Waszazak of Barre City
Critchlow of Colchester	McCann of Montpelier	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dodge of Essex	McGill of Bridport	White of Waitsfield
Dolan of Essex Junction		White of Bethel
Duke of Burlington		Wood of Waterbury
Durfee of Shaftsbury		Yacovone of Morristown

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Christie of Hartford	Maguire of Rutland City	Wells of Brownington
Cole of Hartford	Morris of Springfield	
Dickinson of St. Albans Town		

Rep. Brady of Williston provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

We are setting in motion hard generational system change but we, the Legislature, have the easy part. Systems are made of people, in this case our kids, their families, and educators across the State. So, when we talk about systems change, we are talking about changing people. I voted no because we shouldn’t rush an already ambitious timeline.”

Rep. Donahue of Northfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I think it is unfortunate that we are not willing to tell voters that we do want to try to achieve this crucial and urgent work more quickly if at all possible and reasonable.”

Rep. McCoy of Poultney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

We just passed the Toof/Houghton amendment to, among other things, move forward dates of commissions in this bill. This amendment aligns the intent language in H.454 to mirror the Toof/Houghton amendment. I vote yes to align all sections, as well as intent language, of this bill.”

Rep. Surprenant of Barnard presiding.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill pass?, **Rep. Cina of Burlington** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill pass?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 87. Nays, 55.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Eastes of Guilford	McFaun of Barre Town *
Austin of Colchester	Emmons of Springfield	McGill of Bridport
Bartholomew of Hartland	Galfetti of Barre Town *	Mihaly of Calais
Berbeco of Winooski *	Garofano of Essex	Minier of South Burlington
Birong of Vergennes	Goldman of Rockingham	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Graning of Jericho *	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Greer of Bennington *	Nugent of South Burlington
Boutin of Barre City *	Gregoire of Fairfield *	Ode of Burlington *
Brady of Williston	Headrick of Burlington	Olson of Starksboro *
Brown of Richmond *	Higley of Lowell *	Pezzo of Colchester
Burditt of West Rutland *	Holcombe of Norwich	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Hooper of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Houghton of Essex Junction	Rachelson of Burlington
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Satcowitz of Randolph
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hunter of Manchester	Scheu of Middlebury
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Keyser of Rutland City	Sheldon of Middlebury *
Casey of Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sibilia of Dover *
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Stevens of Waterbury
Conlon of Cornwall	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stone of Burlington *
Cooper of Pownal *	Krowinski of Burlington *	Sweeney of Shelburne
Corcoran of Bennington	Lalley of Shelburne	Tomlinson of Winooski
Cordes of Bristol	LaLonde of South Burlington	Torre of Moretown
Critchlow of Colchester	Logan of Burlington *	Waszazak of Barre City
Dodge of Essex	Long of Newfane	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dolan of Essex Junction	Marcotte of Coventry *	White of Waitsfield
Duke of Burlington	Masland of Thetford	Wood of Waterbury
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McCann of Montpelier	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh
Bartley of Fairfax *	Harvey of Castleton	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bosch of Clarendon	Hooper of Randolph	Oliver of Sheldon
Bos-Lun of Westminster *	James of Manchester	Page of Newport City
Boyden of Cambridge	Kascenska of Burke	Parsons of Newbury
Branagan of Georgia	Labor of Morgan	Pinsonault of Dorset
Burt of Cabot	LaMont of Morristown	Powers of Waterford

Canfield of Fair Haven	Laroche of Franklin	Pritchard of Pawlet
Casey of Hubbardton	Lipsky of Stowe	Quimby of Lyndon
Charlton of Chester	Luneau of St. Albans City	Southworth of Walden
Coffin of Cavendish	Malay of Pittsford	Steady of Milton
Demar of Enosburgh	McCoy of Poultney *	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Micklus of Milton	Taylor of Milton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Morgan, L. of Milton	Toof of St. Albans Town
Donahue of Northfield	Morgan, M. of Milton	Walker of Swanton
Feltus of Lyndon	Morrissey of Bennington	White of Bethel
Goslant of Northfield	Morrow of Weston	Winter of Ludlow
Hango of Berkshire	Nelson of Derby	
Harple of Glover	Nielsen of Brandon	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Christie of Hartford	Town	Morris of Springfield
Cole of Hartford	Howland of Rutland Town	Wells of Brownington
Dickinson of St. Albans	Maguire of Rutland City	

Rep. Bartley of Fairfax provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

A constituent asking me to vote no said it best. ‘We can do better but few can do more.’ H.454 has been touted as a step forward. In reality, it’s a baby step when Vermonters need a leap. This bill does not rectify the mistakes of the past. It doesn’t address the deep economic injustices that our students have endured for decades. And it certainly doesn’t reflect the urgency of the moment. We were elected to this body, and it is our duty to uphold that responsibility. It is unacceptable to expect another body to correct our mistakes.”

Rep. Berbeco of Winooski provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I’m voting yes for Winooski kids and educators and families. More than 20 languages are spoken in our school by the only minority-majority student body in the State. Multi-lingual supports are essential to us. I’m voting yes because my community has hope that these will be protected in the evolution of this legislation.”

Rep. Bos-Lun of Westminster provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I come from a rural community that will lose vital small wanted local schools, both public and independent, if this bill moves forward in its current form. School districts of at least 4000 students will not solve our problems but will result in a loss of local control and civic engagement, especially in rural

communities. I voted no to preserve small local schools in my rural community.”

Rep. Boutin of Barre City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes, but I did so because I want this bill to advance to the Senate, where I hope they will take a more bipartisan approach in drafting a compromise version. I also have to note that the funding model in this bill is favorable to Barre. That being said, what began as a bold and immediate reform proposal by the Governor – one that prioritized student outcomes over political advocacy – has become a lackluster and meandering plan. It will inevitably require us to revisit this third rail in a few years, much like Act 46. I am deeply disappointed where we landed and hope the Senate can make it better.”

Rep Brown of Richmond provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes today for a hopeful, sustainable future for all Vermont students - the students in my district now and the students in the small rural Vermont district where I attended public school from kindergarten through high school. I want to thank all the members of the education field who testified and supported this bill. We appreciate their commitment to helping us get it right together and the incredible work happening every day in schools across Vermont.”

Rep. Burditt of West Rutland provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I want to be crystal clear. Even though I voted yes for H.454, I do not support this version of the bill. I am reaching across the aisle and voting yes to form an alliance to help keep this bill alive and with it the hopes of Vermonters. My hope is the Senate comes through with their promise of a bipartisan bill with an affordable education system Vermonters told us they wanted in the 2024 election season. Over the last few years I’ve heard a message from the majority party asking where is your plan? A well thought out plan that would have benefited Vermonters was put forth and the parts that would have given Vermonters the most property tax relief were ignored in this bill.”

Rep. Cooper of Pownal provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am voting yes because this bill positions Vermont for a future that is already underway: our structures are over-built, our educators are over-stretched, our students are under-resourced. This bill acknowledges the spatial and social realities of our State’s mountains, valleys, and borders, and provides the commonsense need for people to take time to make sound decisions.”

Rep. Galfetti of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

It is with great resistance that I am voting yes on this version of the bill. However, if we do not pass this bill out of the House, the opportunity to reform education funding and stabilize property taxes will be lost. It is my hope that the Senate majority will work with their Vermont Republican counterparts to return a bipartisan bill as their leadership has already promised. Phil Scott Republicans are the party of now and compromise, not the party of NO!”

Rep. Graning of Jericho provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes for H.454 because it sets the path to educate all of Vermont’s children, providing equal opportunity across the State. This bill also gives Vermont’s taxpayers needed stability and protections against the fluctuations that come from the inflationary system that we have today.”

Rep. Greer of Bennington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Independent schools are a part of our education framework. They serve our students well and make our communities stronger. I vote yes because of the protections we’ve included to protect our elementary schools across rural Vermont.”

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I do not vote yes today because this bill represents a good faith effort to work collaboratively or in a bipartisan way toward real and lasting solutions. Collaboration and bipartisan have been used as buzz words today. I’d urge everyone who used those terms to self-reflect on what they actually mean and what that work actually looks like – this is not that. Instead, I vote yes to move the bill to the Senate where we have a commitment to actually work

collaboratively to get to a bill that serves the best interests of Vermonters. Vermonters deserve better, far better, and if we choose to truly work together, we can deliver a bill by the end of the session that everyone can be genuinely proud of regardless of party or whether we live in urban or rural areas.”

Rep. Higley of Lowell provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes, only to move this process forward in hopes that the end product will yield more choices and opportunities for our children, and create an understandable and stable property tax.”

Rep. Krowinski of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes because the status quo is unacceptable for our kids, teachers, and communities. I know change is hard, but we must lead and create stability in our public education system. This is our moment. Let’s show every kid in our State, no matter where they live. They will have the best education at a price we can afford.”

Rep. Logan of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes on H.454 for all Vermonters, and to resist the deceptive rhetoric that haphazard action can deliver the high-quality, affordable public education that we and our children deserve.”

Rep. Marcotte of Coventry provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I reluctantly vote yes. Three committees, three 7-4 votes. The passing of the amendment from the members from St. Albans and Essex Junction gives me a glimmer of hope that we can start working in a bi-partisan manner. The November election sent us a clear message from Vermonters – work together and fix the problems.”

Rep. McCoy of Poultney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While I appreciate the work of the Education and Ways and Means Committees, and you Madam Speaker, to get this bill to the floor, I cannot support the bill at this time. I look forward to receiving this bill back from the Senate with language I can support. Vermonters, and especially our children, deserve nothing less.”

Rep. McFaun of Barre Town provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes to keep the prospects of education reform alive. If this was the final bill, I couldn’t vote for it. My constituents and Vermonters voted for balance in November. It is my hope that the Senate will return to us a bipartisan bill that most of us can vote for and the Governor can sign. That is in the best interest of the children it will impact. Thank you.”

Rep. Ode of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Today, in H.454, we start where we are, not where we wish to be. H.454 moves our education funding system to the future, with a more fair, stable, predictable funding model for Vermont schools and Vermont taxpayers and with a greater chance for equal educational opportunity for Vermont schoolchildren.”

Rep. Olson of Starksboro provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted for H.454 because it contains much that I support, including a good start to reforming our education financing system. There remain issues to work on, including a consequential review of Education Fund spending, including a thoughtful approach to class size, and including the establishment on a permanent basis of fair standards, a fair process, and a community voice before school is closed.”

Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Public education is the commitment we make to all of our children to give them the opportunity they deserve to become healthy, productive members of society, regardless of who their parents are. High quality schools allow all students to learn and grow to the best of their abilities, obtaining the skills they need to engage productively in their community, the economy, and our democracy. Today, I vote yes for H.454 to give all Vermont students equitable access to the education opportunity they deserve.”

Rep. Sibilia of Dover provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

In 2025, I am grateful to serve in a state legislative body that was able to work through great discomfort and act in a bipartisan manner to keep education reform policy advancing.”

Rep. Stone of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I’m voting yes on H.454 because every child in Vermont deserves the chance to learn, grow, and thrive in a school system that won’t let them down. This bill puts students at the heart of our decisions, building a stronger, more stable foundation for their future. It’s not just about education—it’s about doing right by our kids, our communities, and the Vermont we all believe in.”

Speaker presiding.

Message from the Senate No. 39

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 81. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Bakersfield Select Board member Brenda Churchill.

H.C.R. 82. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters State championship bowling team.

H.C.R. 83. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts.

H.C.R. 84. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Mount Anthony Union High School Patriot wrestling program on winning its 36th consecutive State championship.

H.C.R. 85. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 North Country Union High School Falcons' exemplary snowboarding teams.

H.C.R. 86. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Montpelier High School Solons Division II girls' Nordic championship ski team.

H.C.R. 87. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Montpelier High School Solons boys' basketball program on winning a fifth consecutive Division II championship.

H.C.R. 88. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Thetford Academy inductees into the National Technical Honor Society.

H.C.R. 89. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters girls' basketball team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship.

H.C.R. 90. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship girls' basketball team.

H.C.R. 91. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship boys' basketball team.

H.C.R. 92. House concurrent resolution honoring the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont.

H.C.R. 93. House concurrent resolution congratulating Kathleen Lynch of Burlington on being named as the 2025 Vermont Mother of the Year.

H.C.R. 94. House concurrent resolution congratulating Tyler Riggs of Fletcher on the Vermont Forest Products Association naming him Vermont's Outstanding Sawmill Operator 2024.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and ten minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 21.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 81

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Bakersfield Select Board member Brenda Churchill

H.C.R. 82

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters State championship bowling team

H.C.R. 83

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts

H.C.R. 84

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Mount Anthony Union High School Patriot wrestling program on winning its 36th consecutive State championship

H.C.R. 85

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 North Country Union High School Falcons' exemplary snowboarding teams

H.C.R. 86

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Montpelier High School Solons Division II girls' Nordic championship ski team

H.C.R. 87

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Montpelier High School Solons boys' basketball program on winning a fifth consecutive Division II championship

H.C.R. 88

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Thetford Academy inductees into the National Technical Honor Society

H.C.R. 89

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters girls' basketball team on winning a second consecutive Division II championship

H.C.R. 90

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship girls' basketball team

H.C.R. 91

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship boys' basketball team

H.C.R. 92

House concurrent resolution honoring the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont

H.C.R. 93

House concurrent resolution congratulating Kathleen Lynch of Burlington on being named as the 2025 Vermont Mother of the Year

H.C.R. 94

House concurrent resolution congratulating Tyler Riggs of Fletcher on the Vermont Forest Products Association naming him Vermont's Outstanding Sawmill Operator 2024

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Cassandra Grigware, The Safety Team, Burlington.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pages Atticus Lawler of East Montpelier and Eleanor Brady of Williston led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 90**

Offered by Representatives Rachelson of Burlington, Bluemle of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Duke of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, and Stone of Burlington

Offered by Senators Gulick, Baruth, Chittenden, Lyons, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Beck, Brennan, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Douglass, Hardy, Harrison, Hart, Major, Mattos, Perchlik, Weeks, Westman, White, and Williams

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship girls' basketball team

Whereas, 49 years is an extraordinary interval between earning championship titles, or even playing in this decisive game, but that was the Seahorses' legacy, and in 2025, they were determined to end this prolonged drought on both scores, and

Whereas, fielding a talented third-seeded team, Burlington tipped off at the University of Vermont's Patrick Gymnasium before a cheering hometown crowd against the top-seeded St. Johnsbury Academy Hilltoppers, and

Whereas, Burlington emerged onto the court after Wanda Hines, a special fan and supporter, and a Seahorses MVP in 1975 and 1976 (the last two years the team won a divisional championship), delivered an inspiring pre-game pep talk to the players, and

Whereas, the highly motivated Seahorses were in command throughout the game, developing a first-quarter 18-point lead, and with two of the girls scoring 20 points each, the 53–33 victory was most satisfying but hardly surprising, and

Whereas, the history-making Seahorses (19–4) were Emma Maley, Nylah Mitchell, Bree McDonald, Mae Yenkovitch, Hawa Mubarak, Sienna Pitts, Rowan Thomas-Demeritt, Harper Gutheim, Roslen Wallstrom, Rosa Kori, and Elizabeth Lorrain, and

Whereas, Head Coach Beverlis Robertson, assistant coaches Brittany Robertson and Klaire Ware, and Manager Livia Jatlow-Carter were stupendous teachers and supporters, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship girls' basketball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Burlington High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 91

Offered by Representatives Rachelson of Burlington, Bluemle of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Duke of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, and Stone of Burlington

Offered by Senators Gulick, Baruth, Chittenden, Lyons, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Beck, Brennan, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Douglass, Hardy, Harrison, Hart, Major, Mattos, Perchlik, Watson, Weeks, Westman, White, and Williams

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship boys' basketball team

Whereas, the most enduring boys' basketball rivalry in Vermont, matching the top-seeded Burlington Seahorses against the second-ranked Rice Memorial High School Green Knights, was renewed in 2025 in all its glory at the University of Vermont's Patrick Gymnasium, and

Whereas, the emotional level this year was raised considerably with 2024's leading Rice scorer now assuming the same role for Burlington and achieving 29 points, the most any individual player has scored in the Division I season's finale since 1994, and

Whereas, Burlington, which retained the lead for nearly the entire game, built a 27–22 halftime lead into a 64–60 game triumph, and

Whereas, the exuberant Seahorses were Graham McNeil, Pascal Munezero, Ben Koh, Mohamed Abdirahman, Khamis Ali, Abdi Sharif, Byron Robertson Jr., Leander Buckley, Michee Kasongo, Chris Thompson, Hayden McConville, Tyrell Robertson, Colton Bramhall, Sawyer Judkins, Jimmy Homsted, and Miles Kenny, and

Whereas, Head Coach B.J. Robertson; assistant coaches Kevin Garrison, John O'Brien, and Deng Adiang; and managers Caleb Ploof, Mustafa Khudaier, and Tobey Bernabe were each fantastic throughout the 2024–2025 season, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2025 Burlington High School Seahorses Division I championship boys' basketball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Burlington High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 293

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health equity data reporting and registry disclosure requirements

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**S. 27**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

Prior to second reading, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 80**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 8 V.S.A. § 4062 is amended to read:

§ 4062. FILING AND APPROVAL OF POLICY FORMS AND PREMIUMS

* * *

(c)(1) The Board shall provide information to the public on the Board's website about the public availability of the filings and summaries required under this section.

* * *

(3)(A) In addition to the public comment provisions set forth in this subsection (c), the Office of the Health Care Advocate established in 18 V.S.A. chapter 229, acting on behalf of health insurance consumers in this State, may, within 30 calendar days after the Board receives an insurer's rate request pursuant to this section, submit to the Board, in writing, suggested questions regarding with a substantial relationship to the rate filing for and review criteria that the Board to provide to shall ask the insurer, either directly or through its contracting actuary, if any.

(B) The Office of the Health Care Advocate may also submit to the Board written comments on an insurer's rate request. The Board shall post the comments on its website and shall consider the comments prior to issuing its decision.

~~(d)(1) No later than 60 calendar days after receiving an insurer's rate request pursuant to this section, the Green Mountain Care Board shall make available to the public the insurer's rate filing, the Department's analysis and~~

~~opinion of the effect of the proposed rate on the insurer's solvency, and the analysis and opinion of the rate filing by the Board's contracting actuary, if any.~~

~~(2) The Board shall post on its website, after redacting any confidential or proprietary information relating to the insurer or to the insurer's rate filing:~~

~~(A) all questions the Board poses to its contracting actuary, if any, and the actuary's responses to the Board's questions; and~~

~~(B) all questions the Board, the Board's contracting actuary, if any, or the Department poses to the insurer and the insurer's responses to those questions~~ The Green Mountain Care Board shall post on its website or otherwise make available to the public through a file-sharing platform all materials in the record of a rate review proceeding after redacting any information or other material that the Board determines to be confidential or otherwise subject to protection from disclosure by law.

* * *

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9440(c) is amended to read:

(c) The application process shall be as follows:

* * *

(9)(A) The Office of the Health Care Advocate established under chapter 229 of this title or, in the case of nursing homes, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office established under 33 V.S.A. § 7502, is authorized but not required to participate in any administrative or judicial review of an application under this subchapter and shall be considered an interested party in such proceedings upon filing a notice of intervention with the Board.

(B) Once either office files a notice of intervention pursuant to this subchapter, ~~the Board shall provide that office with the information necessary to participate in the review process, including information about procedures, copies of all written correspondence, and copies of all entries in the application record for all certificate of need proceedings, regardless of whether expedited status has been granted~~ that office shall have the right to receive copies of all materials related to the certificate of need application review and may:

(i) submit written questions to the Board that the Board will ask of the applicant in advance of any hearing held in conjunction with the Board's review of the certificate of need application;

(ii) submit written comments for the Board's consideration; and

(iii) ask questions and provide testimony in any hearing held in conjunction with the Board's review of the certificate of need application.

(C) The Office of the Health Care Advocate and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office shall not further disclose any confidential or proprietary information provided to their respective offices pursuant to this subdivision (9).

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. chapter 229 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 229. OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

* * *

§ 9602. OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE; COMPOSITION

(a) The Office of the Health Care Advocate is established as an independent voice for Vermonters that is dedicated to promoting access to high-quality, affordable health care for all.

(b) The Agency of Human Services shall maintain the Office of the Health Care Advocate by contract with any nonprofit organization.

~~(b)~~(c) The Office shall be administered by one or more directors, one of whom shall be the Chief Health Care Advocate, who shall be an individual with expertise and experience in the fields of health care and advocacy. The ~~Advocate~~ director or directors may employ legal counsel, administrative staff, and other employees and contractors as needed to carry out the duties of the Office.

§ 9603. DUTIES AND AUTHORITY

(a) The Office of the Health Care Advocate shall:

(1) Assist ~~health insurance consumers~~ Vermonters with health insurance plan selection by providing information, referrals, and assistance to individuals about means of obtaining and paying for health insurance coverage and services. The Office shall accept referrals from the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange and Exchange navigators created pursuant to 33 V.S.A. chapter 18, subchapter 1, to assist ~~consumers~~ individuals experiencing problems related to the Exchange.

(2) Assist ~~health insurance consumers~~ Vermonters to understand their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans.

(3) Provide information to the public, agencies, members of the General Assembly, and others regarding about Vermonters' problems and concerns of regarding health insurance consumers and access to health care, as well as recommendations for resolving those problems and concerns.

(4) Identify, investigate, and resolve complaints, questions, and inquiries on behalf of individual Vermonters with respect to issues regarding health insurance consumers or access to health care, and assist those consumers Vermonters with filing and pursuit of pursuing complaints and appeals.

(5) ~~Provide information to individuals~~ consumer education to Vermonters regarding their ~~obligations~~ rights and responsibilities under the ~~Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Pub. L. No. 111-148)~~ State and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

(6) Analyze and monitor the development and implementation of federal, State, and local laws, rules, and policies relating to ~~patients and health insurance consumers~~ health insurance and health care, with a special focus on patients' rights and eligibility for State and federal health care programs.

(7) ~~Facilitate~~ Ensure policymakers hear directly from Vermonters by facilitating public comment on health care-related laws, rules, processes, and policies, including policies and actions of health insurers.

(8) Suggest to the Green Mountain Care Board, the Department of Financial Regulation, and other entities in State government policies, procedures, or rules to the Green Mountain Care Board in order to that protect patients' and consumers' and promote the interests of Vermonters in matters related to health insurance and access to health care.

(9) ~~Promote the development of~~ Collaborate with other health care- and health policy-related citizen and consumer organizations to promote affordable and accessible health care for Vermonters.

(10) ~~Ensure that patients and health insurance consumers~~ all Vermonters have timely access to the services provided by the Office.

(11) Submit to the Governor; the House Committees on Health Care, on Ways and Means, and on Appropriations; and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on Finance, and on Appropriations, on or before January 4 15 of each year, a report on the activities, performance, and fiscal accounts of the Office during the preceding calendar year.

(b) The Office of the Health Care Advocate may:

(1) ~~Review the health insurance records of a consumer who has provided written consent. Based on the written consent of the consumer or his or her guardian or legal representative, a health insurer shall provide the Office with access to records relating to that consumer. [Repealed.]~~

(2) Pursue administrative, judicial, and other remedies on behalf of any individual ~~health insurance consumer~~ or group of ~~consumers~~ individuals experiencing problems with health insurance or access to health care.

(3) Represent the interests of the people of the State ~~in cases requiring a hearing before~~ of Vermont in matters involving health care and health insurance at the Green Mountain Care Board established in chapter 220 of this title, the Department of Financial Regulation, or other State agencies.

(4) Adopt policies and procedures necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

(5) Take any other action necessary to fulfill the purposes of this chapter.

(c) The Office of the Health Care Advocate shall be able to speak to Vermonters and on behalf of the interests of Vermonters in health care care- and health insurance consumers insurance-related matters and to carry out all duties prescribed in this chapter without being subject to any retaliatory action; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall limit the authority of the Agency of Human Services to enforce the terms of the contract.

(d) Health care providers and health insurers shall cooperate with the Office of the Health Care Advocate by providing relevant records and information when an individual or the individual's guardian or legal representative has authorized the Office to act on the individual's behalf. A health care provider or health insurer may require the written consent of the individual or the individual's guardian or legal representative prior to providing the records or information to the Office.

§ 9604. DUTIES OF STATE AGENCIES

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that State agencies shall seek input from the Office of the Health Care Advocate when developing or revising significant matters of State policy affecting health care access and affordability in order to ensure that Vermonters' perspectives are heard and considered through the voice of their independent advocate.

(b) All State agencies shall ~~comply~~ facilitate the Office's meaningful participation in health care policymaking by complying with reasonable requests from the Office of the Health Care Advocate for information and, assistance, and access. A request shall be considered reasonable if it relates to the Office's statutory duties and authority.

(1) When appropriate, State agencies shall allow the Office to access confidential or proprietary information that is otherwise exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and to participate in meetings, deliberations, and proceedings in which confidential or proprietary information is discussed; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall require a State agency to provide or disclose information that is prohibited

from disclosure by State or federal law or that would cause the provider or discloser to violate any statutory or common law privilege.

(2) The Office shall not further disclose any confidential or proprietary information provided to the Office.

(c) The Agency of Human Services may adopt rules necessary to ensure the cooperation of State agencies under this section.

§ 9605. CONFIDENTIALITY

~~In the absence of written consent by a complainant or an individual using the services of the Office or by his or her guardian or legal representative or the absence of a court order, the Office of the Health Care Advocate, its employees, and its contractors shall not disclose the identity of the complainant or individual~~ The Office of the Health Care Advocate shall maintain the confidentiality of information related to individuals using its services in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws, rules, regulations, and policies.

§ 9606. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

(a) The Office of the Health Care Advocate, its employees, and its contractors shall not have any conflict of interest relating to the performance of their responsibilities under this chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, a conflict of interest exists whenever the Office of the Health Care Advocate, its employees, or its contractors or a person affiliated with the Office, its employees, or its contractors:

(1) has a direct involvement in the licensing, certification, or accreditation of a health care facility, health insurer, or health care provider;

(2) has a direct ownership interest or investment interest in a health care facility, health insurer, or health care provider;

(3) is employed by or participating in the management of a health care facility, health insurer, or health care provider; or

(4) receives or has the right to receive, directly or indirectly, remuneration under a compensation arrangement with a health care facility, health insurer, or health care provider.

(b) The Office shall report any potential conflicts of interest to the Agency of Human Services.

(c) It shall not constitute a conflict of interest per se for an employee or contractor of the Office to serve without compensation on the board of directors of a nonprofit health care entity whose primary regulator is not an agency of the State of Vermont.

* * *

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Message from the Senate No. 40

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 243. An act relating to the regulation of business organizations.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 22. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 18, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 15th day of April, 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H.154 An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and thirty-four minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Ed Sunday Winters, Pastor, Greensboro United Church.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 22**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 22. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 18, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, April 18, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, April 22, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 37**

Offered by Representatives Burke of Brattleboro, Goodnow of Brattleboro, and Kornheiser of Brattleboro

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution congratulating Meara Seery of Brattleboro on being named Miss Vermont 2024

Whereas, the Miss Vermont contest is not merely a beauty pageant but a competition for scholarship awards that highlights the talents and interests of the contestants, who are from across the State, and

Whereas, Meara Seery, an impressive young woman from Brattleboro graduated, due to her creative initiative, debt-free from the George Washington University in Washington, DC as a photojournalism major, has worked as a digital producer in the office of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, among other projects documenting the impact of the devastating July 2023 flood, has been admitted to graduate school at Champlain College in Burlington, and is an outstanding vocal soloist, and

Whereas, she was one of the most promising 2024 aspirants for this honor and her first pageant experience was at the 2017 Brattleboro Winter Carnival pageant, where she won approximately \$1,500.00 in scholarship prize money, and

Whereas, initially, Meara Seery vied for the Miss Vermont title in 2021 and tried again in 2023, when she was awarded second runner-up honors and named Miss Southern Vermont, and she has also earned recognition as Miss Heart of Vermont, and

Whereas, her third attempt proved to be the pinnacle of her success, when on April 14, 2024, at a ceremony held at the Spruce Performing Arts Center in Stowe, Meara Seery was thrilled to be named Miss Vermont 2024, and she was the recipient of two scholarships, one for \$7,500.00 from the Miss Vermont Scholarship Organization, and a second for \$5,000.00 to attend the Ellis Strategies public speaking and presentation course, and

Whereas, in 2024, Meara Seery's Community Service Initiative focused on sustainability and was entitled "Green for Good," and one aspect of the project was a partnership with Green Up Vermont that resulted in a Guinness World Record for the most volunteer pledges (6,833) to clean up trash in one day, and

Whereas, although not a finalist at the Miss America contest held at Disney World in Florida from December 28, 2024 to January 5, 2025, Meara Seery enjoyed competing at this prestigious national event, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Meara Seery of Brattleboro on being named Miss Vermont 2024, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Meara Seery.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 71

Offered by Representative Mrowicki of Putney

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first class at Landmark College and extending best wishes for continued academic success

Whereas, individuals who learn differently—whether due to autism, dyslexia, attention deficit disorders, executive function challenges, or otherwise—have historically faced major impediments to fair, accessible, and quality education, and

Whereas, until four decades ago, there were not any accredited higher education institutions designed and built exclusively for individuals who learn differently, and in response to the need for this type of school, in 1983, a committed team of educators, philanthropists, and community leaders, including then Putney Select Board member and future Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin, himself dyslexic and unable to read until he was 14 years of age, established Landmark College in Putney, Vermont, and

Whereas, Landmark College accepted its first students in the fall of 1985 and quickly became the world's first accredited college for individuals with learning disabilities and learning differences, and

Whereas, over its 40-year history, Landmark College has broadened the curriculum to include other academic degrees and certificate programs, academic development and college-preparatory programs for high school students, and professional development and certificate programs for educators, and

Whereas, in addition to the academic courses, Landmark College is a global leader in advancing accessibility, inclusion, and opportunity for those who learn differently, and

Whereas, nearly 11,000 students and professionals from 55 countries have studied at Landmark College, opening new doors of opportunity for those who learn differently and preparing them for academic and career success, and

Whereas, the school is the largest employer in Putney and one of the largest year-round employers in southern Vermont, and

Whereas, the outstanding achievements of Landmark College serve as a glowing testament to the dedication and perseverance of all those associated with this unusual and respected higher education institution, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly celebrates the 40th anniversary of the first class at Landmark College and extends best wishes for continued academic success, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Landmark College.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 253

Rep. Mihaly of Calais moved that the Committee on General and Housing be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to workforce housing zones

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Environment, which was agreed to.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 18

Rep. Goldman of Rockingham, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. chapter 53 is added to read:

CHAPTER 53. BIRTH CENTER LICENSING

§ 2351. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Birth center” means a facility the primary purposes of which are to provide midwifery care, low-risk deliveries, and newborn care immediately after delivery, for a stay of generally less than 24 hours. The term does not include a facility that is a hospital, is part of a hospital, or is owned by a hospital; a facility that is an ambulatory surgical center; or the residence of the individual giving birth. A birth center may be located on the grounds of a hospital.

(2) “Certified nurse midwife” means an advanced practice registered nurse licensed in accordance with 26 V.S.A. chapter 28, subchapter 2 who has specialized training in childbirth, newborn care, and reproductive health care services.

(3) “Change of ownership” means a change in the majority or controlling interest in an established birth center to another person.

(4) “Corrective action plan” means a written strategy for correcting an issue of partial compliance, deficiency, or violation of this chapter or rules adopted pursuant to this chapter.

(5) “Licensed maternity care provider” means a licensed provider whose professional scope of practice, as established under Vermont law, includes preconception, prenatal, labor, birth, and postpartum care and early care of a newborn and who may be the primary attendant during the perinatal period.

(6) “Licensed midwife” means a professional licensed in accordance with 26 V.S.A. chapter 85.

(7) “Licensed provider” means an individual licensed or certified in Vermont to provide specific health care-related services within a scope of practice defined by licensing statutes and rules, and may include advanced practice registered nurses, including certified nurse midwives; licensed midwives; physician assistants; naturopathic physicians with a childbirth endorsement in accordance with 26 V.S.A. §§ 4122(b) and 4125(b); and physicians.

§ 2352. LICENSE; PROHIBITIONS

(a) No person shall establish, maintain, or operate a birth center in this State without first obtaining a license for the birth center in accordance with this chapter.

(b) A birth center may be independently owned and operated by a licensed maternity care provider or any other person who complies with the requirements of this chapter.

(c) A birth center shall not offer or provide epidural anesthesia or a cesarean delivery.

(d) No person shall represent itself as a “birth center” or use the term “birth center” in its title or in its advertising, publications, or other form of communication unless the person has been licensed as a birth center in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(e) A license is not transferable or assignable and shall be issued only for the premises and persons named in the application.

§ 2353. APPLICATION; FEE

(a) An application for licensure of a birth center shall be made to the Department of Health in the manner specified by the Department and shall include all information required by the Department.

(b)(1) Each application for an initial license, renewal of a license, or a change of ownership shall be accompanied by a fee of \$250.00.

(2) Fees collected under this section shall be credited to the Hospital Licensing Fees Special Fund and shall be available to the Department of Health to offset the costs of licensing birth centers.

§ 2354. LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Upon receipt of an application for a license and the licensing fee, the Department of Health shall issue a license if it determines, after an inspection conducted by the Department or its designee, that the applicant is able to operate a birth center in accordance with rules adopted by the Department.

§ 2355. REVOCATION OF LICENSE; HEARING

The Department of Health, after notice and opportunity for hearing to the applicant or licensee, is authorized to condition, deny, suspend, or revoke a license in any case in which it finds that there has been a substantial failure to comply with the requirements established under this chapter. Such notice shall be served by registered mail or by personal service, shall set forth the reasons for the proposed action, and shall set a date not less than 60 days from the date of the mailing or service on which the applicant or licensee shall be given opportunity for a hearing. After the hearing, or upon default of the applicant or licensee, the Department shall file its findings of fact and conclusions of law. A copy of the findings and decision shall be sent by registered mail or served personally upon the applicant or licensee. The procedure governing hearings authorized by this section shall be set forth in the rules adopted pursuant to section 2359 of this chapter and shall not be subject to the contested case provisions of 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, subchapter 2.

§ 2356. APPEAL

Any applicant or licensee, or the State acting through the Attorney General, aggrieved by the decision of the Department of Health after a hearing may appeal the decision in accordance with section 128 of this title. Pursuant to section 129 of this title, an appeal pursuant to this section shall not stay the effectiveness of an order entered in accordance with section 2355 of this chapter, but any party is permitted to seek a stay order in the Superior Court in which the appeal is being heard.

§ 2357. INSPECTIONS

(a) The Department of Health or its designee shall make or cause to be made such inspections and investigations as the Department or its designee deems necessary.

(b) A birth center, including its building and grounds and, in accordance with applicable law, its records, shall be subject to inspection by the Department and its designee at all times.

(c) If a birth center is found to be out of compliance with any requirement of this chapter or rules adopted pursuant to this chapter, the Department may condition, deny, suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew the birth center's license or may ask the birth center to develop and implement a corrective action plan.

(d) If the Department finds a violation as the result of an inspection or investigation, the Department shall post a report on the Department's website summarizing the violation and any corrective action required.

§ 2358. RECORDS

(a) Information received by the Department of Health through filed reports, inspections, or as otherwise authorized by law shall:

(1) not be disclosed publicly in a manner that identifies or may lead to the identification of one or more individuals or birth centers;

(2) be exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act; and

(3) be kept confidential except as it relates to a proceeding regarding licensure of a birth center.

(b) The provisions of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to the summary reports of violations required to be posted on the Department's website pursuant to section 2357 of this chapter.

§ 2359. RULES

The Department of Health shall adopt rules in accordance with 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 as needed to carry out the purposes of this chapter. The rules shall be based on the national birth center standards published by the American Association of Birth Centers and shall, at a minimum, include provisions regarding:

(1) requirements for operating a birth center, including requirements for safety, sanitation, and health;

(2) obtaining, storing, and dispensing pharmaceuticals consistent with State and federal laws;

(3) requirements for notice to the Department of Health when there is a change in ownership of a birth center and any additional licensing requirements related to a change in ownership;

(4) the scope of services that may be provided at a birth center, including risk factors that preclude a patient from receiving labor and delivery services at a birth center;

(5) appropriate staffing for a birth center, including the types of licensed providers who may practice at a birth center;

(6) birth center complaint processes;

(7) birth center facility, equipment, and supply requirements, including requirements for the maintenance of safety, sanitation, and health;

(8) record retention and confidentiality;

(9) quality assurance and improvement;

(10) processes for the development, submission, approval, and implementation of corrective action plans;

(11) a requirement for written practice guidelines and policies that include procedures for transferring a patient to a hospital if circumstances warrant; and

(12)(A) requirements for written policies and procedures for collaboration with hospitals, other agencies and facilities, and individuals to provide services to patients as appropriate, including:

(i) laboratory and diagnostic services;

(ii) childbirth education and parenting education support services;

(iii) obstetric consultation services;

(iv) pediatric consultation services;

(v) transport services;

(vi) obstetric and newborn acute care in licensed hospitals; and

(vii) home health care services;

(B) a requirement that the policies and procedures established pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (12) are provided to the relevant service providers upon request; and

(C) a requirement that the birth center provide the health record of the patient or the newborn, or both, to the receiving service provider upon referral or transfer, in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

§ 2360. NO EFFECT ON SCOPE OF SERVICES

(a) Nothing in this chapter or in rules adopted pursuant to this chapter shall be construed to expand or limit the scope of the services that a licensed

midwife, certified nurse midwife, or other provider may offer at a birth center or perform in a space that is shared with or adjacent to a birth center.

(b) A birth center may serve as a location for additional services offered in shared or adjacent spaces, including outpatient gynecologic care, primary care, and education and support services, provided that any licensed provider providing services in those spaces shall only provide those services that are within the licensed provider's authorized scope of practice.

Sec. 2. 8 V.S.A. § 4099d is amended to read:

§ 4099d. MIDWIFERY COVERAGE; ~~HOME BIRTHS~~

(a) A health insurance plan or health benefit plan providing maternity benefits shall also provide coverage for services rendered by a midwife licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 85 or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 28 who is certified as a nurse midwife for services within the licensed midwife's or certified nurse midwife's scope of practice and provided in a hospital, birth center, or other health care facility or at home.

* * *

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 9435 is amended to read:

§ 9435. EXCLUSIONS

* * *

(i) Excluded from this subchapter are birth centers that are licensed pursuant to chapter 53 of this title or are proposed to be established and licensed pursuant to chapter 53 of this title.

Sec. 4. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; MEDICAID; REQUEST FOR
FEDERAL APPROVAL

The Agency of Human Services shall seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to allow Vermont Medicaid to cover prenatal, maternity, postpartum, and newborn services provided at a licensed birth center and to allow Vermont Medicaid to reimburse separately for birth center services, including birth center facility fees, and for professional services.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Sec. 1 (birth center licensing) shall take effect on January 1, 2027 or the effective date of the birth center rules adopted by the Department of Health, whichever comes first.

(b) Sec. 2 (8 V.S.A. § 4099d) shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

(c) Sec. 3 (18 V.S.A. § 9435a) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(d) Sec. 4 (Agency of Human Services; Medicaid; request for federal approval) shall take effect on passage, and the Medicaid coverage shall begin on the later of the date of approval or the effective date of the birth center rules adopted by the Department of Health.

(e) This section shall take effect on passage.

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

Rep. Yacovone of Morristown, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

S. 28

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Berbeco of Winooski**, action on the bill was postponed until April 17, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 41

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 259. An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals.

And has concurred therein.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and forty-nine minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, April 17, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Vegan Aharonian, Executive Director, Karne Choling, Barnet.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 507

By Rep. Boutin of Barre City,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of development in wetlands

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 508

By Rep. Hooper of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Burlington

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 36

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 85

Offered by Representatives Page of Newport City, Higley of Lowell, Labor of Morgan, Marcotte of Coventry, Nelson of Derby, and Wells of Brownington

Offered by Senators Douglass and Ingalls

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 North Country Union High School Falcons' exemplary snowboarding teams

Whereas, many Vermont high schools now boast varsity snowboarding teams, and, in 2025, the Jay Peak Resort hosted the girls' and boys' combined State championship meet, and

Whereas, the North Country Falcons, snowboarding on familiar trails, delighted their hometown supporters, and

Whereas, the Falcon girls' performances were superb, and especially memorable was a team member who won the overall individual State girls' title, and a North Country colleague trailed closely with a third-place finish, and

Whereas, although not the team champions, the Falcon girls, consisting of Aine Remmers, Dakotah Bowen, Willow Clements, Aubrey Sicotte, Haven Brunell, Eliah Dillion, and Sophie Corkins, scored a strong second-place overall score, and

Whereas, the Falcon boys won both the giant slalom, in which quickness and steadiness on the slope are essential elements, and the rail jam, a competition profiling a snowboarder's ability to perform tricks on a rail or rails while being assessed for style, technique, and creativity, and

Whereas, after tallying all the boys' scores, North Country was on top, surpassing second-place Burr and Burton Academy, and the Falcon team, composed of Carson Limlaw, Logan Ellis, Quinn Goff, Armond Capron, Carson LaCroix, Emmett Williams, Chase Currie, and Gregory Rondeau, proudly brought home their school's first snowboarding title, and

Whereas, Head Coach Robert Walls-Thumma, who returned to North Country this year after coaching elsewhere, and Assistant Coach Beth Koennincke were proud of all the North Country snowboarders' achievements, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2025 North Country Union High School Falcons' exemplary snowboarding teams, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to North Country High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 94

Offered by Representatives Lipsky of Stowe, Boyden of Cambridge, Gregoire of Fairfield, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bishop of Colchester, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Hango of Berkshire, Harple of Glover, Kascenska of Burke, Kleppner of Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, North of Ferrisburgh, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Priestley of Bradford, Southworth of Walden, Surprenant of Barnard, Tagliavia of Corinth, Waters Evans of Charlotte, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, and Winter of Ludlow

House concurrent resolution congratulating Tyler Riggs of Fletcher on the Vermont Forest Products Association naming him Vermont's Outstanding Sawmill Operator 2024

Whereas, an outstanding example of an enterprising and innovative Vermont sawmill owner is Tyler (Tucker) Riggs, the proprietor of LSF Forest Products, LLC (LSF) in Jeffersonville, a company that his father established in 2003, and

Whereas, soon after the company's establishment, Tucker Riggs returned home to Vermont to develop this new business with his father, and LSF has evolved into a respected community-focused sawmill, and

Whereas, Tucker Riggs has garnered many compliments from employees, colleagues, and loyal customers and is genuinely well liked, and

Whereas, he has been described as thoughtful, always seeking to improve the mill's workflow, and extremely attentive to safety, and

Whereas, community relations are a high priority for Tucker Riggs, and LSF has hosted State officials, industry peer groups, school groups of all ages, and environmental organizations, and

Whereas, seeking to enhance LSF's operations and improve his business acumen, Tucker Riggs enrolled in the University of Vermont Extension's Forest Business program, and as a result of the company's success, LSF is doubling its annual production capacity to approximately one million board feet per year, and the company has received a Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Supply Chain Impact Grant to finance the project, and

Whereas, in recognition of his laudable industry leadership, the Vermont Forest Products Association chose Tucker Riggs as Vermont's Outstanding Sawmill Operator 2024, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Tyler Riggs of Fletcher on the Vermont Forest Products Association naming him Vermont's Outstanding Sawmill Operator 2024, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Tucker Riggs.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 28

Rep. Berbeco of Winooski, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 1 V.S.A. § 150 is amended to read:

§ 150. LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY

* * *

(b)(1) "Legally protected health care activity" means:

* * *

(4) The protections applicable to persons who engage in "legally protected health care activity" shall also apply to a person who has previously undertaken one or more acts or omissions while in another U.S. jurisdiction to aid or encourage, or attempt to aid or encourage, any person in the exercise and enjoyment, or attempted exercise and enjoyment, of rights to reproductive health care services or gender-affirming health care services that would have been protected by this State if they had been undertaken in this State, provided that the acts or omissions were permissible under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the person was located at the time they were undertaken.

* * *

Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 317(c) is amended to read:

(c) The following public records are exempt from public inspection and copying:

* * *

(44) Records held by the Office of Professional Regulation, Board of Medical Practice, or another public agency that issues one or more licenses, certificates, or registrations to engage in a State-regulated profession or occupation if the records contain the telephone number, email address, physical address, or mailing address, or a combination of these, of an individual who has applied for or has been granted a license, certificate, or registration to practice a profession or occupation in this State, except that the public agency shall disclose any address that the individual has designated as a public address in the record.

Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 129a is amended to read:

§ 129a. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) In addition to any other provision of law, the following conduct by a licensee constitutes unprofessional conduct. When that conduct is by an applicant or person who later becomes an applicant, it may constitute grounds for denial of a license or other disciplinary action. Any one of the following items or any combination of items, whether the conduct at issue was committed within or outside the State, shall constitute unprofessional conduct:

(1) Fraudulent or deceptive procurement or use of a license.

(2) Advertising, including advertising about health care services, that is intended or has a tendency to deceive or mislead.

* * *

(6) Delegating professional responsibilities, including the delivery of health care services, to a person whom the licensed professional knows, or has reason to know, is not qualified by training, experience, education, or licensing credentials to perform them, or knowingly providing professional supervision or serving as a preceptor to a person who has not been licensed or registered as required by the laws of that person's profession.

* * *

(21) Permitting one's name or license to be used by a person, group, or corporation when not actually in charge of ~~or~~ responsible for, or actively overseeing the professional services provided.

* * *

(f)(1) Health care providers. Notwithstanding subsection (e) of this section or any other law to the contrary, no health care provider who is certified, registered, or licensed in Vermont shall be subject to professional disciplinary action by a board or the Director, nor shall a board or the Director take adverse

action on an application for certification, registration, or licensure of a qualified health care provider, based solely on:

* * *

(2) Definitions. As used in this subsection:

* * *

(B) “Health care services” means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

* * *

Sec. 4. 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 11 is amended to read:

Subchapter 11. ~~Pregnancy Services Centers~~ Health Care Services

§ 2491. FINDINGS; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

(a) ~~Findings.~~ The General Assembly finds that:

(1) ~~Centers that seek to counsel clients against abortion, often referred to as crisis pregnancy centers or limited-services pregnancy centers, have become common across the country, including in Vermont. Accurate information about the services that a limited-services pregnancy center performs, in addition to forthright acknowledgement of its limitations, is essential to enable individuals in this State to make informed decisions about their care. This includes individuals being informed of whether they are receiving services from a licensed and qualified health care provider at a limited-services pregnancy center, as this allows individuals to determine if they need to seek medical care elsewhere in order to continue or terminate a pregnancy.~~

(2) ~~Although some limited-services pregnancy centers openly acknowledge in their advertising, on their websites, and at their facilities that they neither provide abortions nor refer clients to other providers of abortion services, others provide confusing and misleading information to pregnant individuals contemplating abortion by leading those individuals to believe that their facilities offer abortion services and unbiased counseling. Some limited-services pregnancy centers have promoted patently false or biased medical claims about abortion, pregnancy, contraception, and reproductive health care providers.~~

(3) ~~False and misleading advertising by centers that do not offer or refer clients for abortion is of special concern to the State because of the time-sensitive and constitutionally protected nature of the decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy. When a pregnant individual is misled into believing~~

~~that a center offers services that it does not in fact offer or receives false or misleading information regarding health care options, the individual loses time crucial to the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy and may lose the option to choose a particular method or to terminate a pregnancy at all.~~

(4) Telling the truth is how trained health care providers demonstrate respect for patients, foster trust, promote self-determination, and cultivate an environment where best practices in shared decision-making can flourish. Without veracity in information and communication, it is difficult for individuals to make informed, voluntary choices that are essential to one's sense of personal agency and autonomy.

~~(5)(2)~~ Advertising strategies and educational information about health care options that lack transparency, use misleading or ambiguous terminology, misrepresent or obfuscate services provided, or provide factually inaccurate information are a form of manipulation that disrespects individuals, undermines trust, broadens health disparity, and can result in patient harm.

~~(b) Intent.~~

~~(1) It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that the public is provided with accurate, factual information about the types of health care services that are available to pregnant individuals in this State. The General Assembly respects the constitutionally protected right of each individual to personal reproductive autonomy, which includes the right to receive clear, honest, and nonmisleading information about the individual's options and to make informed, voluntary choices after considering all relevant information.~~

~~(2) The General Assembly respects the right of limited-services pregnancy centers to counsel individuals against abortion, and nothing in this subchapter should be construed to regulate, limit, or curtail such advocacy.~~

§ 2492. DEFINITIONS DEFINITION

As used in this subchapter:

~~(1) "Abortion" means any medical treatment intended to induce the termination of, or to terminate, a clinically diagnosable pregnancy except for the purpose of producing a live birth.~~

~~(2) "Client" means an individual who is inquiring about or seeking services at a pregnancy services center.~~

~~(3) "Emergency contraception" means any drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a contraceptive method for use after sexual intercourse, whether provided over the counter or by prescription.~~

~~(4) “Health information” means any oral or written information in any form or medium that relates to health insurance or the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of a client.~~

~~(5) “Limited-services pregnancy center” means a pregnancy services center that does not directly provide, or provide referrals to clients for, abortions or emergency contraception.~~

~~(6) “Pregnancy services center” means a facility, including a mobile facility, where the primary purpose is to provide services to individuals who are or may be pregnant and that either offers obstetric ultrasounds, obstetric sonograms, or prenatal care to pregnant individuals or has the appearance of a medical facility. A pregnancy services center has the appearance of a medical facility if two or more of the following factors are present:~~

~~(A) The center offers pregnancy testing or pregnancy diagnosis, or both.~~

~~(B) The center has staff or volunteers who wear medical attire or uniforms.~~

~~(C) The center contains one or more examination tables.~~

~~(D) The center contains a private or semiprivate room or area containing medical supplies or medical instruments.~~

~~(E) The center has staff or volunteers who collect health information from clients.~~

~~(F) The center is located on the same premises as a State-licensed medical facility or provider or shares facility space with a State-licensed medical provider.~~

~~(7) “Premises” means land and improvements or appurtenances or any part thereof “health care services” means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, dental, behavioral health, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication.~~

§ 2493. UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ACT

(a) It is an unfair and deceptive act and practice in commerce and a violation of section 2453 of this title for any ~~limited-services pregnancy center~~ person to disseminate or cause to be disseminated to the public any advertising about the health care services or proposed services performed at that center in this State that is untrue or clearly designed to mislead the public about the nature of the services provided. Advertising includes representations made directly to consumers; marketing practices; communication in any print

medium, such as newspapers, magazines, mailers, or handouts; and any broadcast medium, such as television or radio, telephone marketing, or advertising over the ~~Internet~~ internet such as through websites and, web ads advertisements, and social media. For purposes of this chapter, advertising ~~or the provision of services by a limited-services pregnancy center~~ about health care services is an act in commerce.

~~(b) Health care providers certified, registered, or licensed under Title 26 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated who are employed by, contracted to provide services for or on behalf of, or volunteer to provide services at a limited-services pregnancy center shall be responsible for conducting and providing health care services, information, and counseling at the center. The failure of a health care professional certified, registered, or licensed under Title 26 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated to conduct or to ensure that health care services, information, and counseling at the limited-services pregnancy services center are conducted in accordance with State law and professional standards of practice may constitute unprofessional conduct under 3 V.S.A. § 129a and 26 V.S.A. § 1354. [Repealed.]~~

~~(c) The Attorney General has the same authority to make rules, conduct civil investigations, and bring civil actions with respect to violations of subsection (a) of this section as provided under subchapter 1 of this chapter.~~

Sec. 5. 12 V.S.A. § 7306 is amended to read:

§ 7306. NONCOOPERATION

(a) No public agency or employee, appointee, officer or official, or any other ~~person~~ individual acting on behalf of a public agency may knowingly provide any information or expend or use time, money, facilities, property, equipment, personnel, or other resources in furtherance of any interstate or federal investigation or proceeding seeking to impose civil or criminal liability upon ~~a person~~ an individual or entity for:

(1) the provision, seeking or receipt of, or inquiring about legally protected health care activity that is legal in this State; or

(2) assisting any ~~person~~ individual or entity providing, seeking, receiving, or responding to an inquiry about legally protected health care activity that is legal in this State.

(b) This section shall not apply to:

(1) any investigation or proceeding where the conduct subject to potential liability under the investigation or proceeding would be subject to liability under the laws of this State if committed in this State;

(2) ~~any action taken by the Judicial Branch in judicial proceedings~~ order issued by a Vermont State court or a federal court; or

(3) a public agency or employee, appointee, officer or official, or any other individual acting on behalf of a public agency who, in the course of normal business, is responding to a warrant or extradition demand on the good faith belief that the warrant or demand is valid in this State.

Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. § 1881 is amended to read:

§ 1881. DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION
PROHIBITED

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Business associate” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(2) “Covered entity” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(3) “Legally protected health care activity” has the same meaning as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

(4) “Protected health information” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(5) “Telehealth” has the same meaning as in 26 V.S.A. § 3052.

(b) A covered entity or business associate shall not disclose protected health information unless the disclosure is permitted under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

(c)(1) ~~In~~ Notwithstanding any provision of subsection (b) of this section to the contrary, in order to protect patients and providers who engage in legally protected health care activity and except as set forth in in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a covered entity or business associate shall not disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity;

(A) to any government entity other than the State of Vermont or its political subdivisions or instrumentalities if the covered entity or business associate has reason to believe that the information will be used:

(i) to conduct a criminal, civil, administrative, or professional disciplinary investigation into any individual for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating a legally protected health care activity;

(ii) to impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action on any individual for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating a legally protected health care activity; or

(iii) to identify any individual for any of the activities described in subdivision (i) or (ii) of this subdivision (A); or

(B) for use in a civil or criminal action; a proceeding preliminary to a civil or criminal action; or a probate, legislative, or administrative proceeding unless.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of subdivision (1) of this subsection to the contrary, a covered entity or business associate may disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions:

(1)(A) The disclosure is authorized by the patient or the patient's conservator, guardian, or other authorized legal representative.

(2) The disclosure is specifically required by federal law, Vermont law, or rules adopted by the Vermont Supreme Court.

(3)(B) The disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to federal law, Vermont law, or rules adopted by the Vermont Supreme Court. An order compelling disclosure under this subdivision (B) shall include the court's determination that good cause exists to require disclosure of the information related to the information will not be used to impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action on any individual based solely on the fact that the person sought, obtained, provided, or facilitated a legally protected health care activity.

(4)(C) The disclosure is to be made to a person business associate designated by the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate and will be used solely in the defense of the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate against a claim that has been made, or there is a reasonable belief will be made, against the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate in a civil or criminal action; a proceeding preliminary to a civil or criminal action; or a probate, legislative, or administrative proceeding.

(5)(D) The disclosure is to Vermont's Board of Medical Practice or Office of Professional Regulation, as applicable, in connection with a bona fide investigation in Vermont of a licensed, certified, or registered health care provider or a bona fide investigation of whether an individual who is not licensed, certified, or registered to practice a health care profession in Vermont engaged in unauthorized practice in this State, whether in person or through telehealth.

(6)(E) The disclosure is to the Vermont Department of Health or the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, or both,

in connection with a bona fide investigation of a licensed health care facility in Vermont.

(F) Subject to the limitations set forth in 12 V.S.A. § 7306, the disclosure is required in the ordinary course of business of Vermont's Medicaid program.

(d) A covered entity or business associate shall not be subject to any civil, criminal, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action for refusing to disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity, in accordance with subsection (c) of this section.

Sec. 7. 18 V.S.A. § 4999 is amended to read:

§ 4999. DEFINITIONS

As used in this part:

* * *

(2) "Licensed health care professional," as used in 18 V.S.A. chapter 107, means a physician, a physician assistant, a naturopathic physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse. As used in chapter 107 of this part only, the term also includes a naturopathic physician.

* * *

Sec. 8. 18 V.S.A. § 5200 is amended to read:

§ 5200. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(4) "Licensed health care professional" means a physician, a physician assistant, a naturopathic physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse.

(5) "Natural organic reduction" has the same meaning as in section 5302 of this title.

Sec. 9. 18 V.S.A. § 5222 is amended to read:

§ 5222. REPORTS

(a)(1) The following fetal deaths shall be reported by the hospital, physician licensed health care professional, or funeral director directly to the Commissioner within seven days after delivery on forms prescribed by the Department:

~~(1)~~(A) All fetal deaths of 20 or more weeks of gestation or, if gestational age is unknown, of 400 or more grams, 15 or more ounces, fetal weight shall be reported.

~~(2)~~(B) All therapeutic or induced abortions, as legally authorized to be performed, of any length gestation or weight shall be reported.

~~(3)~~(2) Spontaneous abortions and ectopic pregnancies of less than 20 weeks gestation are not required to be reported.

(b) The ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional who treats a ~~woman patient~~ as a result of a miscarriage or abortion shall report the fetal death if it is not known to be previously reported under subsection (a) of this section. If there is evidence of violence or other unusual or suspicious circumstances, the medical examiner shall be immediately notified, and ~~he or she~~ the medical examiner shall complete at least the medical items on the report. If a funeral director is to be involved, the ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional may delegate to the funeral director the responsibility for completing items other than those of a medical nature. Similarly, the ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional may delegate the responsibility for completion of nonmedical items to appropriate personnel having access to records containing the information.

(c) If a fetal death occurs on a moving conveyance, the place of occurrence shall be given as the town or city where removal from the vehicle took place.

~~(d) Fetal death reports~~ Reports made pursuant to this section are for statistical purposes only and are not public records. They shall be kept confidential; shall not be disclosed or discoverable in any civil, criminal, administrative, or other proceeding; and shall be destroyed after five two years.

Sec. 10. 26 V.S.A. § 1354 is amended to read:

§ 1354. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) Prohibited conduct. The Board shall find that any one of the following, or any combination of the following, whether the conduct at issue was committed within or outside the State, constitutes unprofessional conduct:

* * *

(2) all advertising ~~of~~ about health care services or a medical business that is intended or has a tendency to mislead or deceive the public or impose upon credulous or ignorant persons and so be harmful or injurious to public morals or safety;

* * *

(21) permitting one's name or license to be used by a person, group, or corporation when not actually in charge of, ~~or~~ responsible for, or actively overseeing the treatment given or other health care services provided;

* * *

(29) delegation of professional responsibilities, including delivery of any health care services, to a person whom the licensed professional knows, or has reason to know, is not qualified by training, experience, education, or licensing credentials to perform them;

* * *

(33)(A) providing, prescribing, dispensing, or furnishing medical services or prescription medication or prescription-only devices to a person in response to any communication transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means, when the licensee fails to take the following actions to establish and maintain a proper physician-patient relationship:

(i) a reasonable effort to verify that the person requesting medication is in fact the patient, and is in fact who the person claims to be;

(ii) establishment of documented diagnosis through the use of accepted medical practices; and

(iii) maintenance of a current medical record;

(B) for the purposes of this subdivision (33), an electronic, ~~on-line~~ online, or telephonic evaluation by questionnaire is inadequate for the initial evaluation of the patient, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (C)(iv) of this subdivision (33);

(C) the following would not be in violation of this subdivision (33) if transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means:

(i) initial admission orders for newly hospitalized patients;

(ii) prescribing for a patient of another physician for whom the prescriber has taken the call;

(iii) prescribing for a patient examined by a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or other advanced practitioner authorized by law and supported by the physician;

(iv) in furtherance of 18 V.S.A. chapter 223, prescribing medication for an individual to terminate the individual's pregnancy based on an adaptive questionnaire developed by or in consultation with health care providers with clinically appropriate expertise that allows the licensee to obtain additional medical history and ask follow-up questions as needed;

(v) continuing medication on a short-term basis for a new patient, prior to the patient's first appointment; or

(v)(vi) emergency situations where life or health of the patient is in imminent danger;

* * *

(b) Failure to practice competently. The Board may also find that failure to practice competently by reason of any cause on a single occasion or on multiple occasions constitutes unprofessional conduct. Failure to practice competently includes, as determined by the Board:

(1) performance of unsafe or unacceptable patient care; or

(2) failure to conform to the essential standards of acceptable and prevailing practice.

(c) Burden of proof. The burden of proof in a disciplinary action shall be on the State to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the person has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

(d)(1) Health care providers. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, no health care provider who is certified, registered, or licensed in Vermont shall be subject to professional disciplinary action by the Board, nor shall the Board take adverse action on an application for certification, registration, or licensure of a qualified health care provider, based solely on:

(A)(1) the health care provider providing or assisting in the provision of legally protected health care activity; or

(B)(2) a criminal, civil, or disciplinary action in another state against the health care provider that is based solely on the provider providing or assisting in the provision of legally protected health care activity.

(2)(e) Definitions. As used in this ~~subsection~~ section:

(A)(1) "Health care provider" means a person who provides professional health care services to an individual during that individual's medical care, treatment, or confinement.

(B)(2) "Health care services" means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

(C)(3) "Legally protected health care activity" has the same meaning as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

Sec. 11. 26 V.S.A. § 1615 is amended to read:

§ 1615. ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES;

REGULATORY AUTHORITY; UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) In addition to the provisions of 3 V.S.A. § 129a and section 1582 of this chapter, the Board may deny an application for licensure, renewal, or reinstatement or may revoke, suspend, or otherwise discipline an advanced practice registered nurse upon due notice and opportunity for hearing if the person engages in the following conduct:

* * *

(6) Providing Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, providing, prescribing, dispensing, or furnishing medical services or prescription medication or prescription-only devices to a person in response to any communication transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means when the licensee fails to take the following actions to establish and maintain a proper provider-patient relationship:

(A) a reasonable effort to verify that the person requesting medication is in fact the patient and is in fact who the person claims to be;

(B) establishment of documented diagnosis through the use of accepted medical practices; and

(C) maintenance of a current medical record.

* * *

(b)(1) For the purposes of subdivision (a)(6) of this section, an electronic, online, or telephonic evaluation by questionnaire is inadequate for the initial evaluation of the patient, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (2)(D) of this subsection.

(2) The following would not be in violation of subdivision (a)(6) of this section:

(A) initial admission orders for newly hospitalized patients;

(B) prescribing for a patient of another provider for whom the prescriber has taken call;

(C) prescribing for a patient examined by a licensed APRN, physician assistant, or other practitioner authorized by law and supported by the APRN;

(D) in furtherance of 18 V.S.A. chapter 223, prescribing medication for an individual to terminate the individual's pregnancy based on an adaptive questionnaire developed by or in consultation with health care providers with

clinically appropriate expertise that allows the licensee to obtain additional medical history and ask follow-up questions as needed;

(E) continuing medication on a short-term basis for a new patient prior to the patient's first appointment; or

(F) emergency situations where the life or health of the patient is in imminent danger.

* * *

Sec. 12. 26 V.S.A. § 1736 is amended to read:

§ 1736. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) The following conduct and the conduct described in section 1354 of this title by a licensed physician assistant shall constitute unprofessional conduct; when that conduct is by an applicant or person who later becomes an applicant, it may constitute grounds for denial of licensure:

* * *

(2) occupational advertising or advertising about health care services that is intended or has a tendency to mislead or deceive the public;

(3) exercising undue influence on or taking improper advantage of a person using the individual's services, or promoting the sale of professional goods or services in a manner that exploits a person for the financial gain of the practitioner or of a third party;

(4) failing to comply with provisions of federal or state statutes or rules governing the profession;

(5) conviction of a crime related to the profession; and

(6) conduct that evidences unfitness to practice in the profession.

* * *

(d) As used in this section, "health care services" means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

Sec. 13. 26 V.S.A. § 2024 is added to read:

§ 2024. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PRESCRIBER AND PHARMACIST
INFORMATION ON MEDICATIONS FOR LEGALLY
PROTECTED HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Gender-affirming health care services” and “reproductive health care services” have the same meanings as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

(2) “Noncontrolled medication” means a medication that is not a controlled substance as defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802.

(b)(1) Upon the request of a prescribing practitioner and to the extent not expressly required under federal law, a pharmacist or other licensed member of the pharmacy staff shall redact or otherwise remove the practitioner’s name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(2) A pharmacist may, or, upon the pharmacist’s request, another licensed member of the pharmacy staff shall, redact or otherwise remove the pharmacist’s name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(3) If a prescribing practitioner dispenses medication directly to patients for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, or both, the practitioner may redact or otherwise remove the practitioner’s own name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(c) Nothing in this chapter or the rules governing the pharmacy profession shall be construed to require a pharmacist or other licensed member of a pharmacy’s staff to list the prescribing practitioner’s or pharmacist’s name or initials on a fulfilled prescription for noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services.

(d) A pharmacist or other licensed member of a pharmacy’s staff shall be immune from civil, administrative, and criminal liability for failing to redact or remove the name of a prescriber or pharmacist when requested to do so pursuant to subdivision (b)(1) or (2) of this section; provided, however, that this immunity shall not apply to gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct by a pharmacist or other licensed member of the pharmacy staff.

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Health Care?, **Reps. Dolan of Essex Junction and LaLonde of South Burlington** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Health Care as follows:

First: In Sec. 6, 18 V.S.A. § 1881, in subdivision (c)(2)(B), in the second sentence, by striking out “An” and inserting in lieu thereof “An A State court”

Second: In Sec. 13, 26 V.S.A. § 2024, in subsection (d) by striking out “civil, administrative, and criminal liability” and inserting in lieu thereof “civil and administrative liability”

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Health Care, as amended, was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 97. Nays, 43.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston *	Emmons of Springfield	Minier of South Burlington
Austin of Colchester	Galfetti of Barre Town	Morrow of Weston
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Mrowicki of Putney
Bartley of Fairfax	Goldman of Rockingham *	Nelson of Derby
Berbeco of Winooski *	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Nigro of Bennington
Birong of Vergennes	Graning of Jericho	Noyes of Wolcott
Bishop of Colchester	Greer of Bennington	Nugent of South Burlington
Black of Essex	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Bluemle of Burlington	Headrick of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Holcombe of Norwich	Olson of Starksboro
Boyden of Cambridge	Hooper of Burlington	Pezzo of Colchester
Brady of Williston	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pouech of Hinesburg
Brown of Richmond	Howard of Rutland City	Priestley of Bradford
Burditt of West Rutland	Hunter of Manchester	Quimby of Lyndon
Burke of Brattleboro	James of Manchester	Rachelson of Burlington
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Kascenska of Burke	Satcowitz of Randolph
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kimbell of Woodstock	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Sheldon of Middlebury
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sibilia of Dover
Christie of Hartford	Krasnow of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Cina of Burlington	Lalley of Shelburne	Stone of Burlington
Cole of Hartford	LaLonde of South Burlington *	Sweeney of Shelburne
Conlon of Cornwall	LaMont of Morristown	Taylor of Milton
Cooper of Pownal	Lipsky of Stowe	Tomlinson of Winooski
Corcoran of Bennington	Logan of Burlington	Torre of Moretown
		Walker of Swanton
		Waszazak of Barre City

Cordes of Bristol *	Long of Newfane	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Critchlow of Colchester	Luneau of St. Albans City	Wells of Brownington
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	White of Waitsfield *
Dolan of Essex Junction	McCann of Montpelier	White of Bethel
Duke of Burlington	McFaun of Barre Town	Wood of Waterbury
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McGill of Bridport	Yacovone of Morristown
Eastes of Guilford	Mihaly of Calais	

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Goslant of Northfield	Morrissey of Bennington
Bosch of Clarendon	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nielsen of Brandon
Boutin of Barre City	Harrison of Chittenden	North of Ferrisburgh
Branagan of Georgia	Harvey of Castleton	Oliver of Sheldon
Burt of Cabot	Higley of Lowell	Page of Newport City
Canfield of Fair Haven	Howland of Rutland Town	Parsons of Newbury
Casey of Hubbardton	Keyser of Rutland City	Pinsonault of Dorset
Charlton of Chester *	Labor of Morgan	Powers of Waterford
Coffin of Cavendish *	Laroche of Franklin	Pritchard of Pawlet
Demar of Enosburgh	Maguire of Rutland City	Southworth of Walden
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Marcotte of Coventry	Steady of Milton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney	Tagliavia of Corinth
Donahue of Northfield	Micklus of Milton	Toof of St. Albans Town
Feltus of Lyndon	Morgan, L. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow
	Morgan, M. of Milton	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burrows of West Windsor	Hango of Berkshire	Morris of Springfield
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hooper of Randolph	Squirrell of Underhill
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford	Surprenant of Barnard

Rep. Arsenault of Williston provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

This bill makes necessary adjustments to Vermont’s existing shield laws. The changes provide additional specific and clear protections for doctors and pharmacists who are acting responsibly, voluntarily, and legally within their professional roles to provide appropriate health care. While it’s worrisome that we need to take proactive steps to protect these dedicated health care practitioners, it is a step that I’m proud to vote in favor of.”

Rep. Berbeco of Winooski provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I'm voting yes for this bill because it's time to strengthen our shields. Since Roe, we have seen: 11 murders; 42 facility bombings; more than 200 facility arsons; and thousands of documented incidents of other criminal activity,

including assault, bomb threats, butyric acid attacks, clinic invasions, delivery of suspicious or threatening packages, stalking, and harassment.”

Rep. Charlton of Chester provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote no, knowing fully well that the bill is going to pass and that protections will remain in place. I also speak as a reminder that some cannot speak for themselves and that not all decisions are in our jurisdiction. Thank you.”

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

This bill as written, although well intended, does not address the safety of our health care professionals to keep them from potential legal actions or harm from outside of this State. I will hope that this can be addressed before we endanger them with unintended consequences.”

Rep. Cordes of Bristol provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I supported S.28 because I care about the safety and well-being of medical professionals, indeed some of whom helped draft this bill. They are committed to high standards of care and must be protected.”

Rep. Goldman of Rockingham provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

An in-person visit for the provision of safe medication termination of pregnancy has not been proven to be superior to asynchronous care with an adaptive questionnaire. This bill contains technical corrections that have been revealed in the Shield Bill that was passed in 2023. I voted yes to support access to these services and to protect our medical providers.”

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Vermont cannot change the fact that many states have made abortion and gender-affirming care illegal. We cannot change the fact that many states have restricted or denied access to such health care. We cannot change the fact that there are increasing threats to such care at the federal level. But what we can do with this bill is improve upon the protections offered in Vermont’s Shield bill. We can improve how we protect Vermont-licensed healthcare providers

and people who obtain or help others obtain reproductive or gender-affirming health care, from Vermont providers, from very real threats.”

Rep. White of Waitsfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am fully in support of this bill, which closes loopholes in existing law and ensures the protection of medical professionals assisting women and others with their personal and private health decisions.”

**Third Reading;
Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment**

S. 18

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 243

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

Was taken up and, pending consideration of the Senate proposal of amendment, on motion of **Rep. Cooper of Pownal**, action on the bill was postponed until April 23, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 42

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 10. An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At two o'clock and forty-four minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, April 18, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone of Burlington.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**H. 364**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the annexation of property by the Village of Swanton

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), materially affecting the revenue of one or more municipalities, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 56**

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution designating April 18, 2025 as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont

Whereas, the U.S. submarine VERMONT (USS VERMONT) (SSN 792) was commissioned on April 18, 2020, and is the third United States Naval Vessel to carry the State of Vermont namesake, and

Whereas, the officers and crew of the USS VERMONT (SSN 792) are currently deployed in the Western Pacific and are making port in South Korea and Japan, strengthening military cooperation with our allies, and

Whereas, the USS VERMONT (SSN 792) plays a leading role in the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) Trilateral Security Partnership, and it awarded the first Royal Australian officer his U.S. Navy Submarine Warfare Insignia (Dolphin), while he was serving on the USS VERMONT (SSN 792), and

Whereas, the U.S. Navy has recognized the crew of the USS VERMONT (SSN 792) with the 2024 Squadron One Battle Readiness Award (Battle E), and awards for engineering readiness, electronic warfare, supply readiness, and personnel readiness, further honoring their namesake with sustained superior performance, and

Whereas, the officers and crew of the USS VERMONT (SSN 792) honor Vermont lore with “Champy” patches on their shoulders and our “Freedom & Unity” motto in their emblems as they serve to protect our country and its freedoms, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 18, 2025 as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Commanding Officer of the USS VERMONT and the USS VERMONT Support Group.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 58

Offered by Representative Noyes of Wolcott

Offered by Senator Westman

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 18, 2025 as Electric Utility Lineworker Appreciation Day in Vermont

Whereas, in the 21st century, electric power, which is overwhelmingly transmitted through openly exposed local and long-distance electric power transmission lines, is essential for all aspects of daily living, and

Whereas, when lightning, snow, wind, and other variants of disruptive weather strike, the electric power lines are often damaged, posing an immediate danger to persons who encounter the wires and disrupting the flow of electric power to neighborhoods, entire municipalities, and even large sections of the State, including vital health and public safety facilities, and

Whereas, these electric power disruptions trigger the response of the dedicated men and women who are employees of Vermont's cooperative, investor-owned, and municipal utilities, the organizations that, for decades, have striven to provide all Vermonters with reliable, safe, and, in more recent years, increasingly environmentally friendly electric power, and

Whereas, these electric utility employees must work extended hours, under extremely dangerous conditions that require the utmost degree of care and professionalism, in a time-pressured effort to restore electric power expeditiously and eliminate dangerous hazards on the landscape and byways of the State, and

Whereas, these individuals are truly unsung heroes, whose impact on our daily lives is often forgotten and underappreciated, and

Whereas, across the country, April 18 is annually observed as National Lineman Appreciation Day, and a Vermont commemoration is in order, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April 18, 2025 as Electric Utility Lineworker Appreciation Day in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each of the cooperative, investor-owned, and municipal electric utilities in Vermont.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 21, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Third Reading;
Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment**

S. 28

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 27

Rep. Page of Newport City, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. STATE TREASURER; MEDICAL DEBT RELIEF;

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the State Treasurer from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of contracting with a nonprofit entity to acquire and repay certain medical debts incurred by Vermont residents as set forth in this section.

(b) The State Treasurer shall ensure that the entity with which the Treasurer contracts under this section will:

(1) purchase the medical debt of eligible debtors from health care providers at fair market value;

(2) abolish the debt with no cost or tax consequences for the debtor;

(3) coordinate with the health care provider or collections agency to ensure that any adverse information resulting from the medical debt is removed from the debtor's consumer credit report following the contractor's purchase and abolition of the debt; and

(4) notify each individual whose medical debt was abolished pursuant to this section:

(A) the amount of the individual's medical debt that was abolished and the name of the health care provider or providers from whom the entity purchased the individual's debt;

(B) the estimated percentage of the federal poverty level that corresponds to the individual's household income; and

(C) that financial assistance policies are available at all Vermont hospitals in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 9482, including the following minimum discounts:

(i) a 100 percent discount for individuals with household income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level; and

(ii) at least a 40 percent discount for individuals with household income between 250 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

(c) In order to be eligible for repayment of medical debt under this section, the following conditions must be met:

(1) the debtor shall be a Vermont resident who either has a household income that is at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level for the applicable household size or who owes medical debt in an amount that is five percent or more of the debtor's household income; and

(2) the debtor's patient account still maintains an outstanding balance even after the health care provider has completed its routine efforts to collect the amounts due.

Sec. 2. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 53(b)(5)(B), as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.102 and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.1000, is further amended to read:

(B) ~~\$20,000,000~~ \$19,000,000 shall be appropriated to the State Treasurer's Office and used for redeeming State of Vermont general obligation bonds prior to maturity.

Sec. 3. 9 V.S.A. § 2466d is added to read:

§ 2466d. REPORTING OF MEDICAL DEBT INFORMATION

PROHIBITED

(a) A credit reporting agency shall not report or maintain in the file on a consumer information relating to a medical debt.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "Health care services" means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical, dental, behavioral, or mental health condition or substance use disorder, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

(2) "Medical debt" means debt arising from health care services, including dental services, or from health care goods, including products, devices, durable medical equipment, and prescription drugs. "Medical debt" does not include debt arising from services provided by a veterinarian; debt charged to a credit card unless the credit card is issued under an open-end or closed-end credit plan offered solely for the payment of health care services; debt charged to a home equity or general-purpose line of credit; or secured debt.

Sec. 4. 9 V.S.A. § 2480b is amended to read:

§ 2480b. DISCLOSURES TO CONSUMERS

* * *

(c) Any time a credit reporting agency is required to make a written disclosure to consumers pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1681g, it shall disclose, in at least 12-point type, and in bold type as indicated, the following notice:

“NOTICE TO VERMONT CONSUMERS

* * *

(2) Under Vermont law, no one may access your credit report without your permission except under the following limited circumstances:

* * *

(F) where the request for a credit report is related to a credit transaction entered into prior to January 1, 1993; ~~or~~

(G) where the request for a credit report is by the Vermont Department of Taxes and is used for the purpose of collecting or investigating delinquent taxes; or

(H) where the request for a credit report is by an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for the purpose of determining eligibility for the abolition of medical debt.

* * *

Sec. 5. 9 V.S.A. § 2480g is amended to read:

§ 2480g. EXEMPTIONS

* * *

(e) The provisions of section 2480e of this title shall not apply to an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code when determining eligibility for the abolition of medical debt; provided, however, that the exemption from the provisions of section 2480e of this title shall not apply to a tax-exempt organization that is a large health care facility, as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9481.

Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. chapter 221, subchapter 10 is amended to read:

Subchapter 10. Patient Financial Assistance and Medical Debt

* * *

§ 9485. PROHIBITION ON SALE OR REPORTING OF MEDICAL DEBT

(a)(1) No large health care facility shall sell its medical debt except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) A large health care facility may sell or otherwise transfer its medical debt to an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for the specific purpose of the tax-exempt organization abolishing the medical debt of one or more patients by cancellation of the indebtedness.

(b) No large health care facility or medical debt collector shall report or otherwise furnish any portion of a medical debt to a credit reporting agency.

* * *

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Nigro of Bennington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

Rep. Feltus of Lyndon, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Health Care?, **Reps. Black of Essex, Berbeco of Winooski, Cina of Burlington Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Goldman of Rockingham, Houghton of Essex Junction, McFaun of Barre Town, Page of Newport City, and Powers of Waterford** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Health Care in Sec. 3, 9 V.S.A. § 2466d, in subsection (b), by striking out subdivision (1) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (1) to read as follows:

(1) "Health care services" means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, dental, behavioral health, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication.

Which was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Health Care, as amended?, **Reps. Donahue of Northfield and Black of Essex** moved to further amend the report of the Committee on Health Care by adding a new section to be Sec. 3 to read as follows:

Sec. 3. 1 V.S.A. § 151 is added to read:

§ 151. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

“Behavioral health” means any behavioral condition bearing on health, including stress-linked physical symptoms, patient activation, and health behaviors that can be addressed through support, counseling, change techniques, coaching, and other interventions. As used in the Vermont Statutes Annotated, the term does not include mental health conditions or substance use disorders. The General Assembly recognizes that using the term “behavioral health” to describe mental health conditions or substance use disorders has a stigmatizing impact, which may deter individuals from seeking health care for those conditions, but also recognizes that some jurisdictions interpret the term to incorporate those conditions and that therefore it may be necessary under limited circumstances to include the term in the definition of health care services for the sole reason of avoiding any question about the intended scope of a specific statute.

and by renumbering the remaining sections to be numerically correct

Which was agreed to. Thereafter, the report of the Committee on Health Care, as amended, was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 43

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposals of amendment to Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 9. An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault.

S. 30. An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 118. An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 95. House concurrent resolution designating April 24, 2025 as Vermont Children's Alliance Day at the State House.

H.C.R. 96. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Thetford Academy Panthers Division III boys' basketball team on their second consecutive championship.

H.C.R. 97. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Southern State Correctional Facility's debate team on its National Prison Debate League victory over Wake Forest University.

H.C.R. 98. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets Division I championship girls' ice hockey team.

H.C.R. 99. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars boys' Division I championship Nordic ski team.

H.C.R. 100. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars Division I championship girls' Nordic ski team.

H.C.R. 101. House concurrent resolution congratulating Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees.

H.C.R. 102. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 8–10 Colchester All-Star Vermont championship Little League Baseball team.

H.C.R. 103. House concurrent resolution commemorating the establishment of the Austine School for the Deaf collection and exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Library in Barre.

H.C.R. 104. House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 105. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 19, 2025 as World Circus Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 106. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars dance program on winning a 10th consecutive hip-hop State championship.

H.C.R. 107. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rice Memorial High School Green Knights boys' ice hockey team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship.

H.C.R. 108. House concurrent resolution congratulating the remarkable four-time State high school individual girls' golf champion Namo Seibert.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and forty minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 22.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 95

House concurrent resolution designating April 24, 2025 as Vermont Children's Alliance Day at the State House

H.C.R. 96

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Thetford Academy Panthers Division III boys' basketball team on their second consecutive championship

H.C.R. 97

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Southern State Correctional Facility's debate team on its National Prison Debate League victory over Wake Forest University

H.C.R. 98

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Essex High School Hornets Division I championship girls' ice hockey team

H.C.R. 99

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars boys' Division I championship Nordic ski team

H.C.R. 100

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars Division I championship girls' Nordic ski team

H.C.R. 101

House concurrent resolution congratulating Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees

H.C.R. 102

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 8–10 Colchester All-Star Vermont championship Little League Baseball team

H.C.R. 103

House concurrent resolution commemorating the establishment of the Austine School for the Deaf collection and exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Library in Barre

H.C.R. 104

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 105

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 19, 2025 as World Circus Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 106

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Mount Mansfield Union High School Cougars dance program on winning a 10th consecutive hip-hop State championship

H.C.R. 107

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rice Memorial High School Green Knights boys' ice hockey team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship

H.C.R. 108

House concurrent resolution congratulating the remarkable four-time State high school individual girls' golf champion Namo Seibert

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Ethan Tapper, forester and author, Bolton.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Naomi Isla Segal of Woodstock led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

House Resolution Adopted**H.R. 8**

Offered by Representatives Cole of Hartford, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Bartholomew of Hartland, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Chapin of East Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Conlon of Cornwall, Cooper of Pownal, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Emmons of Springfield, Feltus of Lyndon, Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Harple of Glover, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Kimbell of Woodstock, Kleppner of Burlington, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Krasnow of South Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, LaLonde of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Long of Newfane, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Mihaly of Calais, Minier of South Burlington, Morris of Springfield, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nigro of Bennington, Noyes of Wolcott, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Scheu of Middlebury, Sheldon of Middlebury, Sibia of Dover, Squirrell of Underhill, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown,

Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown

House resolution strongly objecting to the manner and circumstances under which U.S. immigration authorities arrested and detained Mohsen Mahdawi and strongly advocating that he be afforded due process under the law and released immediately from detention

Whereas, Mohsen Mahdawi is a resident of White River Junction and has been a U.S. permanent resident (green card holder) for the past decade, and

Whereas, on Monday, April 14, 2025, in the belief that he was to participate in his final interview for U.S. citizenship, Mohsen Mahdawi arrived at the U.S. immigration office in Colchester, and

Whereas, instead of commencing the interview, armed immigration authorities in plain clothes with faces covered arrested Mohsen Mahdawi and refused to provide any information regarding where he was being taken or what would happen to him, and

Whereas, in a joint statement that U.S. Senators Sanders and Welch and U.S. Representative Balint released, they described this action as “immoral, inhumane, and illegal,” and

Whereas, Vermont’s three federal legislators also demanded that Mohsen Mahdawi be afforded “due process under the law and immediately released from detention,” *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body strongly objects to the manner and circumstances under which U.S. immigration authorities arrested and detained Mohsen Mahdawi and strongly advocate that he be afforded due process under the law and released immediately from detention, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Acting Director Todd Lyons, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Was read and adopted.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 67

Offered by Representatives Morrissey of Bennington, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Greer of Bennington,

Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Nigro of Bennington, and Pinsonault of Dorset

Offered by Senators Bongartz and Plunkett

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's planning, in Bennington in 1775, of the successful Vermont initiation of the American War of Independence and the associated expedition to Ticonderoga

Whereas, during the 1770s, the volunteer militia members of the New Hampshire Grants, living north of the province of Massachusetts in the frontier areas between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain, were known as the Green Mountain Boys, and

Whereas, the Green Mountain Boys were located within striking distance of the two artillery-rich British forts, Crown Point and Ticonderoga, both perched on the western shore of Lake Champlain, and

Whereas, in early May 1775, Ethan Allen, who lived in Bennington, directed his fellow Green Mountain Boys at the Catamount Tavern, the militia's de facto headquarters, to bring their flintlock muskets north, in a discrete manner; to recruit more Green Mountain Boys along the way; and to rendezvous in Castleton, where they would be given further instructions, and

Whereas, the plan was finalized at Castleton and the Green Mountain Boys' execution of it resulted in the successful seizure of the British-held forts and the liberation of 78 cannons at Ticonderoga and 111 cannons at Crown Point, and these forays into British fortifications were seen as the first patriot triumphs in the American War of Independence from Great Britain, and

Whereas, these epic military operations and legendary feats forever enhanced the reputation of the Green Mountain Boys and contributed to the successful American drive to win independence from Great Britain, and

Whereas, in May 2025, Vermonters are commemorating the early role of the gallant and heroic men of the New Hampshire Grants in the fight for American independence, the prelude to Vermont's admission as our nation's 14th state, and

Whereas, in Bennington County, the commemoration of the "Expedition to Ticonderoga: Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain Boys, and America's First Victory," includes public events celebrating these brave deeds of 1775, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's planning, in Bennington in 1775, of the successful Vermont initiation of the American War of Independence and the associated expedition to Ticonderoga, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Bennington Town Clerk.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 72

Offered by Representative Harvey of Castleton

Offered by Senators Weeks, Collamore, and Williams

House concurrent resolution commemorating May 9, 2025 as the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's arrival in Castleton in association with the American War of Independence

Whereas, the Battles of Lexington and Concord, fought on April 19, 1775, initiated the long and deadly conflict between rebellious residents of the American colonies and the government of Great Britain, and

Whereas, as a result of a Committee of War held with the Green Mountain Boys and others in Zadock Remington's tavern in Castleton, their local field commander, Ethan Allen, dispatched Samuel Herrick to lead 30 men to lock down Skenesborough (now Whitehall, New York) and to seize British Lieutenant Philip Skene's fleet of boats in order to transport the Green Mountain Boys across Lake Champlain, and Ethan Allen also directed Gershom Beach to run more than 60 miles to alert men living in towns along Otter Creek and beyond of the need to rush to Hand's Cove in Shoreham on the east shore of Lake Champlain, where they would meet Ethan Allen and more Green Mountain Boys, and

Whereas, this plan was finalized at Castleton and the Green Mountain Boys successfully seized the British-held forts and liberated 78 cannons at Ticonderoga and 111 cannons at Crown Point, and these events were seen as early patriot triumphs in the American War of Independence from Great Britain, and

Whereas, over the next winter, an oxen crew that Bostonian Henry Knox led, moved 29 cannons from Crown Point and 30 from Ticonderoga to Boston, where they were placed on high ground in order to force the British navy to evacuate Boston Harbor, and

Whereas, these epic military operations enhanced the reputation of the Green Mountain Boys and contributed to the securing of American independence from Great Britain and began Vermont's journey towards admission as the nation's 14th state, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates May 9, 2025 as the 250th anniversary of Ethan Allen's arrival in Castleton in association with the American War of Independence, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Castleton Town Clerk and the Vermont State University Castleton campus.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 4, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 103

Offered by Representatives Burke of Brattleboro, Goodnow of Brattleboro, and Kornheiser of Brattleboro

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution commemorating the establishment of the Austine School for the Deaf collection and exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Library in Barre

Whereas, in the 19th century, Brevet Colonel William Austine of Brattleboro donated \$50,000.00 for the construction of a hospital in the community, and

Whereas, because a hospital already existed in Brattleboro, after the Colonel's death, his estate executor arranged for the legal redesignation of the gift for the purpose of establishing a school for the blind and deaf, and

Whereas, the General Assembly, in 1904 Acts and Resolves No. 276, incorporated "The Austine Sanitarium," and it amended the legislation in 1908 Acts and Resolves No. 319 to give the new organization flexibility in designating a name, and

Whereas, finally, in 1910 Acts and Resolves No. 74, the General Assembly appropriated \$50,000.00 "for the purpose of erecting a suitable building or plant for the use of said corporation, upon the land owned by it in Brattleboro, Vermont" subject to it being used for a school for the deaf, and

Whereas, the Austine School for the Deaf opened in the fall of 1912 with 16 students and at the first commencement in 1914, both Alexander Graham Bell and Helen Keller were speakers, and

Whereas, operation of the Austine School for the Deaf continued until 2014, and the school's historic documentation and artifacts are located at the Winston Prouty Center in Brattleboro under the curatorial supervision of the Austine School for the Deaf Museum Board, Donna Marie Auditore-Pyne, President, and

Whereas, in order to afford greater prominence to the history and role of the Austine School for the Deaf, a select collection of the oldest artifacts has been transferred for exhibition to the Vermont Historical Society Library in Barre, and a dedication ceremony, at which State officials spoke, occurred on October 26, 2024, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the establishment of the Austine School for the Deaf collection and exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Library in Barre, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the immediate past chair of the Austine School for the Deaf Museum Board and the Vermont Historical Society.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading;

Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment

S. 27

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 10

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. Coffin of Cavendish**, action on the bill was postponed until April 23, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 44

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 124. An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects.

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

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 23. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and thirty-seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Thomas Stevens of Waterbury.

Senate Bill Referred**S. 124**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 23**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 23. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, April 25, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, April 29, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 10**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill in Sec. 2, 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 1, in section 110 (fiscal year), following the words "shall begin on the first day of July", by striking out the words "and end on the last day of June" and inserting in lieu thereof "~~and end on the last day of June~~"

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 243**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of business organizations

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 4, 11 V.S.A. chapter 15, in section 1656, by striking out the section heading in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new section heading to read as follows:

§ 1656. SERVICE OF PROCESS; SECRETARY OF STATE AS AGENT

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 4a to read as follows:

Sec. 4a. 11 V.S.A. chapter 15, subchapter 2 is amended to read:

Subchapter 2. Administrative Authority

* * *

§ 1657. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

Upon request of any person and payment of the applicable fee, the Secretary of State shall issue a certificate of good standing for a business organization that is authorized to do business in this State, and that is currently active and in good standing as of the date the certificate is issued, as reflected in the records of the Secretary.

Third: By adding a new section to be Sec. 7a to read as follows:

Sec. 7a. 11 V.S.A. § 4028 is amended to read:

§ 4028. ~~CERTIFICATE OF EXISTENCE OR AUTHORIZATION~~
CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

~~(a) A person may request the Secretary of State to furnish a certificate of existence for a limited liability company or a certificate of authorization for a foreign limited liability company.~~

~~(b) A certificate of existence for a limited liability company shall set forth:~~

~~(1) the company's name;~~

~~(2) that it is duly organized under the laws of this State and the date of organization; and~~

~~(3) that articles of termination have not been filed.~~

~~(c) A certificate of authorization for a foreign limited liability company shall set forth:~~

- ~~(1) the company's name used in this State;~~
- ~~(2) that it is authorized to transact business in this State; and~~
- ~~(3) that a certificate of cancellation has not been filed.~~

~~(d) Subject to any qualification stated in the certificate, a certificate of existence or authorization issued by the Secretary of State may be relied upon as conclusive evidence that the domestic or foreign limited liability company is in existence or is authorized to transact business in this State. A person may request the Secretary of State to issue a certificate of good standing for a domestic or foreign limited liability company pursuant to section 1657 of this title.~~

Fourth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 8a to read as follows:

Sec. 8a. 11A V.S.A. § 1.28 is amended to read:

§ 1.28. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

~~(a) Anyone may apply to the Secretary of State to furnish a certificate of good standing for a domestic corporation or a certificate of authorization for a foreign corporation.~~

~~(b) A certificate of good standing or authorization sets forth:~~

~~(1) the domestic corporation's corporate name or the foreign corporation's corporate name used in this State;~~

~~(2) that:~~

~~(A) the domestic corporation is duly incorporated under the law of this state, the date of its incorporation, and the period of its duration if less than perpetual; or~~

~~(B) the foreign corporation is authorized to transact business in this State;~~

~~(3) that all fees and penalties owed to this state under section 1.22 of this title have been paid if:~~

~~(A) payment is reflected in the records of the Secretary of State; and~~

~~(B) nonpayment affects the existence or authorization of the domestic or foreign corporations;~~

~~(4) that its most recent annual report required by section 16.22 of this title has been delivered to the Secretary of State;~~

~~(5) that articles of dissolution have not been filed; and~~

~~(6) other facts of records in the office of the Secretary of State that may be requested by the applicant.~~

~~(c) Subject to any qualification stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing or authorization issued by the Secretary of State may be relied upon as conclusive evidence that the domestic or foreign corporation is in existence or is authorized to transact business in this State. A person may request the Secretary of State to issue a certificate of good standing for a domestic or foreign corporation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1657.~~

Fifth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 15a to read as follows:

Sec. 15a. 11B V.S.A. § 1.28 is amended to read:

§ 1.28. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

~~(a) Any person may apply to the Secretary of State to furnish a certificate of good standing for a domestic or foreign corporation.~~

~~(b) The certificate of good standing sets forth:~~

~~(1) the domestic corporation's corporate name or the foreign corporation's corporate name used in this State;~~

~~(2) that:~~

~~(A) the domestic corporation is duly incorporated under the law of this State, the date of its incorporation, and the period of its duration if less than perpetual; or~~

~~(B) the foreign corporation is authorized to transact business in this State;~~

~~(3) that all fees and penalties owed to this State under section 1.22 of this title have been paid if:~~

~~(A) payment is reflected in the records of the Secretary of State; and~~

~~(B) nonpayment affects the good standing of the domestic or foreign corporation;~~

~~(4) that its most recent biennial report required by section 16.22 of this title has been delivered to the Secretary of State; and~~

~~(5) that articles of dissolution have not been filed.~~

~~(c) Subject to any qualification stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing issued by the Secretary of State may be relied upon as conclusive evidence that the domestic or foreign corporation is in existence or is authorized to transact business in this State.~~

~~(d) Subject to any qualification stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing issued by the Secretary of State may be taken as prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein. A person may request the Secretary of State to issue a certificate of good standing for a domestic or foreign corporation pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1657.~~

Sixth: In Sec. 23, 11C V.S.A. chapter 2, by striking out section 206 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new section 206 to read as follows:

~~§ 206. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING OR AUTHORIZATION~~

~~(a) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish any person that requests it a certificate of good standing for a mutual benefit enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the enterprise's articles of organization, that the enterprise is in good standing, and that the Secretary of State has not filed a statement of termination.~~

~~(b) The Secretary of State, upon request and payment of the required fee, shall furnish to any person that requests it a certificate of authority for a foreign enterprise if the records filed in the Office of the Secretary of State show that the Secretary of State has filed the foreign enterprise's certificate of authority, has not revoked nor has reason to revoke the certificate of authority, and has not filed a notice of cancellation.~~

~~(c) Subject to any exceptions stated in the certificate, a certificate of good standing or authority issued by the Secretary of State establishes conclusively that the mutual benefit enterprise or foreign enterprise is in good standing or is authorized to transact business in this State. A person may request the Secretary of State to issue a certificate of good standing for a domestic or foreign enterprise pursuant to 11 V.S.A. § 1657.~~

Seventh: In Sec. 27, business services and business organizations; study, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) Reporting. The Secretary of State shall, based on the task set forth in subsection (a) of this section, submit to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the House Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Finance an interim report on or before November 15, 2025 and a final report on or before December 1, 2026 including its findings and any proposed legislation for the General Assembly's consideration. The interim report shall provide the General Assembly with any recommended actions to pursue in the 2026 legislative session.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Message from the Senate No. 45

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 398. An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 23rd day of April, 2025, he signed a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 80 An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate

Adjournment

At one o'clock and twenty-four minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, April 24, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by former Rep. Avram Patt of Worcester, now of Montpelier.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 509

By Reps. Berbeco of Winooski and Tomlinson of Winooski,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Winooski

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 510

By Rep. Burt of Cabot,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to repealing the charter of the Town of Danville

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**H. 86**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Chloride Contamination Reduction Program at the Agency of Natural Resources

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 95**

Offered by Representative Noyes of Wolcott

House concurrent resolution designating April 24, 2025 as Vermont Children's Alliance Day at the State House

Whereas, in Vermont, there are 13 Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) focusing on the challenges and solutions to the continuing prevalence of child abuse in our State, and

Whereas, these important organizations provide critical support and representational services to children whose needs can be acute and who rely on the centers to assist in transforming their lives from ones that may be harsh to a potentially more promising future, and

Whereas, a CAC provides "forensic interviews, a safe meeting space, victim advocacy, and coordinated care to children that report sexual and physical abuse," and

Whereas, "the vision of the Vermont Children's Alliance (VCA) [the CACs' membership organization] is to empower Vermont's CACs to provide equal and reliable access to support, treatment, justice, and healing for every child," and

Whereas, this vision is encompassed in the organization's mission "to foster the growth of the CAC movement by providing statewide support and resources, promoting awareness of child abuse and its impact on our communities," and

Whereas, today, April 24, 2025, representatives of the VCA and its member CACs are visiting the State House to educate legislators on the importance of addressing the continuing problems associated with the abuse of our youngest Vermonters, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 24, 2025 as Vermont Children's Alliance Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Children's Alliance.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Action on Bill Postponed**S. 36**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Bishop of Colchester**, action on the bill was postponed until April 25, 2025.

House Discrimination Prevention Panel Appointment

Pursuant to House Rule 90(a), the House Rules Committee appointed the following member to the House Discrimination Prevention Panel to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Rep. Donahue of Northfield:

Rep. Sibilia of Dover

Message from the Senate No. 46

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 21. An act relating to service of writs of possession.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has considered bills originating in the House of the following titles:

H. 13. An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers.

H. 206. An act relating to the Uniform Commercial Code.

H. 463. An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposals of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Governor has informed the Senate that on the 24th day of April, he approved and signed a bill originating in the Senate of the following title:

S. 3. An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and twenty-eight minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, April 25, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

House Bill Introduced**H. 511**

By Rep. Greer of Bennington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the admittance of federal immigration authorities into schools

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**H. 248**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**S. 60**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Farm Security Special Fund to provide grants for farm losses due to weather conditions

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 83

Offered by All Members of the House

Offered by All Members of the Senate

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts

Whereas, earning the rank of Eagle Scout is a special honor that only a small percentage of young persons enrolled in the Boy Scouts of America achieves, and

Whereas, an Eagle Scout is an individual who exhibits a strong commitment to service and perseveres to reach this challenging goal, and

Whereas, the following Scouts proudly achieved the rank of Eagle during 2024: Skyler Martinson, Colton Wild, Aiden Blanchard, Mason Schade, Shane Morse, Aden Michael, Sean Plumer, Lincoln Hurley, John Mosher, Riley Beckett, Craig Bouffard, Newt Bowker, Benjamin Edwards, Reilly Kilpatrick, Carl Laverty, Elliot Miklus, Aiden Powell, Spencer Levi, Xavier Richardson, Marc Stearns, Evan Kaigle, Devin Schlegel-Barber, Rose Brassard, Braeden Appel, Micah Killam, Channing Roper, Rhett Gardner, William Kallock, Nicholas Russell, Truman Bates, Nicholas Bushey, Zachary Bushey, Adam Kett, Henry Lawrence, Delainey LeBlanc, Liam Slattery, Jillian Koval, Oliver Bailey, Spencer Adams, Spencer Gebo, Zachary Norris, Gabriel Scribner, Aidan Hall, Mitchell Knowles, Warren Kingsbury, Oliver Andersen, Trevor Hazelton, Brendan Delaney, Joseph Donerkiel, Ethan Little, and Jaedon Beardsley, and

Whereas, all of these Scouts deserve commendation for their dedication and achievement, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each Eagle Scout honored in this resolution and to the Green Mountain Council.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 92

Offered by Representatives Quimby of Lyndon, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Feltus of Lyndon, Harple of Glover, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Labor of Morgan, Marcotte of Coventry, Nelson of Derby, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, and Wells of Brownington

Offered by Senators Beck, Douglass, and Ingalls

House concurrent resolution honoring the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont

Whereas, at seven Vermont colleges, and through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, students who aspire to be their families' first college graduate but lack the requisite funds can avail themselves of these federal educational support programs, and

Whereas, in 1964, in the Equal Opportunity Act, Congress established Upward Bound, the original federal college incentive program for financially disadvantaged students; in the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress created Talent Search to assist these students applying for newly established federal financial aid support; and in 1968, the 1965 law was amended to include the Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program (now known as Student Support Services), and together these three services became commonly referred to as the Federal TRIO Programs, and

Whereas, subsequent amendments to the 1965 legislation created the Educational Opportunities Centers and Veterans Upward Bound (1972); the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (1986); and in 1990, the Upward Bound program created a new division, Upward Bound Math-Science, and

Whereas, in 1992, Congress officially renamed and combined these programs as the Federal TRIO Programs, and they continue to be a special gateway for financially disadvantaged students to pursue their college dream, and

Whereas, students and administrators representing the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont are visiting the State House today, Friday, April 25, 2025, and their visit serves as an opportunity to recognize the educational and societal roles of the Federal TRIO Programs, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Board of Directors of the Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 101

Offered by Representatives Campbell of St. Johnsbury and Dolan of Essex Junction

Offered by Senator Ingalls

House concurrent resolution congratulating Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees

Whereas, spelling correctly is both an art and a science, requiring the knowledge of the English language's grammatical rules and the innumerable exceptions to every spelling convention, and

Whereas, the challenge of spelling complex words correctly is tested in individual schools, states, and nationally through students' participation in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, a venerable scholastic tradition, and 2025 marks the competition's centennial, and

Whereas, Phoenix Newell, a seventh grader at the Riverside School in Lyndonville, has, for two consecutive years, exhibited a passion and a special talent for mastering the nuances of spelling a sophisticated lexicon of words, and

Whereas, after innumerable hours of study and memorization, Phoenix Newell, then a sixth grader, advanced through numerous rounds of school competition to earn the opportunity to represent the Riverside School at the 2024 Vermont State Spelling Bee, at which she out-spelled all the other contestants and was declared the champion, and

Whereas, this singular achievement entitled Phoenix Newell to advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee final in Washington, DC, and

Whereas, despite her best effort, Phoenix Newell was not recognized as the 2024 national spelling champion, but the excitement and thrill of being part of this nationwide contest motivated her to try again as a seventh grader, and

Whereas, in 2025, Phoenix Newell's determination, patience, and academic stamina all contributed to her distinctive success in winning a second consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bee, and she eagerly anticipates returning to our nation's capital for her second appearance at the Scripps National Spelling Bee, this time as a more experienced contender, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Phoenix Newell.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Wood of Waterbury**, the following remarks by **Rep. Emmons of Springfield** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I’d like to spend some time this morning speaking a little bit about history and its history in terms of legislation that we quite often or maybe not often work on in this General Assembly. Today is the 25th anniversary of the passage of our Civil Unions law back in the year of 2000. I am one of the remaining members still here from that time. We do have a resolution that has been drafted. It will appear next week in our concurrent resolution calendar. It did not come in at the right time but Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words of what occurred and to give a little bit of background on this.

The House, twenty-five years ago today, concurred with the Senate amendments to House bill H.847 and we sent the bill to Governor Howard Dean for his signature and that occurred on April 26, 2000. What led up to that day was something that many of us never really experienced in this House and I want to start by reading a little bit of the Court ruling that set the foundation for the discussion that occurred. And it occurred in our House Judiciary Committee as well as within the halls of this building.

Madam Speaker, on December 20, 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court issued the landmark decision *Baker v. State*, holding that the exclusion of same-sex couples from access to the benefits and rights of marriage licenses under Vermont’s law violated the Common Benefits Clause of the Vermont Constitution. The Court allowed the General Assembly to consider and enact legislation consistent with the constitutional mandate described in its decision, which could be civil marriage or a different legal status that delivered ‘the common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law.’ Based on this, starting in January of the year 2000, our House Judiciary Committee started their work. They heard from many Vermonters and some of those public hearings were tenuous at best. There was high security. There were tremendous emotions on both sides of the issue, but our committee

listened to testimony from all sides and came to a unanimous solution of creating civil unions, and the term ‘civil unions’ came out of our House Judiciary Committee room and the work of our colleagues.

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from one particular floor speech that occurred—that sums it up. “The vote was approaching, and the chamber was packed with spectators when [the Vice Chair of House Judiciary Committee, Representative Bill] Lippert, the only openly gay lawmaker, rose to speak.” He started his speech by saying, “‘I think it’s important to put a face on this.’ The room fell silent.” He continued, “‘I’ve had the privilege of developing a deep, devoted, loving, caring relationship with another man. I think it’s very important as we listen, as we debate, as we make decisions, that you understand what the reality is about gay and lesbian people, gay and lesbian couples . . . Our lives, in the midst of historic prejudice and historic discrimination, are, to my view, in some ways miracles. Think what kind of relationship you would try to establish, how successful it would be to find [a] loving, committed partner in an environment where you have been barraged on a daily basis from birth saying you are sinful, you are wrong, something fundamentally flawed in your nature.’”¹

Madam Speaker, we did pass that legislation and we have some members here from the House Judiciary Committee, at that time, that I would like to introduce. We have the former member—the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Representative Tom Little from Shelburne. We have the Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee at the time, Representative Bill Lippert from Hinesburg, and we also have with us a member of the Committee, Representative Alice Nitka, later Senator Alice Nitka, from Ludlow, and they are seated in the Gallery. Please welcome them.”

¹ Quoting excerpts from Mary Ann Lickteig, *Vermont’s Civil Union Law Was Passed 25 Years Ago, Sparking the Nationwide March to Marriage Equality*, Seven Days (April 23, 2025).

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to; Amendment
Offered; Question Divided; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 36

Rep. Bishop of Colchester, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by inserting a new Sec. 6 and a new section to be Sec. 7 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. REPORTS; PUBLIC INEBRIATE SERVICES AND
PROGRAMMING

(a)(1) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand public inebriate services and programming shall prioritize Chittenden County.

(2) On or before February 15, 2026, the Departments of Health and of Mental Health shall jointly provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to expand public inebriate services and programming pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b) On or before February 15, 2026, the Department of Corrections shall provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to reinstate the practice of connecting individuals receiving public inebriate services in a correctional facility with appropriate community-based substance use recovery providers.

Sec. 7. REPORTS; HUMAN SERVICES BOARD PROCEEDINGS

(a) On or before December 15, 2025, the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Human Services Board, Office of the Attorney General, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Human Services Board, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare providing the following information and recommendations regarding proceedings before the Board:

(1) a proposal that attorneys representing the Agency or departments participate in training that balances the attorney's ethical obligation to zealously represent the attorney's client with the respectful, trauma-informed treatment of appellants;

(2) an analysis of varying appeals processes specific to the Agency and each department with cases before the Board, including proposals and any legislative action necessary to improve consistency;

(3) a proposal to identify and collect currently unavailable data in a manner that ensures uniform data collection across the Agency and departments with cases before the Board, including data regarding cases resolved prior to reaching the stage of hearing officer or full Board involvement;

(4) recommendations for resolving potential appeals prior to reaching the Board; and

(5) any other recommendation requiring legislative action.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Human Services Board, in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Board, the Office of the Attorney General, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare providing the following information and recommendations regarding proceedings before the Board:

(1) a proposal to improve understanding of Board processes and accessibility to appellants, including the use of media and graphics to explain what the Board is and how it operates;

(2) a proposal for the exchange of periodic feedback as part of a continual quality improvement process between the Board, Agency, departments appearing before the Board, Office of the Attorney General, Vermont Legal Aid, and other relevant stakeholders;

(3) an analysis of how to enable an appellant to present a personal narrative without jeopardizing the appellant's case or disrupting the legal obligations of the Board and the attorneys representing the Agency or departments appearing before the Board; and

(4) recommendations to improve the reporting and analysis of data to the General Assembly, including information related to appeal requests resolved prior to reaching the stage of hearing officer or full Board involvement.

and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, Public Inebriate Services, and Human Services Board proceedings"

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Human Services.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Human Services?, **Reps. Bishop of Colchester, Cole of Hartford, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Maguire of Rutland City, McGill of Bridport, Nielsen of Brandon, Noyes of Wolcott, Steady of Milton, and Wood of Waterbury** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Human Services as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 6, reports; public inebriate services and programming, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. REPORTS; SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING FOR PERSONS

WHO ARE INCAPACITATED

(a)(1) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 shall prioritize Chittenden County.

(2) On or before February 15, 2026, the Departments of Health and of Mental Health shall jointly provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b) On or before February 15, 2026, the Department of Corrections shall provide a presentation to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Health Care, and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Institutions and on Health and Welfare describing efforts to reinstate the practice of connecting persons who are in a correctional facility due to incapacitation pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 with appropriate community-based substance use recovery providers.

Second: By proposing to the Senate to amend the bill in Sec. 4, repeal, by striking out “public inebriates” and inserting in lieu thereof “persons who are incapacitated”

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings”

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Rachelson of Burlington** moved to amend the House proposal of amendment as follows:

First: By proposing to the Senate to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 4, repeal, and Sec. 5, 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 105, in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof new Secs. 4 and 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 105 is amended to read:

Sec. 105. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

(c) Secs. 99 and 100 (amending 18 V.S.A. §§ 4910 and 4811) shall take effect on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2027.

* * *

Sec. 5. 18 V.S.A. § 4810 is amended to read:

§ 4810. TREATMENT AND SERVICES

* * *

(d) A person judged by a law enforcement officer to be incapacitated, ~~and who has not been charged with a crime, and who poses a risk to public safety~~ may be lodged in protective custody in a lockup or community correctional center for up to 24 hours or until judged by the person in charge of the facility to be no longer incapacitated, if and only if:

(1) the person refuses to be transported to an appropriate facility for treatment or, if once there, refuses treatment or leaves the facility before ~~he or she~~ the person is considered by the responsible staff of that facility to be no longer incapacitated; or

(2) ~~no~~ there is not an approved substance abuse treatment program with detoxification capabilities ~~and no~~ a staff physician, or other medical professional at ~~the nearest a~~ a licensed general hospital ~~can be found within a 60-mile radius of where the person was first encountered~~ who will accept the person for treatment.

* * *

(h) If an incapacitated person in protective custody is lodged in a lockup or community correctional center;

(1) ~~his or her~~ the person's family or next of kin shall be notified as promptly as possible. ~~If, unless the person is an adult and requests that there be no notification, his or her~~ in which case the person's request shall be respected;

(2) any personal belongings taken from the person shall be promptly returned to the person upon release; and

(3) the person shall be returned to the location the person was first encountered or other reasonable location upon release, if requested.

* * *

Second: In Sec. 6, reports; services and programming for persons who are incapacitated, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 shall first prioritize the county with the highest current use of correctional facilities for this purpose and then any other underserved region of the State. As part of the Departments' fiscal year 2027 budget presentation, the Departments shall include a proposal for expanding community-based services for persons who are incapacitated to underserved regions of the State using, in part, cost savings from diverting persons who are incapacitated from emergency departments and correctional facilities.

Pending the question, Shall the House proposal of amendment be amended as offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington?, **Rep. Headrick of Burlington** asked that the question be divided by first considering the amendment to Sec. 4, and by thereafter considering the remainder of the amendment, and the Speaker ruled the question was divisible in that manner.

Thereupon, the question, Shall the House proposal of amendment be amended as offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington in Section 4?, was disagreed to.

Thereafter, the remainder of the amendment offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington was disagreed to and third reading ordered.

Favorable Reports; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 364

Rep. Hango of Berkshire, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the annexation of property by the Village of Swanton

Reported in favor of its passage.

Rep. Higley of Lowell, for the Committee on Ways and Means, reported in favor of its passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading was ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 398

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. Carris-Duncan of Whitingham**, action on the bill was postponed until April 28, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 47

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 18. An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 17. An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 109. House concurrent resolution congratulating the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie.

H.C.R. 110. House concurrent resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 111. House concurrent resolution designating May 18, 2025 as Grand Army of the Republic Highway Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 112. House concurrent resolution congratulating Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra for a quarter century of delightful and informative classical music performances and related cultural endeavors in central Vermont.

H.C.R. 113. House concurrent resolution congratulating the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition.

H.C.R. 114. House concurrent resolution honoring Deborah J. Aldrich for 42 years of extraordinary municipal public service in the Town of Chester.

H.C.R. 115. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Danville High School Bears Division IV championship boys' basketball team.

H.C.R. 116. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War.

H.C.R. 117. House concurrent resolution congratulating Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

H.C.R. 118. House concurrent resolution commending Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Monday, April 28, 2025, at three o'clock in the afternoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 23.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 109

House concurrent resolution congratulating the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie

H.C.R. 110

House concurrent resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 111

House concurrent resolution designating May 18, 2025 as Grand Army of the Republic Highway Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 112

House concurrent resolution congratulating Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra for a quarter century of delightful and informative classical music performances and related cultural endeavors in central Vermont

H.C.R. 113

House concurrent resolution congratulating the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition

H.C.R. 114

House concurrent resolution honoring Deborah J. Aldrich for 42 years of extraordinary municipal public service in the Town of Chester

H.C.R. 115

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Danville High School Bears Division IV championship boys' basketball team

H.C.R. 116

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War

H.C.R. 117

House concurrent resolution congratulating Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

H.C.R. 118

House concurrent resolution commending Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Monday, April 28, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, **Rep. Scheu of Middlebury** called the House to order. Noting a lack of quorum and pursuant to House Rule 9, the House adjourned until Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Joe Welker, East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Alex Young-Springer of Burlington led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

H. 512

By Reps. Harrison of Chittenden, Bosch of Clarendon, Canfield of Fair Haven, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Keyser of Rutland City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, McCoy of Poultney, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of the event ticketing market

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 513

By Reps. Bartholomew of Hartland and Burrows of West Windsor,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Southeast State Correctional Facility natural areas

To the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

H. 86

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Chloride Contamination Reduction Program at the Agency of Natural Resources

Appearing on the Action Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 504

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Rutland

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), materially affecting the revenue of one or more municipalities, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 86

Offered by Representatives McCann of Montpelier, Casey of Montpelier, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond, Conlon of Cornwall, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Harple of Glover, Hooper of Randolph, Hunter of Manchester, Long of Newfane, Quimby of Lyndon, Satcowitz of Randolph, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town

Offered by Senators Cummings, Perchlik, and Watson

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Montpelier High School Solons Division II girls' Nordic championship ski team

Whereas, the winter of 2025 proved propitious for the Solons girls' Nordic skiers as they dashed and glided their way to glory, and

Whereas, this confident and skilled contingent of snowy trail enthusiasts was exceptionally well prepared, having earned second place in each of the prior two years, and

Whereas, the two-day skiing competition consisted of the first day's freestyle runs held in Craftsbury and the concluding day's classical racing at Prospect Mountain, at which Montpelier emerged as the day's winner, and

Whereas, when all the scores were tallied, the Solons had clinched the 2025 Nordic skiing title, and the delighted Montpelier skiers were Phoebe Bakeman, Sara Saligman McGill, Anna Newara, Adele Pritchard, Clare Pritchard, Miriam Serota-Winston, Marie Voisin, and Anna Wetherell, and

Whereas, Head Coach Brian Carlson and assistant coaches Jason Serota-Winston and Hugh Pritchard were proud of the team, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2025 Montpelier High School Solons Division II girls' Nordic championship ski team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Montpelier High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 87

Offered by Representatives McCann of Montpelier, Casey of Montpelier, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond, Conlon of Cornwall, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Harple of Glover, Hooper of Randolph, Hunter of Manchester, Long of Newfane, Quimby of Lyndon, Satcowitz of Randolph, Taylor of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town

Offered by Senators Cummings, Perchlik, and Watson

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Montpelier High School Solons boys' basketball program on winning a fifth consecutive Division II championship

Whereas, during the 2024–2025 regular season, the first-seeded Solons and the third-seeded Harwood Highlanders had two encounters in which Montpelier strongly outscored Harwood, and the highly experienced Solons team was determined to repeat those earlier on-court performances at the Division II championship contest played at the Barre Auditorium, and

Whereas, the game proved to be a spirited hoop encounter, as at halftime the 40–30 Montpelier lead was not insurmountable, and

Whereas, recognizing the Highlanders' perseverance, the Solons accelerated their fourth-quarter drive, outscoring Harwood 19–10, ensuring a final 68–57 victory, and achieving a consecutive-year boys' basketball championship record not seen in Vermont high school competition in over three decades, and

Whereas, the victorious Solons were Kayden Anderson-Hall, Kleo Bridge, Carter Bruzzese, Carson Cody, Clayton Foster, Cayden Haley, Winter Holloway, Weston Jones, Atif Milak, Orion Nuss, Joseph Nyiringabo, Stone Poor, Colby Sterling-Proulx, Eliades Toman-Greenberg, and Alex Weinstein, and

Whereas, Head Coach Nick Foster and assistant coaches Bill Bruzzese, Ryan Booth, and Anthony Roberts inspired the team throughout the 2024–2025 basketball season, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Montpelier High School Solons boys' basketball program on winning a fifth consecutive Division II championship, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Montpelier High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 109

Offered by Representatives Burkhardt of South Burlington, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaLonde of South Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, and Nugent of South Burlington

House concurrent resolution congratulating the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie

Whereas, on February 23, 1905, Chicago attorney Paul Harris established the world's first Rotary Club, consisting of members from different professional and business backgrounds who gathered to "exchange ideas and form meaningful, lifelong friendships," and

Whereas, the organization quickly expanded around the globe, and within 16 years, there were Rotary Clubs on six continents, and

Whereas, a fundamental goal of all Rotary Clubs is to promote the Five Avenues of Service: Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service, International Service, and New Generation Service (empowering youth), and

Whereas, Rotary International's strong Vermont connection dates from 1923, and the South Burlington Rotary Club, for which Rotary International issued a charter on October 28, 1985, has been a stellar organizational contributor, and

Whereas, over the past four decades, the South Burlington Rotary Club has not only exemplified the highest ideals of Rotary International, making significant financial donations to laudable local initiatives, but, equally, has contributed to hands-on “people power” to support the success of community service projects that have improved life in South Burlington, and

Whereas, among the community achievements in which the South Burlington Rotary Club has participated are the completion of improvements to the bandshell at Veteran’s Memorial Park, the acquisition of an all-electric delivery and pickup van for the South Burlington Food Shelf, and the installation of benches along recreation paths, and they assist with school literacy projects, support Scouting programs, host and send students who are studying on international and academic exchanges, and much more, and

Whereas, the South Burlington Rotary Club is proudly commemorating 40 years of selfless good deeds and looks forward to active Rotary service for many years into the future, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the South Burlington Rotary Club.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 364

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of the annexation of property by the Village of Swanton

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Third Reading;

Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment

S. 36

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

**Second Reading; Amendment Offered; Point of Order; Proposal of
Amendment Agreed to; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 50

Rep. James of Manchester, for the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 8010 is amended to read:

§ 8010. SELF-GENERATION AND NET METERING

* * *

(c) In accordance with this section, the Commission shall adopt and implement rules that govern the installation and operation of net metering systems.

(1) The rules shall establish and maintain a net metering program that:

* * *

(G) accounts for changes over time in the cost of technology; ~~and~~

(H) allows a customer to retain ownership of the environmental attributes of energy generated by the customer's net metering system and of any associated tradeable renewable energy credits or to transfer those attributes and credits to the interconnecting retail provider, and:

(i) if the customer retains the attributes, reduces the value of the credit provided under this section for electricity generated by the customer's net metering system by an appropriate amount; and

(ii) if the customer transfers the attributes to the interconnecting provider, requires the provider to retain them for application toward compliance with sections 8004 and 8005 of this title; and

(I) allows a customer to change the customer's decision to retain or transfer the attributes once in the 120-day period after the net metering system is commissioned.

* * *

(3) The rules shall establish standards and procedures governing application for and issuance or revocation of a certificate of public good for net metering systems under the provisions of section 248 of this title. In establishing these standards and procedures:

* * *

(F) This subdivision (F) applies to an application for a net metering system with a capacity that is greater than ~~15~~ 25 kilowatts, unless the system is located on a new or existing structure the primary purpose of which is not the generation of electricity. With respect to such a system, the rules shall not waive or include provisions that are less stringent than each of the following:

(i) the requirement of subdivision 248(a)(4)(C) of this title to provide a copy of the application to the Agencies of Agriculture, Food and Markets and of Natural Resources; the Department of Public Service; the Division for Historic Preservation; the municipal legislative body; and the municipal and regional planning commissions; and

(ii) the requirements of subsection 248(f) (preapplication submittal) of this title.

(G) The rules shall establish an expedited registration procedure for net metering systems of 25 kilowatts and less in size.

* * *

Sec. 2. RULEMAKING

The Public Utility Commission shall update its Rule 5.100 to allow ground mounted photovoltaic net metering systems of 25 kilowatts and less to qualify for expedited registration. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Commission shall allow systems of 25 kilowatts and less to use the expedited registration before the rules are updated.

Sec. 3. 30 V.S.A. § 248(s) is amended to read:

(s) This subsection sets minimum setback requirements that shall apply to in-state ground-mounted solar electric generation facilities approved under this section, unless the facility is installed on a canopy constructed on an area primarily used for parking vehicles that is in existence or permitted on the date the application for the facility is filed.

(1) The minimum setbacks shall be:

(A) From a State or municipal highway, measured from the edge of the traveled way:

(i) 100 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kW;
and

(ii) 40 feet for a facility with a plant capacity less than or equal to 150 kW but greater than ~~15~~ 25 kW; and

(iii) 10 feet for a facility with a plant capacity less than or equal to 25 kW.

(B) From each property boundary that is not a State or municipal highway:

(i) 50 feet for a facility with a plant capacity exceeding 150 kW;
and

(ii) 25 feet for a facility with a plant capacity less than or equal to 150 kW but greater than ~~15~~ 25 kW; and

(iii) 10 feet for a facility with a plant capacity less than or equal to 25 kW.

(2) ~~This subsection does not require a setback for a facility with a plant capacity equal to or less than 15 kW. [Repealed.]~~

(3) On review of an application, the Commission may:

(A) require a larger setback than this subsection requires;

(B) approve an agreement to a smaller setback among the applicant, the municipal legislative body, and each owner of property adjoining the smaller setback; or

(C) require a setback for a facility constructed on an area primarily used for parking vehicles, if the application concerns such a facility.

(4) In this subsection:

(A) “kW” and “plant capacity” ~~shall~~ have the same meaning as in section 8002 of this title.

(B) “Setback” means the shortest distance between the nearest portion of a solar panel or support structure for a solar panel, at its point of attachment to the ground, and a property boundary or the edge of a highway’s traveled way.

Sec. 4. 30 V.S.A. § 248(a)(7) is amended to read:

(7) When a certificate of public good under this section or amendment to such a certificate is issued for an in-state electric generation or energy storage facility with a capacity that is greater than ~~15~~ 25 kilowatts, the certificate holder within 45 days shall record a notice of the certificate or

amended certificate, on a form prescribed by the Commission, in the land records of each municipality in which a facility subject to the certificate is located ~~and shall submit proof of this recording to the Commission.~~ The recording under this subsection shall be indexed as though the certificate holder were the grantor of a deed. The prescribed form shall not exceed one page and shall require identification of the land on which the facility is to be located by reference to the conveyance to the current landowner, the number of the certificate, and the name of each person to which the certificate was issued and shall include information on how to contact the Commission to view the certificate and supporting documents.

Sec. 5. PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION;

DEFINITION OF SINGLE PLANT

On or before November 1, 2025, and with input from stakeholders, the Public Utility Commission shall submit a recommended amended definition of “plant” in 30 V.S.A. § 8002(18) and an overview of their process and explanation of the recommendation to the House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. In making its recommendation, the Commission shall consider:

- (1) the land use benefits of collocation of energy generation facilities;
- (2) the ability to ensure comprehensive review of collocated facilities;
- and
- (3) the potential impacts to ratepayers associated with collocated facilities.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure?, **Rep. North of Ferrisburgh** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure by adding a new section to be Sec. 5a to read as follows:

Sec. 5a. REPEALS; CLEAN HEAT STANDARD

30 V.S.A. chapter 94 (Clean Heat Standard) and 32 V.S.A. § 3102(e)(23) (confidentiality of tax records) are repealed.

Rep. Bartholomew of Hartland raised a Point of Order that the amendment was not germane to the bill, which the Chair ruled well-taken because the underlying bill pertains to expedited registration for certain net-metering systems, whereas the amendment would repeal the Clean Heat Standard, and therefore the amendment deals with a different topic and would change the purpose of the bill. Therefore, the Chair ruled that the amendment was not germane and could not be considered.

Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 13

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 900 is amended to read:

§ 900. DEFINITIONS

~~Unless otherwise required by the context, the words and phrases in this chapter shall be defined as follows~~ As used in this chapter:

* * *

(7) “Community-based services” means the following services provided pursuant to Vermont’s Global Commitment to Health Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration or a successor program:

(A) long-term services and supports provided to older adults and adults with disabilities in a home or community setting other than a nursing home, including enhanced residential care services;

(B) home health and hospice services, adult day rehabilitation services, and assistive community care services; and

(C) short- and long-term services and supports provided to individuals with mental conditions, individuals with substance use disorders, individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities, and individuals with a brain injury, in a home or community setting that is not a clinical residential setting or a private nonmedical residential setting.

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 911 is added to read:

§ 911. PAYMENT RATES FOR PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

(a) The Secretary of Human Services shall calculate payment rates for providers of community-based services that are reasonable and adequate to achieve the required outcomes for the populations they serve. When calculating these payment rates, the Secretary:

(1) for informational purposes, shall ensure that the calculations take into account factors that include:

(A) the reasonable cost of any governmental mandate that has been enacted, adopted, or imposed by any State or federal authority; and

(B) a cost adjustment factor to reflect changes in reasonable costs of goods to and services of providers of community-based services, including those attributed to inflation and labor market dynamics; and

(2) may consider geographic differences in wages, benefits, housing, and real estate costs in each region of the State.

(b) The Secretary shall establish a methodology for calculating payment rates for providers of community-based services in accordance with this section. The methodology shall:

(1) provide a schedule for conducting studies of the Medicaid reimbursement rates paid to the providers of community-based services, including the rates' adequacy and their underlying methodologies, that includes studying the rates paid to providers for each type of service at least once every five years;

(2) set forth a predictable timeline for redetermination of base rates;

(3) include a process for calculating an annual inflationary rate adjustment;

(4) to the extent permitted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, take into account the financial needs of providers whose reimbursements may be negatively affected by client absences; and

(5) use Vermont labor market rates and Vermont costs of operation.

(c) The Secretary shall establish a process by which a provider of community-based services whose financial condition places it at imminent risk of closure may request provider stabilization from the Agency.

(d) The Secretary shall recalculate the payment rates for providers of community-based services in accordance with this section at least annually and shall report those rates, and the amounts necessary to fund them, to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Human Services, and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare annually as part of the Agency's budget presentation.

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 8914 is amended to read:

§ 8914. RATES OF PAYMENTS TO DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES

~~(a) The Secretary of Human Services shall have sole responsibility for establishing calculate the Departments of Health's, of Mental Health's, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living's rates of payments for designated and specialized service agencies that are reasonable and adequate to achieve the required outcomes for designated populations in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 911. When establishing rates of payment for designated and specialized service agencies, the Secretary shall adjust rates to take into account factors that include:~~

~~(1) the reasonable cost of any governmental mandate that has been enacted, adopted, or imposed by any State or federal authority; and~~

~~(2) a cost adjustment factor to reflect changes in reasonable costs of goods and services of designated and specialized service agencies, including those attributed to inflation and labor market dynamics.~~

~~(b) When establishing rates of payment for designated and specialized service agencies, the Secretary may consider geographic differences in wages, benefits, housing, and real estate costs in each region of the State.~~

Sec. 4. PAYMENT RATES FOR PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES; UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION; REPORT

On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committees on Human Services and on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with an update on the Agency's implementation of 33 V.S.A. § 911, as added by Sec. 2 of this act, including the Agency's proposed schedule for Medicaid rate studies and the methodology the Agency developed for calculating payment rates for providers of community-based services.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for community-based service providers”

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 206

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Uniform Commercial Code

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 11, transitional provisions for articles 9 and 12 of the Uniform Commercial Code amendments, in subdivision (b)(1)(A), following “transaction validly entered into”, by inserting “before”

Second: In Sec. 11, transitional provisions for articles 9 and 12 of the Uniform Commercial Code amendments, in subdivision (d)(2), following “as amended by this act, on”, by striking out “July 1, 2025”

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

**Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in with Further Proposal of
Amendment Thereto**

H. 398

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 10 V.S.A. chapter 12, in section 254, in the section heading, by striking out the word “STATE” and inserting in lieu thereof “STATE AUTHORITY”

Second: In Sec. 1, 10 V.S.A. chapter 12, in section 280gg, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a)(1) There is established within the Authority the Vermont Disaster Recovery Loan Fund, referred to in this subchapter as “the Fund,” the purpose of which is to enable the Authority to provide loans and other forms of financial assistance to businesses, including agricultural and forest product enterprises, after disasters.

(2) The Authority shall consult with the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development; the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets;

and the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation in determining whether funds shall be made available following a nondeclared disaster event impacting areas of the State. A consultation shall not be required in the event of a disaster declaration declared by the Governor or the President of the United States.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Reps. Marcotte of Coventry and Graning of Jericho** moved to concur in the Senate proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto in Sec. 1, 10 V.S.A. chapter 12, in section 280gg, by adding a new subsection to be subsection (e) to read as follows:

(e) A business shall not be eligible for financial assistance from the Vermont Disaster Recovery Loan Fund established by this subchapter 15 if the business has received disaster recovery financial assistance from the State for the same disaster event.

Which was agreed to.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 463

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. Hooper of Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until April 30, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 48

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 28. An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

S. 131. An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms.

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

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 218. An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 24. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on May 2, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 29th day of April, 2025, he signed bills originating in the House of the following titles:

H.118 An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes

H.259 An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and forty-eight minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Aaron Clark, Crossroads Christian Church, East Montpelier.

Senate Bill Referred

S. 131

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

S. 117

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar

Bill Referred to the Committee on Appropriations

S. 56

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 24**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 24. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on May 2, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, May 2, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, May 6, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 113**

Offered by Representatives Sibia of Dover, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Cooper of Pownal, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Duke of Burlington, Galfetti of Barre Town, Garofano of Essex, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Hango of Berkshire, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Lalley of Shelburne, Lipsky of Stowe, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Mrowicki of Putney, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Page of Newport City, Priestley of Bradford, Stevens of Waterbury, Tomlinson of Winooski, Toof of St. Albans Town, Waszazak of Barre City, and Wood of Waterbury

House concurrent resolution congratulating the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition

Whereas, Vermont Afterschool, the proud sponsor of the Jr Iron Chef VT cooking competition, describes the event as being one in which “youth from across the state are brought together to stand side-by-side in an orchestrated frenzy—dicing, grating, and sautéing their way to culinary fame,” and

Whereas, on March 29, 2025, the 17th rendition of this unusual cooking extravaganza, which encourages student chefs “to create locally sourced meals that promote Vermont’s Farm to School” program, was convened at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, and

Whereas, the popularity of this career exploration initiative is reflected in the more than 5,000 Vermont middle and high school students, who since 2008 have enthusiastically maximized their cooking skills and ingenuity as members of 1,000 participating teams, and

Whereas, the teams compete for three awards: Lively Local, honoring the team that best highlights Vermont foods; Mise en Place, honoring the team that shows exemplary teamwork, order, and professionalism; and Crowd Pleaser, honoring the team that best incorporates color, texture, and taste, and

Whereas, the competition categories, the winning middle and high schools, their team names, and their culinary creations were as follows:

Lively Local: Camel's Hump Middle School, Space Girls, soy glazed tofu and veggie taco with sunbutter sauce; Twin Valley Middle School, Cauliflower Crusaders, bodacious buffalo cauliflower tacos; and Champlain Valley Union High School, Chefhawks, brown butter shitake mushroom rice bowl;

Mise en Place: Winooski Middle School, Winooski Wild Onions, Korean fried "chicken" of the wood; Hunt Middle School, Eggsperits, green goddess deviled eggs; and Lake Champlain Waldorf School, Steam Dream Team, mushroom cabbage dumplings; and

Crowd Pleaser: Boys & Girls Club of Burlington, Los Amigos, three pepper quesadilla with charred corn and black bean salsa; Vergennes Union Middle School, Jalapeno Hotties, blackened tofu with mushrooms, shallots, peppers, and grits; and Champlain Valley Union High School, Spice Girls, tikka masala with spiced naan, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each of the winning teams and to Vermont Afterschool.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 116

Offered by Representatives Hango of Berkshire, Morgan, M. of Milton, Arsenault of Williston, Austin of Colchester, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartholomew of Hartland, Bartley of Fairfax, Berbeco of Winooski, Birong of Vergennes, Bishop of Colchester, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Boyden of Cambridge, Brady of Williston, Branagan of Georgia, Brown of Richmond, Burditt of West Rutland, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Canfield of Fair Haven, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Casey of Montpelier, Casey of Hubbardton, Chapin of East Montpelier, Charlton of Chester, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford,

Conlon of Cornwall, Cooper of Pownal, Corcoran of Bennington, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Eastes of Guilford, Emmons of Springfield, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harple of Glover, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Higley of Lowell, Holcombe of Norwich, Hooper of Randolph, Hooper of Burlington, Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Hunter of Manchester, James of Manchester, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Kimbell of Woodstock, Kleppner of Burlington, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Krasnow of South Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne, LaLonde of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Laroche of Franklin, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Long of Newfane, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Malay of Pittsford, Marcotte of Coventry, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Mihaly of Calais, Minier of South Burlington, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Morrow of Weston, Mrowicki of Putney, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, Nigro of Bennington, North of Ferrisburgh, Noyes of Wolcott, Nugent of South Burlington, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Ode of Burlington, Oliver of Sheldon, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Pezzo of Colchester, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pouech of Hinesburg, Powers of Waterford, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Rachelson of Burlington, Satcowitz of Randolph, Scheu of Middlebury, Sheldon of Middlebury, Sibia of Dover, Southworth of Walden, Squirrell of Underhill, Steady of Milton, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Tomlinson of Winooski, Toof of St. Albans Town, Torre of Moretown, Walker of Swanton, Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Winter of Ludlow, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown

Offered by Senators Collamore and Ram Hinsdale

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War

Whereas, the U.S. military engagement in Vietnam began in 1950, when, on the advice of his National Security Council, President Truman authorized military aid for French armed forces battling in Indochina, and, in July 1959, two American military advisors were killed in a guerrilla attack, and

Whereas, as the challenges for the South Vietnamese government increased, the American military advisory presence expanded, and

Whereas, in August 1964, while stationed off the Vietnamese coast in the Gulf of Tonkin, the American destroyer USS Maddox sustained damage from North Vietnamese fire, and in response, Congress adopted the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, increasing President Johnson's authority to engage militarily in Vietnam, and

Whereas, in March 1965, the first American combat troops arrived at Da Nang, South Vietnam, and during the following years, American forces fought bravely and at great peril, and according to the 2021 data of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 58,281 U.S. military personnel, including 100 Vermonters, died in combat or noncombat situations during the Vietnam War, while over 300,000 American soldiers were wounded, and

Whereas, although a cease-fire agreement was signed in January 1973 and the last U.S. ground troops withdrew from the country in March 1973, the Vietnam War continued until April 30, 1975, when North Vietnam captured the South Vietnamese capital, then known as Saigon, and the conflict concluded, and

Whereas, Vietnam War veterans served their country heroically and many continue to face physical and mental health challenges due to their military service, and

Whereas, today, April 30, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Legion Department of Vermont, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Vermont.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Bartley of Fairfax**, the following remarks by **Rep. Morgan, M. of Milton** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

On this somber yet significant anniversary of the fall of Saigon, we remember the 50th year since the end of the Vietnam War. The complex history involved made this a unique conflict. We remember the men and women who served and the lasting scars on both nations.

On this day, April 30, 2025, we stand in remembrance of the day the Vietnam War officially ended, with the fall of Saigon. This event marked the end of a long and arduous conflict, one that profoundly shaped the landscape of global politics and left an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals. It’s important to acknowledge the complex history of this war. From its origins in the Cold War, through the escalating involvement of the United States, to the eventual withdrawal and its aftermath, the Vietnam War was a deeply divisive and controversial period. We must remember the sacrifices made by all who served, both on the American and Vietnamese sides. This anniversary also provides an opportunity to reflect on the lasting impact of the Vietnam War. We must also remember our veterans who continue to suffer from the physical and psychological scars of the war. Having an uncle that flew roughly a year’s worth of combat missions in Vietnam, I can remember the way they were treated upon their return from war versus the way my generation was treated. It was starkly different, and I feel for that lack of support and showing of respect that these Vietnam Veterans generally did not receive. One could say they ‘never got their day.’

In closing, let us remember those who lost their lives, those who were wounded, and those who were forever changed by this conflict. Let us honor their sacrifices and learn from the lessons of the past, so that we may strive for a more peaceful and just future. Let us continue to remember, to learn, and to heal, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

Madam Speaker, we have with us today individuals representing our Vermont Vietnam Veterans. We specifically have four members of the State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America: Perry Melvin, VT State Council President of Shelburne, Richard Reed, Vice President of the VT State Council from Leicester, Lawrence Gold and his wife Irene, Chapter 001 (First in Nation) Vice President from Middlebury, and Steven Bennett, Chapter President of 601 from Bennington. Madam Speaker, would you help me recognize these, silent, unsung heroes? They are seated in the gallery behind me.”

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 463**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill in: Sec. 7, 3 V.S.A. § 206, following “pertaining” by inserting to

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Third Reading; Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment**S. 50**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Reps. Harrison of Chittenden and McCoy of Poultney** moved to amend the House proposal of amendment by striking out Sec. 6, effective date, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof new Secs. 6-12 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. 30 V.S.A. § 202b is amended to read:

§ 202b. STATE COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN

(a) The Department of Public Service, in conjunction with other State agencies designated by the Governor, shall prepare a State Comprehensive Energy Plan covering at least a 20-year period. The Plan shall seek to implement the State energy policy set forth in section 202a of this title, including meeting the State’s greenhouse gas emissions reductions ~~requirements~~ goals pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 578, and shall be consistent with the relevant goals of 24 V.S.A. § 4302 ~~and with the Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted and updated pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 592.~~ The State Comprehensive Energy Plan shall include:

* * *

(e) The Commissioner of Public Service (Commissioner) shall file an annual report on progress in meeting the goals of the Plan. The report shall address each of the following sectors of energy consumption in the State: electricity, nonelectric fuels for thermal purposes, and transportation. In preparing the report, the Commissioner shall consult with the Secretaries of Administration, of Agriculture, Food and Markets, of Natural Resources, and of Transportation and the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services.

* * *

(3) For each sector, the report shall provide:

(A) In millions of British thermal units (MMBTUs) for the most recent calendar year for which data are available, the total amount of energy consumed, the amount of clean and renewable energy consumed, and the percentage of clean and renewable energy consumed. For the electricity sector, the report shall also state the amounts in megawatt hours (MWH) of retail sales and load for Vermont as well as for each retail electricity provider and the Vermont and New England summer and winter peak electric demand, including the hour and day of peak demand.

(B) Projections of the energy reductions and shift to clean and renewable energy expected to occur under existing policies, technologies, and markets. The most recent available data shall be used to inform these projections and shall be provided as a supplement to the data described in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3).

* * *

(7) The report shall include the following information on progress toward meeting the Renewable Clean Energy Standard (RES CES):

(A) An assessment of the costs and benefits of the RES CES based on the most current available data, including rate and economic impacts, customer savings, technology deployment, greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved both relative to 10 V.S.A. § 578 requirements and societally, fuel price stability, effect on transmission and distribution upgrade costs, and any recommended changes based on this assessment.

(i) For the most recent calendar year for which data is available, each retail electricity provider's retail sales and load, in MWh; required amounts of clean and renewable energy for each category of the RES CES as set forth in section 8005 of this title; and amounts of clean and renewable energy and tradeable clean and renewable energy credits eligible to satisfy the requirements of sections 8004 and 8005 of this title actually owned by the Vermont retail electricity providers, expressed as a percentage of ~~retail sales and total load~~ MWh purchases made by Vermont retail electricity providers to meet demand.

* * *

(iv) The report shall assess how costs and benefits of the RES CES are being distributed across State, to the extent possible given available data, by retail electricity service territory, municipality, and environmental

justice focus populations, as defined by 3 V.S.A. § 6002. Such an assessment shall consider metrics to monitor affordability of electric rates.

(B) Projections, looking at least 10 years ahead, of the impacts of the ~~RES~~ CES.

* * *

(iii) The Department shall project, for the State, the impact of the ~~RES~~ CES in each of the following areas: electric utility rates, total energy consumption, electric energy consumption, fossil fuel consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. The report shall compare the amount or level in each of these areas with and without the program.

(C) An assessment of whether the requirements of the ~~RES~~ CES have been met to date, and any recommended changes needed to achieve those requirements.

(D) A summary of the activities of distributed renewable generation programs that support the achievement of the ~~RES~~ CES, including:

* * *

Sec. 7. 30 V.S.A. § 8002 is amended to read:

§ 8002. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(7) “Environmental attributes” means the characteristics of a plant that enable the energy it produces to qualify as clean or renewable energy and include any and all benefits of the plant to the environment such as avoided emissions or other impacts to air, water, or soil that may occur through the plant’s displacement of a nonclean or nonrenewable energy source.

* * *

(25) “Clean energy” means both renewable energy, as defined in this section, as well as electricity produced using a technology that does not emit greenhouse gases as a by-product of energy generation.

* * *

(29) “RES” “CES” means the Renewable Clean Energy Standard established under sections 8004 and 8005 of this title.

* * *

(33) “Tradeable zero emissions credits” or “ZECs” means all of the environmental attributes associated with a single unit of energy generated by a clean energy source where:

(A) those attributes are transferred or recorded separately from that unit of energy;

(B) the party claiming ownership of the tradeable zero emissions credits has acquired the exclusive legal ownership of all, and not less than all, the environmental attributes associated with that unit of energy; and

(C) exclusive legal ownership can be verified through an auditable contract path or pursuant to the system established or authorized by the Commission or any program for tracking and verification of the ownership of environmental attributes of energy legally recognized in any state and approved by the Commission.

Sec. 8. 30 V.S.A. § 8004 is amended to read:

§ 8004. SALES OF ELECTRIC ENERGY; RENEWABLE CLEAN
ENERGY STANDARD (RES CES)

(a) ~~Establishment~~ Expansion; requirements. The ~~RES Renewable Energy Standard~~ is established expanded to become the CES. Under this program, a retail electricity provider shall not sell or otherwise provide or offer to sell or provide electricity in the State of Vermont without ownership of sufficient energy produced by clean and renewable energy plants or sufficient tradeable renewable energy and zero emissions credits from plants whose energy is capable of delivery in New England that reflect the required amounts of clean and renewable energy set forth in section 8005 of this title or without support of energy transformation projects in accordance with that section. A retail electricity provider may meet the required amounts of clean and renewable energy through eligible tradeable renewable energy and zero emissions credits that it owns and retires, eligible clean and renewable energy resources with environmental attributes still attached, or a combination of those credits and resources.

(b) Rules. The Commission shall ~~adopt~~ update the rules that are necessary to allow the Commission and the Department to implement and supervise further the implementation and maintenance of the RES CES.

(c) ~~RECS~~ RECs and ZECs; banking. The Commission shall allow a provider that has met the required ~~amount~~ amounts of renewable energy or zero emissions credits in a given year, commencing with 2017, to retain tradeable renewable energy or zero emissions credits created or purchased in

excess of that amount for application to the provider's required amount of clean or renewable energy in one of the following three years.

(d) Alternative compliance payment. In lieu of purchasing renewable energy or tradeable renewable energy or zero emissions credits or supporting energy transformation projects to satisfy the requirements of this section and section 8005 of this title, a retail electricity provider in this State may pay to the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund established under section 8015 of this title an alternative compliance payment at the applicable rate set forth in section 8005. The administrator of the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund shall use the payment from a retail electricity provider electing to make an alternative compliance payment to satisfy its obligations under subdivisions 8005(a)(1), 8005(a)(2), 8005(a)(4), and 8005(a)(5) of this title for the development of renewable energy plants that are intended to serve and benefit customers with low income of the retail electricity provider that has made the payment. Such plants shall be located within the provider's service territory, if feasible. In the event that such a payment is insufficient to enable the development of a renewable energy plant, the administrator may use the payment for other initiatives allowed under section 8015 of this title that will benefit customers with low income of the retail electricity provider that has made the payment. As used in this subsection (~~d~~), "customer with low income" means a person purchasing energy from a retail electricity provider and with an income that is less than or equal to 80 percent of area median income, adjusted for family size, as published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

* * *

(f) Joint efforts. Retail electricity providers may engage in joint efforts to meet one or more categories within the ~~RES~~ CES.

Sec. 9. 30 V.S.A. § 8005 is amended to read:

§ 8005. ~~RES~~ CES CATEGORIES

(a) Categories. This section specifies five categories of required resources to meet the requirements of the ~~RES~~ CES established in section 8004 of this title: total clean and renewable energy, distributed renewable generation, energy transformation, new renewable energy, and load growth renewable energy. In order to support progress toward Vermont's climate goals and requirements, a provider may, but shall not be required to, exceed the statutorily required amounts under this section.

(1) Total clean and renewable energy.

(A) Purpose; establishment. To encourage the economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy, this subdivision establishes, for the RES CES, minimum total amounts of clean and renewable energy within the supply portfolio of each retail electricity provider. To satisfy this requirement, a provider may use clean energy generated within New England or renewable energy with environmental attributes attached or any class of tradeable renewable energy credits generated by any renewable energy plant whose energy is capable of delivery in New England.

(B) Required amounts.

(i) The amounts of total clean and renewable energy required by this subsection (a) shall be 63 percent of each retail electricity provider's annual load during the year beginning on January 1, 2025, increasing by at least an additional ~~four~~ 7.4 percent each third January 1 thereafter until reaching 100 percent: on and after January 1, 2030.

~~(i) on and after January 1, 2035 for a retail electricity provider who serves a single customer that takes service at 115 kilovolts and each municipal retail electricity provider formed under local charter or chapter 79 of this title; and~~

~~(ii) on and after January 1, 2030, for all other retail electricity providers~~ The amount of total renewable energy required by this subsection (a) shall be 55 percent of each retail electricity provider's annual electricity purchases during the year beginning on January 1, 2027, increasing by an additional four percent each January 1 hereafter, until reaching 75 percent on and after January 1, 2032.

* * *

(2) Distributed renewable generation.

(A) Purpose; establishment. This subdivision establishes a distributed renewable generation category for the RES CES. This category encourages the use of distributed generation to support the reliability of the State's electric system; reduce line losses; contribute to avoiding or deferring improvements to that system necessitated by transmission or distribution constraints; and diversify the size and type of resources connected to that system. This category requires the use of renewable energy for these purposes to reduce environmental and health impacts from air emissions that would result from using other forms of generation.

* * *

(E) Avoiding transmission and distribution constraints.

(i) Procurements by retail electricity providers and programs that support meeting the requirements of this subdivision (2) shall avoid development of new facilities in generation constrained areas of the distribution or transmission system that would not need to be expanded but for the addition of additional generation, unless costs associated with development in those generation constrained areas are not passed through to ratepayers through the cost to utilities to purchase the generation or in any other manner. To implement the intent of this section, the Commission may update or adopt rules, including rules that require a locational adjustor fee.

(ii) A retail electricity provider may petition the Commission for relief of the requirements of subdivision (C) of this subdivision (a)(2) or the associated alternative compliance payment, which may be granted if the provider can demonstrate that it is unable to meet its requirements without extensive upgrades to the transmission or distribution infrastructure that would be borne by the provider's ratepayers. If relief is granted, the retail electricity provider shall be required to instead acquire new renewable generation from facilities that qualify to meet the requirements of subdivision (4) of this subsection (a), in addition to the requirements as described in subdivision (4) of this subsection (a).

(3) Energy transformation.

(A) Purpose; establishment. This subdivision (3) establishes an energy transformation category for the RES CES. This category encourages Vermont retail electricity providers to support additional distributed renewable generation or to support other projects to reduce fossil fuel consumed by their customers and the emission of greenhouse gases attributable to that consumption. A retail electricity provider may satisfy the energy transformation requirement through distributed renewable generation in addition to the generation used to satisfy subdivision (2) of this subsection (a) or energy transformation projects or a combination of such generation and projects.

* * *

(4) New renewable energy.

(A) Purpose; establishment. This subdivision (4) establishes a new regional renewable energy category for the RES CES. This category encourages the use of new renewable generation to support the reliability of the regional ISO-NE electric system. To satisfy this requirement, a provider shall use new renewable energy with environmental attributes attached or any class of tradeable renewable energy credits generated by any renewable energy

plant coming into service after January 1, 2010 whose energy is capable of delivery in New England.

* * *

(6) Alternative compliance rates.

(A) The alternative compliance payment rates for the categories established by subdivisions (1)–(3) of this subsection (a) shall be:

(i) total clean and renewable energy requirement — \$0.01 per kWh; and

(ii) ~~distributed renewable generation~~ and energy transformation requirements — \$0.06 per kWh.

(B) The Commission shall adjust these rates for inflation annually commencing January 1, 2018, using the CPI.

(C) For the distributed renewable energy, new renewable energy and load growth requirements, it shall be \$0.04 per kWh annually commencing on January 1, 2025, with calculations for inflation beginning on January 1, 2023.

* * *

Sec. 10. 30 V.S.A. § 8006 is amended to read:

§ 8006. TRADEABLE CREDITS; ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES;
RECOGNITION, MONITORING, AND DISCLOSURE

(a) The Commission shall ~~establish or adopt a~~ amend and expand its system of tradeable renewable energy credits for renewable resources that may be earned by electric generation qualifying for the prior RES to include clean energy generation. The system shall recognize tradeable renewable energy credits monitored and traded on the New England Generation Information System (GIS); shall provide a process for the recognition, approval, and monitoring of environmental attributes attached to clean and renewable energy that are eligible to satisfy the requirements of sections 8004 and 8005 of this title but are not monitored and traded on the GIS; and shall otherwise be consistent with regional practices.

(b) The Commission shall ensure that all electricity provider and provider-affiliate disclosures and representations made with regard to a provider's portfolio are accurate and reasonably supported by objective data. Further, the Commission shall ensure that providers disclose the types of generation used and shall clearly distinguish between energy or tradeable energy credits provided from clean, renewable, and nonrenewable energy sources and existing and new renewable energy.

Sec. 11. 30 V.S.A. § 8008 is amended to read:

§ 8008. AGREEMENTS; ATTRIBUTE REVENUES; DISPOSITION BY
COMMISSION

(a) As used in this section, “the revenues” means revenues that are from the sale, through tradeable clean or renewable energy certificates or other means, of environmental attributes associated with the generation of clean and renewable energy from a system of generation resources with a total plant capacity greater than 200 MW and that are received by a Vermont retail electricity provider on or after May 1, 2012, pursuant to an agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or other transaction in which a person or entity agrees to transfer such revenues or rights associated with such attributes to the provider.

* * *

Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Thereupon, **Rep. Harrison of Chittenden** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

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

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 505

Rep. Pinsonault of Dorset, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the Town of Barre

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 49

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 27. An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports.

And has concurred therein with an amendment in the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 96. An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and forty-two minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, May 1, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Troy Headrick of Burlington.

House Bill Introduced

H. 514

By LaLonde of South Burlington

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the procedures governing the change of a minor's legal name

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 117

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar

Bill Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

H. 230

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 102**

Offered by Representatives Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Critchlow of Colchester, and Pezzo of Colchester

Offered by Senators Norris and Brennan

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 8–10 Colchester All-Star Vermont championship Little League Baseball team

Whereas, for the 2024 8–10 Colchester All-Star Little League Baseball team, the phrases “come from behind” and “never say no” ring true, and

Whereas, this fine squad of young players had previously proven their dedication to the game of baseball upon being selected as all-stars, and

Whereas, Colchester’s first challenge was to advance in the District 1 competition in which the team twice defeated its rival contender, Camel’s Hump, 21–8 and then 10–4 for the divisional title, notwithstanding two earlier Camel’s Hump victories over Colchester, and

Whereas, in the State championship contest, Colchester was matched against the host Brattleboro team, and in the bottom of the seventh of a scheduled seven-inning contest with two outs, no runner on base, and trailing 4–2, Colchester ignited an unanticipated offensive spree, scoring three successive and decisive runs, triumphantly departing the diamond as the 5–4 game winner and the 2024 8–10 Vermont Little League champion, and

Whereas, Colchester represented Vermont admirably at the New England regional Little League Baseball tournament played in Rhode Island, and

Whereas, the proud Colchester All-Star Little League players were Boden Carney, Grayson Carey, Elliot Cote, Hayden Critchlow, Weston Ellingson, Willie Lamarche, Graysen Mead, Keegan Norris, Oliver Ouellette, Easton Pratt, Toby Scheuch, and Jensen Yelk, and

Whereas, head coaches Brennan Carney, Ty Pratt, and Jason Yelk served as outstanding mentors and teachers for the team, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 8–10 Colchester All-Star Vermont championship Little League Baseball team, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the 8–10 Colchester All-Star Vermont Little League Baseball team.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Vermont
Adopted in Concurrence**

Proposal 3

Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington, for the Committee on General and Housing, to which had been referred Proposal 3, which is printed in full below, reported in favor of its adoption in concurrence.

The proposal, having appeared on the Calendar for five legislative days pursuant to House Rule 51a, was taken up.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE STATE OF VERMONT

Subject: Declaration of Rights; right to collectively bargain

PROPOSAL 3

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to provide that the citizens of the State have a right to collectively bargain.

Sec. 2. Article 23 of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is added to read:

Article 23. [Right to collectively bargain]

That employees have a right to organize or join a labor organization for the purpose of collectively bargaining with their employer through an exclusive representative of their choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions and to protect their economic welfare and safety in the workplace. Therefore, no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to collectively bargain with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, or that prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization representing the employer's employees that requires membership in the labor organization as a condition of employment.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

The amendment set forth in this proposal shall become a part of the Constitution of the State of Vermont on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2026 when ratified and adopted by the people of this State in accordance with the provisions of 17 V.S.A. chapter 32.

Pending the question, Shall the House adopt the constitutional proposal in concurrence?, **Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the House adopt the constitutional proposal in concurrence?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 125. Nays, 15.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Eastes of Guilford	Minier of South Burlington
Austin of Colchester	Emmons of Springfield	Morgan, L. of Milton
Bailey of Hyde Park	Feltus of Lyndon	Morgan, M. of Milton
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Morris of Springfield
Bartley of Fairfax	Goldman of Rockingham	Morrissey of Bennington
Berbeco of Winooski	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Morrow of Weston
Birong of Vergennes	Goslant of Northfield	Mrowicki of Putney *
Bishop of Colchester	Graning of Jericho	Nigro of Bennington
Black of Essex	Greer of Bennington	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Gregoire of Fairfield *	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harple of Glover	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Boutin of Barre City	Harrison of Chittenden	Ode of Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Oliver of Sheldon
Brady of Williston	Higley of Lowell	Olson of Starksboro *
Branagan of Georgia	Holcombe of Norwich	Page of Newport City
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Pezzo of Colchester
Burke of Brattleboro	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pinsonault of Dorset
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howard of Rutland City	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burrows of West Windsor	Hunter of Manchester	Pritchard of Pawlet
Canfield of Fair Haven	James of Manchester	Quimby of Lyndon
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kascenska of Burke	Rachelson of Burlington
Casey of Montpelier	Keyser of Rutland City	Satcowitz of Randolph
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Scheu of Middlebury
Charlton of Chester	Kleppner of Burlington	Sheldon of Middlebury
Christie of Hartford	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sibilia of Dover
Cina of Burlington *	Krasnow of South Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Coffin of Cavendish	Lalley of Shelburne	Steady of Milton
Cole of Hartford *	LaLonde of South Burlington	Stevens of Waterbury
Conlon of Cornwall	LaMont of Morristown	Stone of Burlington
Cooper of Pownal	Laroche of Franklin	Surprenant of Barnard
Corcoran of Bennington	Lipsky of Stowe	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cordes of Bristol *	Logan of Burlington *	Taylor of Milton
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	Tomlinson of Winooski
Demar of Enosburgh	Maguire of Rutland City	Toof of St. Albans Town
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Malay of Pittsford	Torre of Moretown
Dodge of Essex *	Marcotte of Coventry	Waszazak of Barre City
Dolan of Essex Junction	Masland of Thetford	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McCann of Montpelier	Wells of Brownington
	McFaun of Barre Town	White of Waitsfield
		White of Bethel
		Wood of Waterbury

Donahue of Northfield	McGill of Bridport	Yacovone of Morristown
Duke of Burlington	Micklus of Milton	
Durfee of Shaftsbury	Mihaly of Calais	

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bosch of Clarendon *	Hango of Berkshire *	Southworth of Walden
Burditt of West Rutland	Harvey of Castleton	Tagliavia of Corinth
Burt of Cabot *	Howland of Rutland Town	Walker of Swanton
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Winter of Ludlow
Dobrovich of Williamstown*	Luneau of St. Albans City	
	Nelson of Derby *	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Campbell of St. Johnsbury	McCoy of Poultney	Parsons of Newbury
Galfetti of Barre Town	Nielsen of Brandon	Powers of Waterford
Hooper of Burlington	North of Ferrisburgh	Priestley of Bradford

Rep. Bosch of Clarendon provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I believe requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of hire will have a chilling effect on the workforce, and we have received testimony already that we have two vacancies for every applicant.”

Rep. Burt of Cabot provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

My mother would have asked me not to.”

Rep. Cina of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes in honor of my grandparents, all the ancestors who have struggled, and my co-workers in AFSCME local 1674 at Howard Center. Workers of the world unite!”

Rep. Cole of Hartford provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

We have a grave distribution of wealth problem in this country, with billionaires garnering exponentially more wealth each day – at the expense of the hardest working members of our society. I’m proud that Vermont is giving power back to the people who earned it.”

Rep. Cordes of Bristol provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Happy International Labor Day. As Mother Jones said, ‘Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living.’”

Rep. Dobrovich of Williamstown provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

While I support the ability for workers to organize, I do not agree that anyone should be compelled to become a member of a union to obtain employment. That is a bridge too far.”

Rep. Dodge of Essex provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support Prop 3 because it defends the right of Vermonters to choose whether to organize alongside their colleagues and co-workers. Prop 3 recognizes that workplaces where labor can organize are workplaces where power lies with the many, not with the money.”

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support the right to join a union. I also support the right not to join. I do not support being compelled to join. However, I vote yes to give the people of Vermont the opportunity to decide for themselves.”

Rep. Hango of Berkshire provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted no today for a simple reason: I cannot support taking away workers’ right to make the decision to join a union as a condition of their employment. I support union activity. I grew up in a union household, and I was a card-carrying member as a teenager. Unions have had a tremendous impact on our workplace throughout history and they have served their purpose well. I simply do not support taking away a worker’s freedom to decide.”

Rep. Logan of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

As a former member of AFT-Oregon Local GTFF3544, on behalf of every working Vermonter, and in support of workplace democracy. Solidarity forever.”

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

My YES vote is for my maternal grandfather. He came to this country from Poland after WWI and the last pandemic, landed in Jersey City, NJ, and headed to the coal mines of West Virginia. The labor strife there over conditions and wages included the Blair Massacre, where Pinkertons for management opened fire on the miners’ tent city. After that they returned to Jersey City but because of the lung cancer he contracted in the coal mines, he died the year I was born, and we never met. I vote yes for him and all the workers striving for livable conditions and livable wages.”

Rep. Nelson of Derby provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

As dairy farmers, we are not allowed to collectively bargain/unionize. For this reason, I voted no.”

Rep. Olson of Starksboro provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted for Article 23 notwithstanding my reservations concerning a potential conflict with individual Vermonters’ First Amendment rights of association. Now more than ever, protect the Vulnerable. Speak the Truth. Defend the Rule of Law. I believe and intend with my vote that the courts will construe the last phrase of Article 23 so as to reconcile the values of collective bargaining with the right of all citizens to decide whether or not to join an association, all the while contributing their full share to the work of the association. Thank you, Madam Speaker.”

Third Reading; Bill Passed

H. 505

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the Town of Barre

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

J.R.S. 15

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Joint Senate Resolution, entitled

Joint resolution supporting Vermont's transgender and non-binary community and declaring Vermont's commitment to fighting discrimination and treating all citizens with respect and dignity

Reported in favor of its adoption in concurrence. The resolution, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 218

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill in Sec. 1, appropriations; Opioid Abatement Special Fund, in subdivision (a)(11), by striking out “\$50,0000.00” and inserting thereof “\$50,000.00”

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 801, the Speaker appointed the following members to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee:

Rep. Emmons of Springfield
Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington
Rep. Wood of Waterbury
Rep. McFaun of Barre Town
Rep. Squirrell of Underhill

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 1st day of May, 2025, he signed bills originating in the House of the following titles:

- H.10 An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre**
- H.243 An act relating to the regulation of business organizations**

Message from the Senate No. 50

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered bills originating in the House of the following titles:

H. 488. An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation.

H. 493. An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposals of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At two o'clock and eleven minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, May 2, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Josh Compton of Windsor.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 64**

Offered by Representatives McCann of Montpelier, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Dolan of Essex Junction, Duke of Burlington, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire,

Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, James of Manchester, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morris of Springfield, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Priestley of Bradford, Sibilia of Dover, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, Torre of Moretown, and Waszazak of Barre City

Offered by Senators Bongartz, Cummings, Gulick, Perchlik, Vyhovsky, Watson, and Weeks

House concurrent resolution congratulating Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver of Winooski High School on her selection as the 2025 Vermont Teacher of the Year and Jeremy DeMink of Edmunds Middle School in Burlington and Sonya Shedd of Wolcott Elementary School on their recognition as Distinguished Finalists

Whereas, since 1964, the Agency of Education has honored an outstanding educator as the Vermont Teacher of the Year, and

Whereas, for 2025, the Agency is pleased to bestow this honor on Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver, a teacher of English and history and a reading specialist at Winooski High School, who also serves as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Vermont and previously taught in Boston, Massachusetts, and Juneau, Alaska, and

Whereas, her academic and professional credentials are extremely impressive as she is a graduate of Wesleyan University; earned a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Boston, an advanced certificate in literacy and language from Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions, and an advanced certificate in leadership from the Peronne-Sizer Institute for Creative Leadership; and served at the National Geographic Society as a Grosvenor Teaching Fellow and summer teaching fellow, and at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a planetary steward, and

Whereas, she adeptly applies her experience working with refugee and immigrant students in Boston, Massachusetts, to her multilingual and multinational Winooski classroom, developing a curriculum reflective of their diverse backgrounds, and she is an exceptional educator who inspires her students and makes them feel respected and valued, and

Whereas, Distinguished Finalists Jeremy DeMink and Sonya Shedd are outstanding educators who enrich their classrooms, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Caitlin MacLeod-Bluver of Winooski High School on her selection as the 2025 Vermont Teacher of the Year and Jeremy DeMink of Edmunds Middle School in Burlington and Sonya Shedd of Wolcott Elementary School on their recognition as Distinguished Finalists, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each of these honored teachers.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 28, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 117

Offered by Representatives McCann of Montpelier, Brady of Williston, Brown of Richmond, Conlon of Cornwall, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Garofano of Essex, Harple of Glover, Houghton of Essex Junction, Hunter of Manchester, and Long of Newfane

House concurrent resolution congratulating Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Whereas, since Congress established this program in 1983, the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), which the National Science Foundation (NSF) administers on behalf of the Office of the President and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), has been the federal government's highest recognition for K–12 math and science teachers, and

Whereas, PAEMST recognizes the importance of elementary and secondary school educators in encouraging students to pursue mathematics, engineering, computer science, and natural science education in the classroom and as a potential career, and

Whereas, jurisdictional finalists for this prestigious honor are selected through a rigorous review process in each state, the District of Columbia, American territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and

Whereas, the 2025 PAEMST Vermont finalist is Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin, a distinguished public educator, whose teaching excellence at the Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering has been previously recognized, and

Whereas, Andrew Kasprisin directs his students to examine topics as if they were scientists and not merely reading information from a book, and he poses questions to the students that guide them through an innovative applied learning process, incorporating real-world phenomena, and

Whereas, this exemplary practitioner of secondary school science pedagogy is a superb choice for designation as the Vermont finalist, and

Whereas, once the jurisdictional finalists are selected, the NSF convenes a national selection committee; the committee then evaluates the finalists and recommends two per jurisdiction (assuming the jurisdiction had a minimum of two finalists) to the OSTP for national finalist recognition; and the national finalists attend a special conference in Washington, DC, which has historically featured a presidential event, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Andrew Kasprisin.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 118

Offered by Representatives Burrows of West Windsor, Coffin of Cavendish, Austin of Colchester, Bailey of Hyde Park, Bartholomew of Hartland, Bartley of Fairfax, Bishop of Colchester, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Branagan of Georgia, Burditt of West Rutland, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burt of Cabot, Canfield of Fair Haven, Casey of Hubbardton, Chapin of East Montpelier, Charlton of Chester, Demar of Enosburgh, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Donahue of Northfield, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of Chittenden, Harvey of Castleton, Headrick of Burlington, Higley of Lowell, Holcombe of Norwich, Howard of Rutland City, Howland of Rutland Town, Kascenska of Burke, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, LaMont of Morristown, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Maguire of Rutland City, Marcotte of Coventry, McCann of Montpelier, McCoy of Poultney, McFaun of Barre Town, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Mihaly of Calais, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon,

North of Ferrisburgh, Oliver of Sheldon, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Pezzo of Colchester, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Quimby of Lyndon, Sibia of Dover, Southworth of Walden, Steady of Milton, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tagliavia of Corinth, Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Walker of Swanton, Wells of Brownington, Winter of Ludlow, and Yacovone of Morristown

House concurrent resolution commending Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism

Whereas, shortly before his second birthday in 2017, Truman Compton was diagnosed with autism, and shortly thereafter, the informal community of family and friends known as “Team Trumie” was established to provide love and support for Truman and to foster community awareness and acceptance of autism, and

Whereas, Team Trumie, now more than 50 volunteers strong, has raised funds for the Special Needs Support Center of the Upper Valley, participated in community walks, donated books about autism or featuring characters with autism to Windsor County classrooms and libraries, and donated sensory kits to the Windsor Fire and Police Departments for first responders’ use, and

Whereas, this special support group has designed unique shirts, celebrated Truman’s personal milestones, and created the slogan “let’s learn more about autism, together,” and the international distribution of Team Trumie postcards, featuring this unifying slogan, has sparked worldwide conversations, and

Whereas, the efforts of Team Trumie reflect a profound desire to create a world where disability and differences are not hidden but embraced, and

Whereas, Truman and his family have actively engaged with their local community through their presence at public venues, established an initiative to improve support for students with special needs through the installation of outdoor picture-based communication boards on school playgrounds, and launched a project to establish a parent-caregiver special education advisory committee in Windsor County, and

Whereas, Truman has bravely and effectively participated in classroom presentations alongside his family, sharing personal insights about autism, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commends Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Compton family and to Team Trumie.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Third Reading; Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 15**

Joint Senate Resolution, entitled

Joint resolution supporting Vermont's transgender and non-binary community and declaring Vermont's commitment to fighting discrimination and treating all citizens with respect and dignity

Was taken up, read the third time, and adopted in concurrence.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 86**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Chloride Contamination Reduction Program at the Agency of Natural Resources

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Chapin of East Montpelier**, action on the bill was postponed until May 6, 2025.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 248**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Cole of Hartford**, action on the bill was postponed until May 8, 2025.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 96**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 9434 is amended to read:

§ 9434. CERTIFICATE OF NEED; GENERAL RULES

(a) A health care facility ~~other than a hospital~~ shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a “new health care project” ~~includes~~ means any of the following:

(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a health care facility, for which the capital cost exceeds ~~\$1,500,000.00~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(2) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.

(3) The offering of any home health service, or the transfer or conveyance of more than a 50 percent ownership interest in a health care facility other than a hospital or nursing home.

(4) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ \$5,000,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board’s determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(5) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds ~~\$500,000.00~~ \$3,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the health care facility within the previous three fiscal years.

(6) ~~The construction, development, purchase, lease, or other establishment of an ambulatory surgical center.~~ [Repealed.]

~~(b) A hospital shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a “new health care project” includes the following:~~

~~(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a hospital, for which the capital cost exceeds \$3,000,000.00.~~

~~(2) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of \$1,500,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board’s determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.~~

~~(3) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds \$1,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the hospital within the previous three fiscal years.~~

~~(4) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.~~

~~(5) The offering of any home health service. [Repealed.]~~

(c) In the case of a project that requires a certificate of need under this section, expenditures for which are anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00, the applicant first shall secure a conceptual development phase certificate of need, in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter, that permits the applicant to make expenditures for architectural services, engineering design services, or any other planning services, as defined by the Board, needed in connection with the project. Upon completion of the conceptual development phase of the project, and before offering or further developing the project, the applicant shall secure a final certificate of need in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter. Applicants shall not be subject to sanctions for failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection if such failure is solely the result of good faith reliance on verified project cost

estimates issued by qualified persons, which cost estimates would have led a reasonable person to conclude the project was not anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00 and therefore not subject to this subsection. The provisions of this subsection notwithstanding, expenditures may be made in preparation for obtaining a conceptual development phase certificate of need, which expenditures shall not exceed ~~\$1,500,000.00 for non-hospitals or \$3,000,000.00 for hospitals~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(d) If the Board determines that a person required to obtain a certificate of need under this subchapter has separated a single project into components in order to avoid cost thresholds or other requirements under this subchapter, the person shall be required to submit an application for a certificate of need for the entire project, and the Board may proceed under section 9445 of this title. The Board's determination under this subsection shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(e) The Board may periodically adjust the monetary jurisdictional thresholds contained in this section. In doing so, the Board shall reflect the same categories of health care facilities, services, and programs recognized in this section. Any adjustment by the Board shall not exceed an amount calculated using the cumulative Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9435 is amended to read:

§ 9435. EXCLUSIONS

* * *

(f)(1) Excluded from this subchapter are routine replacements of:

(A) medical equipment that is fully depreciated; and

(B) nonmedical equipment and fixtures, including furnaces, boilers, refrigeration units, kitchen equipment, heating and cooling units, and similar items, regardless of their remaining useful life.

(2) These The replacements described in subdivision (1) of this subsection and purchased by a hospital shall be included in the hospital's budget and may be reviewed in the budget process set forth in subchapter 7 of this chapter.

* * *

(i) Excluded from this subchapter are emergency and nonemergency ground ambulance services, affiliated agencies, and equipment and supplies used by emergency medical personnel, as those terms are defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651.

(j) Excluded from this subchapter are the offering of a health care service, or the construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, that is owned or operated by the State of Vermont or is funded in whole or in substantial part by a contract or grant awarded by the State of Vermont; provided, however, that the State agency sponsoring the project or awarding the contract or grant shall inform the Green Mountain Care Board prior to commencing the project or within 30 days following the execution of the contract or grant.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage and shall apply to all new health care projects initiated on or after that date. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on the date of passage of this act for which one or more persons have been granted interested party status, the jurisdictional thresholds and exclusions in place at the time the application was filed shall continue to apply until a final decision is made on the application. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on the date of passage of this act for which no person has been granted interested party status, the applicant may withdraw the application in accordance with Board rules.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Senate Proposal of Amendment to House Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

S. 27

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto on Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto by striking out Sec. 2, which further amends 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 53(b)(5)(B), as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.102 and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.1000, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

**Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration; Senate Proposal of
Amendment Not Concurred in; Committee of Conference Requested and
Appointed; Rules Suspended, Messaged to Senate Forthwith**

H. 493

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Purpose, Definitions, Legend * * *

Sec. A.100 SHORT TITLE

(a) This bill may be referred to as the “BIG BILL – Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Act”.

Sec. A.101 PURPOSE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

(a) The purpose of this act is to provide appropriations for the operations of State government and for capital appropriations not funded with bond proceeds during fiscal year 2026. It is the express intent of the General Assembly that activities of the various agencies, departments, divisions, boards, offices, and commissions be limited to those that can be supported by funds appropriated in this act or other acts passed prior to June 30, 2025. Agency and department heads are directed to implement staffing and service levels at the beginning of fiscal year 2026 so as to meet this condition unless otherwise directed by specific language in this act or other acts of the General Assembly.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that any interim budget and appropriation adjustments made in accordance with 32 V.S.A. §§ 133 and 704 prioritize supporting the health, safety, and well-being of Vermonters; a robust education system; and a strong economy.

Sec. A.102 APPROPRIATIONS

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that this act serves as the primary source and reference for appropriations for the operations of State government and for capital appropriations not funded with bond proceeds in fiscal year 2026.

(b) The sums herein stated are appropriated for the purposes specified in the following sections of this act. When no time is expressly stated during which any of the operating appropriations are to continue, the appropriations are single-year appropriations and only for the purpose indicated and shall be paid from funds shown as the source of funds. Capital appropriations funded from the Capital Infrastructure Subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments Special Fund shall be subject to the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 1001b(e). If in this act there is an error in either addition or subtraction, the totals shall be adjusted accordingly. Apparent errors in referring to section numbers of statutory titles within this act may be disregarded by the Commissioner of Finance and Management.

(c) Unless codified or otherwise specified, all narrative portions of this act apply only to the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026.

Sec. A.103 DEFINITIONS

(a) As used in this act:

(1) “Encumbrances” means a portion of spending authority reserved for the subsequent payment of existing travel authorizations, purchase orders, grants, or contracts. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall make final decisions on the appropriateness of encumbrances.

(2) “Grants” means subsidies, aid, or payments to local governments, to community and quasi-public agencies for providing local services, and to persons who are not wards of the State for services or supplies and means cash or other direct assistance, including pension contributions.

(3) “Operating expenses” means property management; repair and maintenance; rental expenses; insurance; postage; travel; energy and utilities; office and other supplies; equipment, including motor vehicles, highway materials, and construction; expenditures for the purchase of land and construction of new buildings and permanent improvements; and similar items.

(4) “Personal services” means wages and salaries, fringe benefits, per diems, contracted third-party services, and similar items.

(5) “Capital appropriation” means an appropriation for tangible capital investments or expenses that are eligible to be funded from general obligation debt financing and are allowed under federal laws governing the use of State bond proceeds as described in 32 V.S.A. § 309.

Sec. A.104 RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING LAWS

(a) Except as specifically provided, this act shall not be construed in any way to negate or impair the full force and effect of existing laws.

Sec. A.105 OFFSETTING APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In the absence of specific provisions to the contrary in this act, when total appropriations are offset by estimated receipts, the State appropriations shall control, notwithstanding receipts being greater or less than anticipated.

Sec. A.106 FEDERAL FUNDS

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the Governor, with the approval of the General Assembly or the Joint Fiscal Committee if the General Assembly is not in session, may accept federal funds available to the State of Vermont, including block grants in lieu of, or in addition to, funds herein designated as federal. The Governor, with the approval of the General Assembly or the Joint Fiscal Committee if the General Assembly is not in session, may allocate all or any portion of such federal funds for any purpose consistent with the purposes for which the basic appropriations in this act have been made.

(b) If, during fiscal year 2026, federal funds available to the State of Vermont and designated as federal in this and other acts of the 2025 session of the Vermont General Assembly are converted into block grants or are abolished under their current title in federal law and reestablished under a new title in federal law, the Governor may continue to accept such federal funds for any purpose consistent with the purposes for which the federal funds were appropriated. The Governor may spend such funds for such purposes for not more than 45 days prior to General Assembly or Joint Fiscal Committee approval. Notice shall be given to the Joint Fiscal Committee without delay if the Governor intends to use the authority granted by this section, and the Joint Fiscal Committee shall meet in an expedited manner to review the Governor's request for approval.

Sec. A.107 NEW POSITIONS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the total number of authorized State positions, both classified and exempt, excluding temporary positions as defined in 3 V.S.A. § 311(a)(11), shall not be increased during fiscal year 2026 except for new positions authorized by the General Assembly during the 2025 session. Limited service positions approved pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5 shall not be subject to this restriction.

Sec. A.108 LEGEND

(a) The act is organized by functions of government. The sections between B.100 and B.9999 contain appropriations of funds for the upcoming budget year. The sections between E.100 and E.9999 contain language that relates to specific appropriations or government functions, or both. The function areas by section numbers are as follows:

<u>B.100–B.199 and E.100–E.199</u>	<u>General Government</u>
<u>B.200–B.299 and E.200–E.299</u>	<u>Protection to Persons and Property</u>
<u>B.300–B.399 and E.300–E.399</u>	<u>Human Services</u>
<u>B.400–B.499 and E.400–E.499</u>	<u>Labor</u>
<u>B.500–B.599 and E.500–E.599</u>	<u>General Education</u>
<u>B.600–B.699 and E.600–E.699</u>	<u>Higher Education</u>
<u>B.700–B.799 and E.700–E.799</u>	<u>Natural Resources</u>
<u>B.800–B.899 and E.800–E.899</u>	<u>Commerce and Community Development</u>
<u>B.900–B.999 and E.900–E.999</u>	<u>Transportation</u>
<u>B.1000–B.1099 and E.1000–E.1099</u>	<u>Debt Service</u>
<u>B.1100–B.1199 and E.1100–E.1199</u>	<u>One-time and other appropriation actions</u>

(b) The C sections contain amendments to the current fiscal year; the D sections contain fund allocations, transfers, reversions, and reservations for the upcoming fiscal year; the F sections also contain amendments to the current fiscal year; and the G section contains effective dates.

* * * Fiscal Year 2026 Base Appropriations * * *

Sec. B.100 Secretary of administration - secretary's office

Personal services	2,532,305
Operating expenses	255,891
Grants	<u>755,000</u>
Total	3,543,196
Source of funds	
General fund	1,762,509
Special funds	755,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,025,687</u>
Total	3,543,196

Sec. B.100.1 Secretary of administration - office of racial equity

Personal services	1,687,090
Operating expenses	<u>118,323</u>
Total	1,805,413
Source of funds	
General fund	1,144,831

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1223

Internal service funds	534,462
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>126,120</u>
Total	1,805,413
Sec. B.101 Secretary of administration - finance	
Personal services	1,523,066
Operating expenses	<u>168,424</u>
Total	1,691,490
Source of funds	
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,691,490</u>
Total	1,691,490
Sec. B.102 Secretary of administration - workers' compensation insurance	
Personal services	871,453
Operating expenses	<u>100,387</u>
Total	971,840
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>971,840</u>
Total	971,840
Sec. B.103 Secretary of administration - general liability insurance	
Personal services	406,346
Operating expenses	<u>65,072</u>
Total	471,418
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>471,418</u>
Total	471,418
Sec. B.104 Secretary of administration - all other insurance	
Personal services	278,478
Operating expenses	<u>54,925</u>
Total	333,403
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>333,403</u>
Total	333,403
Sec. B.104.1 Retired state employees pension plus funding	
Grants	15,000,000
Total	15,000,000
Source of funds	
General fund	15,000,000
Total	15,000,000

Sec. B.105 Agency of digital services - communications and information technology

Personal services	87,034,344
Operating expenses	<u>50,695,231</u>
Total	137,729,575
Source of funds	
General fund	233,207
Special funds	1,014,199
Internal service funds	<u>136,482,169</u>
Total	137,729,575

Sec. B.106 Finance and management - budget and management

Personal services	1,843,264
Operating expenses	<u>342,676</u>
Total	2,185,940
Source of funds	
General fund	1,254,559
Internal service funds	688,359
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>243,022</u>
Total	2,185,940

Sec. B.107 Finance and management - financial operations

Personal services	3,416,478
Operating expenses	<u>894,620</u>
Total	4,311,098
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	3,767,171
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>543,927</u>
Total	4,311,098

Sec. B.108 Human resources - operations

Personal services	12,091,729
Operating expenses	<u>1,609,092</u>
Total	13,700,821
Source of funds	
General fund	1,931,766
Special funds	171,235
Internal service funds	10,811,922
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>785,898</u>
Total	13,700,821

Sec. B.108.1 Human resources - VTHR operations

Personal services	2,259,639
Operating expenses	<u>922,339</u>
Total	3,181,978
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>3,181,978</u>
Total	3,181,978

Sec. B.109 Human resources - employee benefits & wellness

Personal services	1,443,574
Operating expenses	<u>727,231</u>
Total	2,170,805
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>2,170,805</u>
Total	2,170,805

Sec. B.110 Libraries

Personal services	3,071,139
Operating expenses	523,300
Grants	<u>267,993</u>
Total	3,862,432
Source of funds	
General fund	2,371,969
Special funds	96,994
Federal funds	1,273,020
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>120,449</u>
Total	3,862,432

Sec. B.111 Tax - administration/collection

Personal services	30,188,806
Operating expenses	<u>7,007,735</u>
Total	37,196,541
Source of funds	
General fund	24,668,155
Special funds	12,413,386
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>115,000</u>
Total	37,196,541

Sec. B.112 Buildings and general services - administration

Personal services	1,132,286
Operating expenses	<u>206,653</u>
Total	1,338,939

Source of funds	
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,338,939</u>
Total	1,338,939
Sec. B.113 Buildings and general services - engineering	
Personal services	47,165
Operating expenses	<u>1,116,280</u>
Total	1,163,445
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>1,163,445</u>
Total	1,163,445
Sec. B.113.1 Buildings and general services engineering - capital projects	
Personal services	3,225,944
Operating expenses	<u>500,000</u>
Total	3,725,944
Source of funds	
General fund	3,225,944
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>500,000</u>
Total	3,725,944
Sec. B.114 Buildings and general services - information centers	
Personal services	3,721,861
Operating expenses	<u>1,973,457</u>
Total	5,695,318
Source of funds	
General fund	702,146
Transportation fund	4,542,959
Special funds	<u>450,213</u>
Total	5,695,318
Sec. B.115 Buildings and general services - purchasing	
Personal services	2,860,824
Operating expenses	<u>272,026</u>
Total	3,132,850
Source of funds	
General fund	1,697,210
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,435,640</u>
Total	3,132,850
Sec. B.116 Buildings and general services - postal services	
Personal services	846,111
Operating expenses	<u>188,303</u>

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1227

Total	1,034,414
Source of funds	
General fund	93,669
Internal service funds	<u>940,745</u>
Total	1,034,414
Sec. B.117 Buildings and general services - copy center	
Personal services	951,063
Operating expenses	<u>223,405</u>
Total	1,174,468
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>1,174,468</u>
Total	1,174,468
Sec. B.118 Buildings and general services - fleet management services	
Personal services	1,020,985
Operating expenses	<u>247,895</u>
Total	1,268,880
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	1,201,997
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>66,883</u>
Total	1,268,880
Sec. B.119 Buildings and general services - federal surplus property	
Operating expenses	<u>4,427</u>
Total	4,427
Source of funds	
Enterprise funds	<u>4,427</u>
Total	4,427
Sec. B.120 Buildings and general services - state surplus property	
Personal services	365,056
Operating expenses	<u>175,786</u>
Total	540,842
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>540,842</u>
Total	540,842
Sec. B.121 Buildings and general services - property management	
Personal services	1,199,933
Operating expenses	<u>605,349</u>
Total	1,805,282

Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>1,805,282</u>
Total	1,805,282
Sec. B.122 Buildings and general services - fee for space	
Personal services	21,826,541
Operating expenses	<u>17,638,201</u>
Total	39,464,742
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	39,360,459
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>104,283</u>
Total	39,464,742
Sec. B.124 Executive office - governor's office	
Personal services	1,957,078
Operating expenses	<u>567,607</u>
Total	2,524,685
Source of funds	
General fund	1,997,850
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>526,835</u>
Total	2,524,685
Sec. B.125 Legislative counsel	
Personal services	4,589,480
Operating expenses	<u>286,936</u>
Total	4,876,416
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>4,876,416</u>
Total	4,876,416
Sec. B.126 Legislature	
Personal services	6,957,653
Operating expenses	<u>5,329,448</u>
Total	12,287,101
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>12,287,101</u>
Total	12,287,101
Sec. B.126.1 Legislative information technology	
Personal services	1,504,560
Operating expenses	<u>912,661</u>
Total	2,417,221

Source of funds	
General fund	<u>2,417,221</u>
Total	2,417,221
Sec. B.127 Joint fiscal committee	
Personal services	2,959,862
Operating expenses	<u>197,907</u>
Total	3,157,769
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>3,157,769</u>
Total	3,157,769
Sec. B.128 Sergeant at arms	
Personal services	1,639,780
Operating expenses	<u>166,416</u>
Total	1,806,196
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>1,806,196</u>
Total	1,806,196
Sec. B.129 Lieutenant governor	
Personal services	296,158
Operating expenses	<u>51,993</u>
Total	348,151
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>348,151</u>
Total	348,151
Sec. B.130 Auditor of accounts	
Personal services	4,775,026
Operating expenses	<u>143,505</u>
Total	4,918,531
Source of funds	
General fund	408,398
Special funds	53,145
Internal service funds	<u>4,456,988</u>
Total	4,918,531
Sec. B.131 State treasurer	
Personal services	7,137,154
Operating expenses	<u>312,956</u>
Total	7,450,110

Source of funds	
General fund	2,729,084
Special funds	4,179,251
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>541,775</u>
Total	7,450,110
Sec. B.132 State treasurer - unclaimed property	
Personal services	801,268
Operating expenses	<u>581,648</u>
Total	1,382,916
Source of funds	
Private purpose trust funds	<u>1,382,916</u>
Total	1,382,916
Sec. B.133 Vermont state retirement system	
Personal services	221,251
Operating expenses	<u>3,066,842</u>
Total	3,288,093
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	<u>3,288,093</u>
Total	3,288,093
Sec. B.134 Municipal employees' retirement system	
Personal services	228,961
Operating expenses	<u>1,672,059</u>
Total	1,901,020
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	<u>1,901,020</u>
Total	1,901,020
Sec. B.134.1 Vermont pension investment commission	
Personal services	2,234,198
Operating expenses	<u>303,904</u>
Total	2,538,102
Source of funds	
Special funds	2,538,102
Pension trust funds	<u>0</u>
Total	2,538,102
Sec. B.135 State labor relations board	
Personal services	545,157
Operating expenses	<u>66,136</u>
Total	611,293

Source of funds	
General fund	601,717
Special funds	6,788
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,788</u>
Total	611,293
Sec. B.136 VOSHA review board	
Personal services	109,521
Operating expenses	<u>25,734</u>
Total	135,255
Source of funds	
General fund	84,251
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>51,004</u>
Total	135,255
Sec. B.136.1 Ethics commission	
Personal services	183,787
Operating expenses	<u>39,775</u>
Total	223,562
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>223,562</u>
Total	223,562
Sec. B.137 Homeowner rebate	
Grants	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	19,000,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	19,000,000
Sec. B.138 Renter rebate	
Grants	<u>9,500,000</u>
Total	9,500,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>9,500,000</u>
Total	9,500,000
Sec. B.139 Tax department - reappraisal and listing payments	
Grants	<u>3,410,000</u>
Total	3,410,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>3,410,000</u>
Total	3,410,000

Sec. B.140 Municipal current use

Grants	<u>21,350,000</u>
Total	21,350,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>21,350,000</u>
Total	21,350,000

Sec. B.142 Payments in lieu of taxes

Grants	<u>12,200,000</u>
Total	12,200,000
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>12,200,000</u>
Total	12,200,000

Sec. B.144 Payments in lieu of taxes - correctional facilities

Grants	<u>40,000</u>
Total	40,000
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>40,00</u>
Total	40,000

Sec. B.145 Total general government

Source of funds	
General fund	139,223,564
Transportation fund	4,542,959
Special funds	33,918,313
Federal funds	1,273,020
Internal service funds	209,117,870
Interdepartmental transfers	9,219,740
Enterprise funds	4,427
Pension trust funds	5,189,113
Private purpose trust funds	<u>1,382,916</u>
Total	403,871,922

Sec. B.200 Attorney general

Personal services	15,608,060
Operating expenses	1,810,445
Grants	<u>20,000</u>
Total	17,438,505
Source of funds	
General fund	8,195,240
Special funds	2,468,889
Tobacco fund	434,660

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1233

Federal funds	1,809,676
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,530,040</u>
Total	17,438,505
Sec. B.201 Vermont court diversion	
Personal services	1,250
Grants	<u>5,024,343</u>
Total	5,025,593
Source of funds	
General fund	4,767,596
Special funds	<u>257,997</u>
Total	5,025,593
Sec. B.202 Defender general - public defense	
Personal services	18,955,131
Operating expenses	<u>1,650,926</u>
Total	20,606,057
Source of funds	
General fund	20,016,404
Special funds	<u>589,653</u>
Total	20,606,057
Sec. B.203 Defender general - assigned counsel	
Personal services	7,887,975
Operating expenses	<u>64,500</u>
Total	7,952,475
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>7,952,475</u>
Total	7,952,475
Sec. B.204 Judiciary	
Personal services	64,512,754
Operating expenses	13,865,672
Grants	<u>121,030</u>
Total	78,499,456
Source of funds	
General fund	72,601,728
Special funds	1,997,094
Federal funds	1,560,412
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,340,222</u>
Total	78,499,456

Sec. B.205 State's attorneys

Personal services	19,010,284
Operating expenses	<u>2,115,052</u>
Total	21,125,336
Source of funds	
General fund	20,541,309
Federal funds	31,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>553,027</u>
Total	21,125,336

Sec. B.206 Special investigative unit

Personal services	126,877
Operating expenses	27,835
Grants	<u>2,136,507</u>
Total	2,291,219
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>2,291,219</u>
Total	2,291,219

Sec. B.206.1 Crime victims advocates

Personal services	3,221,461
Operating expenses	<u>117,870</u>
Total	3,339,331
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>3,339,331</u>
Total	3,339,331

Sec. B.207 Sheriffs

Personal services	6,092,392
Operating expenses	<u>446,237</u>
Total	6,538,629
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>6,538,629</u>
Total	6,538,629

Sec. B.208 Public safety - administration

Personal services	6,289,651
Operating expenses	6,380,415
Grants	<u>278,285</u>
Total	12,948,351
Source of funds	
General fund	7,630,863

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1235

Special funds	4,105
Federal funds	1,089,155
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,224,228</u>
Total	12,948,351
Sec. B.209 Public safety - state police	
Personal services	83,279,417
Operating expenses	16,733,452
Grants	<u>1,813,523</u>
Total	101,826,392
Source of funds	
General fund	87,421,532
Special funds	3,223,793
Federal funds	9,734,790
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,446,277</u>
Total	101,826,392
Sec. B.210 Public safety - criminal justice services	
Personal services	5,116,729
Operating expenses	<u>2,098,944</u>
Total	7,215,673
Source of funds	
General fund	1,929,676
Special funds	4,483,740
Federal funds	<u>802,257</u>
Total	7,215,673
Sec. B.211 Public safety - emergency management	
Personal services	6,811,020
Operating expenses	1,018,043
Grants	<u>63,029,843</u>
Total	70,858,906
Source of funds	
General fund	2,145,622
Special funds	710,000
Federal funds	67,941,304
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>61,980</u>
Total	70,858,906
Sec. B.212 Public safety - fire safety	
Personal services	9,963,365
Operating expenses	3,674,954
Grants	<u>127,350</u>

Total	13,765,669
Source of funds	
General fund	1,795,530
Special funds	10,769,486
Federal funds	1,155,653
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>45,000</u>
Total	13,765,669
Sec. B.213 Public safety - forensic laboratory	
Personal services	4,388,176
Operating expenses	<u>1,356,042</u>
Total	5,744,218
Source of funds	
General fund	4,162,196
Special funds	81,774
Federal funds	951,794
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>548,454</u>
Total	5,744,218
Sec. B.215 Military - administration	
Personal services	1,142,600
Operating expenses	810,661
Grants	<u>1,319,834</u>
Total	3,273,095
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>3,273,095</u>
Total	3,273,095
Sec. B.216 Military - air service contract	
Personal services	11,831,181
Operating expenses	<u>1,427,093</u>
Total	13,258,274
Source of funds	
General fund	818,486
Federal funds	<u>12,439,788</u>
Total	13,258,274
Sec. B.217 Military - army service contract	
Personal services	51,243,591
Operating expenses	<u>8,227,725</u>
Total	59,471,316

Source of funds	
Federal funds	<u>59,471,316</u>
Total	59,471,316
Sec. B.218 Military - building maintenance	
Personal services	906,250
Operating expenses	<u>908,538</u>
Total	1,814,788
Source of funds	
General fund	1,752,288
Special funds	<u>62,500</u>
Total	1,814,788
Sec. B.219 Military - veterans' affairs	
Personal services	1,382,555
Operating expenses	193,170
Grants	<u>27,500</u>
Total	1,603,225
Source of funds	
General fund	1,259,653
Special funds	222,717
Federal funds	<u>120,855</u>
Total	1,603,225
Sec. B.220 Center for crime victim services	
Personal services	2,371,733
Operating expenses	321,928
Grants	<u>8,573,370</u>
Total	11,267,031
Source of funds	
General fund	1,650,091
Special funds	4,465,489
Federal funds	<u>5,151,451</u>
Total	11,267,031
Sec. B.221 Criminal justice council	
Personal services	2,508,514
Operating expenses	<u>2,142,603</u>
Total	4,651,117
Source of funds	
General fund	4,260,265
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>390,852</u>
Total	4,651,117

Sec. B.222 Agriculture, food and markets - administration

Personal services	3,384,273
Operating expenses	<u>353,580</u>
Total	3,737,853
Source of funds	
General fund	1,519,601
Special funds	1,695,613
Federal funds	<u>522,639</u>
Total	3,737,853

Sec. B.223 Agriculture, food and markets - food safety and consumer protection

Personal services	5,680,286
Operating expenses	1,109,650
Grants	<u>2,810,000</u>
Total	9,599,936
Source of funds	
General fund	3,663,441
Special funds	4,048,844
Federal funds	1,875,651
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>12,000</u>
Total	9,599,936

Sec. B.224 Agriculture, food and markets - agricultural development

Personal services	6,358,750
Operating expenses	746,926
Grants	<u>15,633,200</u>
Total	22,738,876
Source of funds	
General fund	3,157,499
Special funds	646,995
Federal funds	<u>18,934,382</u>
Total	22,738,876

Sec. B.225 Agriculture, food and markets - agricultural resource management and environmental stewardship

Personal services	3,053,693
Operating expenses	845,696
Grants	<u>247,000</u>
Total	4,146,389
Source of funds	
General fund	822,914

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1239

Special funds	2,473,045
Federal funds	482,577
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>367,853</u>
Total	4,146,389
Sec. B.225.1 Agriculture, food and markets - Vermont agriculture and environmental lab	
Personal services	2,058,524
Operating expenses	<u>1,359,556</u>
Total	3,418,080
Source of funds	
General fund	1,698,826
Special funds	1,647,441
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>71,813</u>
Total	3,418,080
Sec. B.225.2 Agriculture, food and markets - clean water	
Personal services	4,120,365
Operating expenses	857,888
Grants	<u>11,487,000</u>
Total	16,465,253
Source of funds	
General fund	1,975,832
Special funds	10,511,241
Federal funds	2,171,588
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,806,592</u>
Total	16,465,253
Sec. B.226 Financial regulation - administration	
Personal services	3,011,702
Operating expenses	103,565
Grants	<u>100,000</u>
Total	3,215,267
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>3,215,267</u>
Total	3,215,267
Sec. B.227 Financial regulation - banking	
Personal services	2,483,666
Operating expenses	<u>482,337</u>
Total	2,966,003

Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>2,966,003</u>
Total	2,966,003
Sec. B.228 Financial regulation - insurance	
Personal services	5,825,682
Operating expenses	<u>578,524</u>
Total	6,404,206
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>6,404,206</u>
Total	6,404,206
Sec. B.229 Financial regulation - captive insurance	
Personal services	5,998,278
Operating expenses	<u>591,092</u>
Total	6,589,370
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>6,589,370</u>
Total	6,589,370
Sec. B.230 Financial regulation - securities	
Personal services	1,375,414
Operating expenses	<u>242,541</u>
Total	1,617,955
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>1,617,955</u>
Total	1,617,955
Sec. B.232 Secretary of state	
Personal services	21,619,186
Operating expenses	4,242,952
Grants	<u>1,350,000</u>
Total	27,212,138
Source of funds	
General fund	1,350,000
Special funds	19,155,734
Federal funds	<u>6,706,404</u>
Total	27,212,138
Sec. B.233 Public service - regulation and energy	
Personal services	12,790,401
Operating expenses	2,615,047
Grants	<u>25,000</u>

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1241

Total	15,430,448
Source of funds	
Special funds	12,152,225
Federal funds	2,439,257
ARRA funds	6,627
Interdepartmental transfers	821,491
Enterprise funds	<u>10,848</u>
Total	15,430,448
Sec. B.233.1 VT Community broadband board	
Personal services	1,978,960
Operating expenses	571,368
Grants	<u>43,000,000</u>
Total	45,550,328
Source of funds	
Special funds	1,589,990
Federal funds	<u>43,960,338</u>
Total	45,550,328
Sec. B.234 Public utility commission	
Personal services	4,565,693
Operating expenses	<u>578,746</u>
Total	5,144,439
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>5,144,439</u>
Total	5,144,439
Sec. B.235 Enhanced 9-1-1 board	
Personal services	4,700,016
Operating expenses	<u>697,379</u>
Total	5,397,395
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>5,397,395</u>
Total	5,397,395
Sec. B.236 Human rights commission	
Personal services	1,243,420
Operating expenses	<u>142,164</u>
Total	1,385,584
Source of funds	
General fund	1,292,811
Federal funds	<u>92,773</u>
Total	1,385,584

 Sec. B.236.1 Liquor and lottery commission

Personal services	10,866,788
Operating expenses	<u>7,415,512</u>
Total	18,282,300
Source of funds	
Special funds	125,000
Tobacco fund	250,579
Interdepartmental transfers	70,000
Enterprise funds	<u>17,836,721</u>
Total	18,282,300

Sec. B.240 Cannabis control board

Personal services	4,466,288
Operating expenses	2,053,382
Grants	<u>10,000</u>
Total	6,529,670
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>6,529,670</u>
Total	6,529,670

Sec. B.241 Total protection to persons and property

Source of funds	
General fund	279,824,152
Special funds	121,247,670
Tobacco fund	685,239
Federal funds	239,445,060
ARRA funds	6,627
Interdepartmental transfers	17,289,829
Enterprise funds	<u>17,847,569</u>
Total	676,346,146

Sec. B.300 Human services - agency of human services - secretary's office

Personal services	17,333,398
Operating expenses	11,231,120
Grants	<u>3,795,202</u>
Total	32,359,720
Source of funds	
General fund	15,569,598
Special funds	135,517
Federal funds	14,023,964
Global Commitment fund	2,510,857

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>119,784</u>
Total	32,359,720
Sec. B.301 Secretary's office - global commitment	
Grants	<u>2,207,280,248</u>
Total	2,207,280,248
Source of funds	
General fund	712,815,861
Special funds	31,339,852
Tobacco fund	21,049,373
State health care resources fund	31,074,772
Federal funds	1,406,003,180
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,997,210</u>
Total	2,207,280,248
Sec. B.303 Developmental disabilities council	
Personal services	513,359
Operating expenses	96,185
Grants	<u>191,595</u>
Total	801,139
Source of funds	
Special funds	12,000
Federal funds	<u>789,139</u>
Total	801,139
Sec. B.304 Human services board	
Personal services	823,371
Operating expenses	<u>90,892</u>
Total	914,263
Source of funds	
General fund	538,324
Federal funds	<u>375,939</u>
Total	914,263
Sec. B.305 AHS - administrative fund	
Personal services	330,000
Operating expenses	<u>13,170,000</u>
Total	13,500,000
Source of funds	
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>13,500,000</u>
Total	13,500,000

 Sec. B.306 Department of Vermont health access - administration

Personal services	142,860,018
Operating expenses	36,310,876
Grants	<u>3,112,301</u>
Total	182,283,195
Source of funds	
General fund	43,820,359
Special funds	4,760,237
Federal funds	126,141,154
Global Commitment fund	4,382,601
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>3,178,844</u>
Total	182,283,195

Sec. B.307 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program - global commitment

Grants	<u>979,554,012</u>
Total	979,554,012
Source of funds	
Global Commitment fund	<u>979,554,012</u>
Total	979,554,012

Sec. B.309 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program - state only

Grants	<u>67,605,443</u>
Total	67,605,443
Source of funds	
General fund	62,133,605
Global Commitment fund	<u>5,471,838</u>
Total	67,605,443

Sec. B.310 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid non-waiver matched

Grants	<u>44,034,870</u>
Total	44,034,870
Source of funds	
General fund	13,467,770
Federal funds	<u>30,567,100</u>
Total	44,034,870

Sec. B.311 Health - administration and support

Personal services	9,163,996
Operating expenses	8,043,463

Grants	<u>7,985,727</u>
Total	25,193,186
Source of funds	
General fund	4,298,710
Special funds	2,423,587
Federal funds	10,954,085
Global Commitment fund	7,361,523
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>155,281</u>
Total	25,193,186
Sec. B.312 Health - public health	
Personal services	71,272,453
Operating expenses	10,371,654
Grants	<u>48,496,832</u>
Total	130,140,939
Source of funds	
General fund	15,160,817
Special funds	25,398,124
Tobacco fund	1,088,918
Federal funds	64,355,699
Global Commitment fund	18,457,507
Interdepartmental transfers	5,654,874
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>
Total	130,140,939
Sec. B.313 Health - substance use programs	
Personal services	7,036,556
Operating expenses	381,500
Grants	<u>61,624,360</u>
Total	69,042,416
Source of funds	
General fund	4,795,744
Special funds	7,972,399
Tobacco fund	949,917
Federal funds	15,928,439
Global Commitment fund	<u>39,395,917</u>
Total	69,042,416
Sec. B.314 Mental health - mental health	
Personal services	12,456,526
Operating expenses	2,420,029
Grants	<u>279,691,678</u>

Total	294,568,233
Source of funds	
General fund	13,127,716
Special funds	6,836
Federal funds	13,158,032
Global Commitment fund	266,967,840
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,307,809</u>
Total	294,568,233
Sec. B.315 Department of mental health - mental health facilities	
Personal services	40,937,117
Operating expenses	<u>3,393,946</u>
Total	44,331,063
Source of funds	
General fund	18,868,124
Special funds	1,711,256
Global Commitment fund	<u>23,751,683</u>
Total	44,331,063
Sec. B.316 Department for children and families - administration & support services	
Personal services	50,609,972
Operating expenses	17,876,453
Grants	<u>5,914,175</u>
Total	74,400,600
Source of funds	
General fund	43,680,871
Special funds	2,954,500
Federal funds	24,518,288
Global Commitment fund	2,780,636
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>466,305</u>
Total	74,400,600
Sec. B.317 Department for children and families - family services	
Personal services	49,175,153
Operating expenses	5,497,038
Grants	<u>100,541,760</u>
Total	155,213,951
Source of funds	
General fund	63,680,993
Special funds	729,150
Federal funds	37,407,542

Global Commitment fund	53,381,266
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>15,000</u>
Total	155,213,951
Sec. B.318 Department for children and families - child development	
Personal services	6,563,807
Operating expenses	783,604
Grants	<u>228,228,202</u>
Total	235,575,613
Source of funds	
General fund	80,715,345
Special funds	96,409,671
Federal funds	42,924,133
Global Commitment fund	<u>15,526,464</u>
Total	235,575,613
Sec. B.319 Department for children and families - office of child support	
Personal services	14,186,272
Operating expenses	<u>3,738,844</u>
Total	17,925,116
Source of funds	
General fund	5,598,669
Special funds	454,219
Federal funds	11,484,628
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>387,600</u>
Total	17,925,116
Sec. B.320 Department for children and families - aid to aged, blind and disabled	
Personal services	2,558,460
Grants	<u>10,418,567</u>
Total	12,977,027
Source of funds	
General fund	7,470,372
Global Commitment fund	<u>5,506,655</u>
Total	12,977,027
Sec. B.321 Department for children and families - general assistance	
Personal services	15,000
Grants	<u>10,415,779</u>
Total	10,430,779
Source of funds	
General fund	10,189,157

Federal funds	11,098
Global Commitment fund	<u>230,524</u>
Total	10,430,779
Sec. B.322 Department for children and families - 3SquaresVT	
Grants	<u>51,077,812</u>
Total	51,077,812
Source of funds	
Federal funds	<u>51,077,812</u>
Total	51,077,812
Sec. B.323 Department for children and families - reach up	
Operating expenses	23,821
Grants	<u>36,532,863</u>
Total	36,556,684
Source of funds	
General fund	24,035,417
Special funds	5,970,229
Federal funds	2,806,330
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,744,708</u>
Total	36,556,684
Sec. B.324 Department for children and families - home heating fuel assistance/LIHEAP	
Grants	<u>16,019,953</u>
Total	16,019,953
Source of funds	
Special funds	1,480,395
Federal funds	<u>14,539,558</u>
Total	16,019,953
Sec. B.325 Department for children and families - office of economic opportunity	
Personal services	1,376,425
Operating expenses	159,458
Grants	<u>39,165,356</u>
Total	40,701,239
Source of funds	
General fund	32,312,474
Special funds	83,135
Federal funds	5,118,329
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,187,301</u>
Total	40,701,239

Sec. B.326 Department for children and families - OEO - weatherization assistance

Personal services	498,837
Operating expenses	275,322
Grants	<u>15,147,885</u>
Total	15,922,044
Source of funds	
Special funds	7,757,091
Federal funds	<u>8,164,953</u>
Total	15,922,044

Sec. B.327 Department for children and families - secure residential treatment

Personal services	258,100
Operating expenses	38,775
Grants	<u>3,476,862</u>
Total	3,773,737
Source of funds	
General fund	3,743,737
Global Commitment fund	<u>30,000</u>
Total	3,773,737

Sec. B.328 Department for children and families - disability determination services

Personal services	8,322,170
Operating expenses	<u>495,934</u>
Total	8,818,104
Source of funds	
General fund	130,556
Federal funds	<u>8,687,548</u>
Total	8,818,104

Sec. B.329 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - administration & support

Personal services	48,973,454
Operating expenses	<u>6,544,338</u>
Total	55,517,792
Source of funds	
General fund	25,692,412
Special funds	1,390,457
Federal funds	27,258,639
Global Commitment fund	110,000

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,066,284</u>
Total	55,517,792
Sec. B.330 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - advocacy and independent living grants	
Grants	<u>24,909,492</u>
Total	24,909,492
Source of funds	
General fund	8,585,909
Federal funds	7,321,114
Global Commitment fund	<u>9,002,469</u>
Total	24,909,492
Sec. B.331 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - blind and visually impaired	
Grants	<u>3,407,604</u>
Total	3,407,604
Source of funds	
General fund	489,154
Special funds	223,450
Federal funds	2,390,000
Global Commitment fund	<u>305,000</u>
Total	3,407,604
Sec. B.332 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - vocational rehabilitation	
Grants	<u>10,179,845</u>
Total	10,179,845
Source of funds	
General fund	371,845
Federal funds	8,558,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,250,000</u>
Total	10,179,845
Sec. B.333 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - developmental services	
Grants	<u>349,987,467</u>
Total	349,987,467
Source of funds	
General fund	132,732
Special funds	15,463
Federal funds	403,573
Global Commitment fund	349,385,699

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>50,000</u>
Total	349,987,467
Sec. B.334 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - TBI home and community based waiver	
Grants	<u>7,540,256</u>
Total	7,540,256
Source of funds	
Global Commitment fund	<u>7,540,256</u>
Total	7,540,256
Sec. B.334.1 Disabilities, aging and independent living - long term care	
Grants	<u>346,858,094</u>
Total	346,858,094
Source of funds	
General fund	498,579
Federal funds	2,450,000
Global Commitment fund	<u>343,909,515</u>
Total	346,858,094
Sec. B.335 Corrections - administration	
Personal services	5,601,461
Operating expenses	<u>269,950</u>
Total	5,871,411
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>5,871,411</u>
Total	5,871,411
Sec. B.336 Corrections - parole board	
Personal services	551,497
Operating expenses	<u>60,112</u>
Total	611,609
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>611,609</u>
Total	611,609
Sec. B.337 Corrections - correctional education	
Personal services	3,900,732
Operating expenses	<u>255,399</u>
Total	4,156,131
Source of funds	
General fund	4,006,975
Federal funds	372

Interdepartmental transfers	<u>148,784</u>
Total	4,156,131
Sec. B.338 Corrections - correctional services	
Personal services	177,107,933
Operating expenses	25,571,966
Grants	<u>801,823</u>
Total	203,481,722
Source of funds	
General fund	198,084,766
Special funds	935,963
Federal funds	516,600
Global Commitment fund	3,548,078
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>396,315</u>
Total	203,481,722
Sec. B.338.1 Corrections - justice reinvestment II	
Grants	<u>11,055,849</u>
Total	11,055,849
Source of funds	
General fund	8,478,161
Federal funds	13,147
Global Commitment fund	<u>2,564,541</u>
Total	11,055,849
Sec. B.339 Corrections - correctional services - out of state beds	
Personal services	<u>4,130,378</u>
Total	4,130,378
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>4,130,378</u>
Total	4,130,378
Sec. B.340 Corrections - correctional facilities - recreation	
Personal services	708,510
Operating expenses	<u>457,555</u>
Total	1,166,065
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>1,166,065</u>
Total	1,166,065
Sec. B.341 Corrections - Vermont offender work program	
Personal services	243,283
Operating expenses	<u>160,570</u>

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1253

Total	403,853
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>403,853</u>
Total	403,853
Sec. B.342 Vermont veterans' home - care and support services	
Personal services	24,048,875
Operating expenses	<u>6,913,887</u>
Total	30,962,762
Source of funds	
General fund	10,033,214
Special funds	12,799,530
Federal funds	<u>8,130,018</u>
Total	30,962,762
Sec. B.343 Commission on women	
Personal services	432,073
Operating expenses	<u>89,355</u>
Total	521,428
Source of funds	
General fund	516,773
Special funds	<u>4,655</u>
Total	521,428
Sec. B.344 Retired senior volunteer program	
Grants	<u>164,960</u>
Total	164,960
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>164,960</u>
Total	164,960
Sec. B.345 Green mountain care board	
Personal services	10,362,452
Operating expenses	<u>416,874</u>
Total	10,779,326
Source of funds	
General fund	4,482,574
Special funds	<u>6,296,752</u>
Total	10,779,326
Sec. B.346 Office of the child, youth, and family advocate	
Personal services	386,033
Operating expenses	<u>71,330</u>

Total	457,363
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>457,363</u>
Total	457,363
Sec. B.347 Total human services	
Source of funds	
General fund	1,448,763,034
Special funds	212,430,533
Tobacco fund	23,088,208
State health care resources fund	31,074,772
Federal funds	1,946,078,413
Global Commitment fund	2,148,606,890
Internal service funds	403,853
Interdepartmental transfers	32,694,090
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>
Total	5,843,156,793
Sec. B.400 Labor - programs	
Personal services	39,454,824
Operating expenses	5,462,457
Grants	<u>5,870,493</u>
Total	50,787,774
Source of funds	
General fund	11,313,657
Special funds	9,710,673
Federal funds	29,640,603
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>122,841</u>
Total	50,787,774
Sec. B.401 Total labor	
Source of funds	
General fund	11,313,657
Special funds	9,710,673
Federal funds	29,640,603
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>122,841</u>
Total	50,787,774
Sec. B.500 Education - finance and administration	
Personal services	17,203,356
Operating expenses	4,699,787
Grants	<u>17,772,840</u>
Total	39,675,983

Source of funds	
General fund	8,994,162
Special funds	19,793,553
Education fund	3,606,201
Federal funds	6,217,482
Global Commitment fund	260,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>804,585</u>
Total	39,675,983
Sec. B.501 Education - education services	
Personal services	18,418,946
Operating expenses	1,185,388
Grants	<u>192,117,080</u>
Total	211,721,414
Source of funds	
General fund	6,894,415
Special funds	3,266,001
Tobacco fund	750,388
Federal funds	199,239,149
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,571,461</u>
Total	211,721,414
Sec. B.502 Education - special education: formula grants	
Grants	<u>270,736,200</u>
Total	270,736,200
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>270,736,200</u>
Total	270,736,200
Sec. B.503 Education - state-placed students	
Grants	<u>17,200,000</u>
Total	17,200,000
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>17,200,000</u>
Total	17,200,000
Sec. B.504 Education - adult education and literacy	
Grants	<u>4,899,009</u>
Total	4,899,009
Source of funds	
General fund	3,958,344
Federal funds	<u>940,665</u>
Total	4,899,009

Sec. B.504.1 Education - Flexible Pathways

Grants	<u>11,481,896</u>
Total	11,481,896
Source of funds	
General fund	921,500
Education fund	<u>10,560,396</u>
Total	11,481,896

Sec. B.505 Education - adjusted education payment

Grants	<u>1,991,143,238</u>
Total	1,991,143,238
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>1,991,143,238</u>
Total	1,991,143,238

Sec. B.506 Education - transportation

Grants	<u>26,115,792</u>
Total	26,115,792
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>26,115,792</u>
Total	26,115,792

Sec. B.507 Education - merger support grants

Grants	<u>1,800,000</u>
Total	1,800,000
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>1,800,000</u>
Total	1,800,000

Sec. B.507.1 Education - EL categorical aid

Grants	<u>2,250,000</u>
Total	2,250,000
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>2,250,000</u>
Total	2,250,000

Sec. B.508 Education - nutrition

Grants	<u>18,500,000</u>
Total	18,500,000
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>18,500,000</u>
Total	18,500,000

Sec. B.509 Education - afterschool grant program

Personal services	500,000
Grants	<u>9,140,000</u>
Total	9,640,000
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>9,640,000</u>
Total	9,640,000

Sec. B.510 Education - essential early education grant

Grants	<u>8,977,737</u>
Total	8,977,737
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>8,977,737</u>
Total	8,977,737

Sec. B.511 Education - technical education

Grants	<u>18,737,850</u>
Total	18,737,850
Source of funds	
Education fund	<u>18,737,850</u>
Total	18,737,850

Sec. B.511.1 State board of education

Personal services	54,208
Operating expenses	<u>16,500</u>
Total	70,708
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>70,708</u>
Total	70,708

Sec. B.513 Retired teachers pension plus funding

Grants	<u>15,000,000</u>
Total	15,000,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>15,000,000</u>
Total	15,000,000

Sec. B.514 State teachers' retirement system

Grants	<u>199,377,627</u>
Total	199,377,627
Source of funds	
General fund	160,566,569

Education fund	<u>38,811,058</u>
Total	199,377,627
Sec. B.514.1 State teachers' retirement system administration	
Personal services	345,352
Operating expenses	<u>3,465,303</u>
Total	3,810,655
Source of funds	
Pension trust funds	<u>3,810,655</u>
Total	3,810,655
Sec. B.515 Retired teachers' health care and medical benefits	
Grants	<u>71,052,589</u>
Total	71,052,589
Source of funds	
General fund	49,091,090
Education fund	<u>21,961,499</u>
Total	71,052,589
Sec. B.516 Total general education	
Source of funds	
General fund	245,496,788
Special funds	32,699,554
Tobacco fund	750,388
Education fund	2,430,399,971
Federal funds	206,397,296
Global Commitment fund	260,000
Interdepartmental transfers	2,376,046
Pension trust funds	<u>3,810,655</u>
Total	2,922,190,698
Sec. B.600 University of Vermont	
Grants	<u>57,378,104</u>
Total	57,378,104
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>57,378,104</u>
Total	57,378,104
Sec. B.602 Vermont state colleges	
Grants	<u>52,468,692</u>
Total	52,468,692

Source of funds	
General fund	<u>52,468,692</u>
Total	<u>52,468,692</u>
Sec. B.603 Vermont state colleges - allied health	
Grants	<u>1,797,087</u>
Total	<u>1,797,087</u>
Source of funds	
General fund	297,087
Global Commitment fund	<u>1,500,000</u>
Total	<u>1,797,087</u>
Sec. B.605 Vermont student assistance corporation	
Grants	<u>27,084,946</u>
Total	<u>27,084,946</u>
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>27,084,946</u>
Total	<u>27,084,946</u>
Sec. B.605.1 VSAC - flexible pathways stipend	
Grants	<u>82,450</u>
Total	<u>82,450</u>
Source of funds	
General fund	41,225
Education fund	<u>41,225</u>
Total	<u>82,450</u>
Sec. B.606 New England higher education compact	
Grants	<u>86,520</u>
Total	<u>86,520</u>
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>86,520</u>
Total	<u>86,520</u>
Sec. B.607 University of Vermont - morgan horse farm	
Grants	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>1</u>
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>1</u>

Sec. B.608 Total higher education

Source of funds	
General fund	137,356,575
Education fund	41,225
Global Commitment fund	<u>1,500,000</u>
Total	138,897,800

Sec. B.700 Natural resources - agency of natural resources - administration

Personal services	6,436,257
Operating expenses	<u>1,265,146</u>
Total	7,701,403
Source of funds	
General fund	5,344,094
Special funds	722,828
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,634,481</u>
Total	7,701,403

Sec. B.701 Natural resources - state land local property tax assessment

Operating expenses	<u>2,705,834</u>
Total	2,705,834
Source of funds	
General fund	2,284,334
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>421,500</u>
Total	2,705,834

Sec. B.702 Fish and wildlife - support and field services

Personal services	23,876,543
Operating expenses	6,738,504
Grants	<u>833,630</u>
Total	31,448,677
Source of funds	
General fund	9,532,865
Special funds	364,696
Fish and wildlife fund	10,097,060
Federal funds	9,927,754
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,526,302</u>
Total	31,448,677

Sec. B.703 Forests, parks and recreation - administration

Personal services	1,564,253
Operating expenses	<u>1,796,785</u>
Total	3,361,038

Source of funds	
General fund	3,130,308
Special funds	143,765
Federal funds	<u>86,965</u>
Total	3,361,038
Sec. B.704 Forests, parks and recreation - forestry	
Personal services	11,026,473
Operating expenses	1,122,371
Grants	<u>1,408,910</u>
Total	13,557,754
Source of funds	
General fund	6,839,753
Special funds	1,204,005
Federal funds	4,326,877
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,187,119</u>
Total	13,557,754
Sec. B.705 Forests, parks and recreation - state parks	
Personal services	13,707,058
Operating expenses	4,936,482
Grants	<u>550,000</u>
Total	19,193,540
Source of funds	
General fund	2,061,995
Special funds	<u>17,131,545</u>
Total	19,193,540
Sec. B.706 Forests, parks and recreation - lands administration and recreation	
Personal services	3,818,270
Operating expenses	8,667,107
Grants	<u>6,015,019</u>
Total	18,500,396
Source of funds	
General fund	1,324,880
Special funds	2,794,948
Federal funds	13,755,832
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>624,736</u>
Total	18,500,396
Sec. B.708 Forests, parks and recreation - forest and parks access roads	
Personal services	130,000
Operating expenses	<u>99,925</u>

Total	229,925
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>229,925</u>
Total	229,925
Sec. B.709 Environmental conservation - management and support services	
Personal services	9,655,674
Operating expenses	5,226,877
Grants	<u>188,303</u>
Total	15,070,854
Source of funds	
General fund	2,462,770
Special funds	1,452,358
Federal funds	2,563,636
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>8,592,090</u>
Total	15,070,854
Sec. B.710 Environmental conservation - air and waste management	
Personal services	26,481,647
Operating expenses	9,958,684
Grants	<u>4,343,000</u>
Total	40,783,331
Source of funds	
General fund	305,347
Special funds	27,825,978
Federal funds	12,531,023
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>120,983</u>
Total	40,783,331
Sec. B.711 Environmental conservation - office of water programs	
Personal services	44,324,028
Operating expenses	8,531,648
Grants	<u>136,489,044</u>
Total	189,344,720
Source of funds	
General fund	12,980,443
Special funds	33,801,176
Federal funds	141,693,623
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>869,478</u>
Total	189,344,720

Sec. B.713 Land use review board

Personal services	5,001,041
Operating expenses	<u>537,905</u>
Total	5,538,946
Source of funds	
General fund	4,169,020
Special funds	<u>1,369,926</u>
Total	5,538,946

Sec. B.714 Total natural resources

Source of funds	
General fund	50,665,734
Special funds	86,811,225
Fish and wildlife fund	10,097,060
Federal funds	184,885,710
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,976,689</u>
Total	347,436,418

Sec. B.800 Commerce and community development - agency of commerce
and community development - administration

Personal services	2,515,577
Operating expenses	872,866
Grants	<u>389,320</u>
Total	3,777,763
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>3,777,763</u>
Total	3,777,763

Sec. B.801 Economic development

Personal services	4,396,254
Operating expenses	1,199,682
Grants	<u>9,106,544</u>
Total	14,702,480
Source of funds	
General fund	6,087,190
Special funds	3,150,350
Federal funds	5,264,940
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>200,000</u>
Total	14,702,480

Sec. B.802 Housing and community development

Personal services	2,669,883
Operating expenses	1,528,070
Grants	<u>27,139,431</u>
Total	31,337,384
Source of funds	
General fund	7,806,505
Special funds	10,144,339
Federal funds	10,957,973
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,428,567</u>
Total	31,337,384

Sec. B.806 Tourism and marketing

Personal services	3,453,707
Operating expenses	4,569,290
Grants	<u>700,000</u>
Total	8,722,997
Source of funds	
General fund	4,640,125
Federal funds	4,007,872
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>75,000</u>
Total	8,722,997

Sec. B.808 Vermont council on the arts

Grants	<u>1,003,063</u>
Total	1,003,063
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>1,003,063</u>
Total	1,003,063

Sec. B.809 Vermont symphony orchestra

Grants	<u>154,170</u>
Total	154,170
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>154,170</u>
Total	154,170

Sec. B.810 Vermont historical society

Grants	<u>1,202,564</u>
Total	1,202,564

Source of funds	
General fund	<u>1,202,564</u>
Total	1,202,564
Sec. B.811 Vermont housing and conservation board	
Grants	<u>109,284,304</u>
Total	109,284,304
Source of funds	
General fund	1,631,582
Special funds	40,490,082
Federal funds	<u>67,162,640</u>
Total	109,284,304
Sec. B.812 Vermont humanities council	
Grants	<u>318,270</u>
Total	318,270
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>318,270</u>
Total	318,270
Sec. B.813 Total commerce and community development	
Source of funds	
General fund	26,621,232
Special funds	53,784,771
Federal funds	87,393,425
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,703,567</u>
Total	170,502,995
Sec. B.900 Transportation - finance and administration	
Personal services	19,914,359
Operating expenses	6,581,104
Grants	<u>50,000</u>
Total	26,545,463
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	25,152,473
Federal funds	<u>1,392,990</u>
Total	26,545,463
Sec. B.901 Transportation - aviation	
Personal services	4,770,561
Operating expenses	8,456,904
Grants	<u>190,000</u>
Total	13,417,465

Source of funds	
Transportation fund	7,474,433
Federal funds	<u>5,943,032</u>
Total	13,417,465
Sec. B.902 Transportation - buildings	
Personal services	1,000,000
Operating expenses	<u>1,500,000</u>
Total	2,500,000
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	2,200,000
TIB fund	<u>300,000</u>
Total	2,500,000
Sec. B.903 Transportation - program development	
Personal services	83,759,860
Operating expenses	281,446,274
Grants	<u>46,104,466</u>
Total	411,310,600
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	62,005,434
TIB fund	15,103,017
Special funds	280,000
Federal funds	308,679,500
Interdepartmental transfers	15,722,027
Local match	<u>9,520,622</u>
Total	411,310,600
Sec. B.904 Transportation - rest areas construction	
Personal services	398,500
Operating expenses	<u>791,746</u>
Total	1,190,246
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	119,025
Federal funds	<u>1,071,221</u>
Total	1,190,246
Sec. B.905 Transportation - maintenance state system	
Personal services	48,113,208
Operating expenses	<u>69,113,835</u>
Total	117,227,043
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	110,349,507

Federal funds	932,014
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>5,945,522</u>
Total	117,227,043
Sec. B.906 Transportation - policy and planning	
Personal services	3,411,138
Operating expenses	1,290,442
Grants	<u>10,346,035</u>
Total	15,047,615
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	3,742,314
Federal funds	11,223,301
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>82,000</u>
Total	15,047,615
Sec. B.906.1 Transportation - environmental policy and sustainability	
Personal services	8,114,291
Operating expenses	67,686
Grants	<u>1,332,030</u>
Total	9,514,007
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	389,377
Federal funds	8,150,226
Interdepartmental transfers	21,860
Local match	<u>952,544</u>
Total	9,514,007
Sec. B.907 Transportation - rail	
Personal services	18,493,101
Operating expenses	<u>43,394,247</u>
Total	61,887,348
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	15,067,669
Federal funds	31,894,435
Interdepartmental transfers	8,228,363
Local match	<u>6,696,881</u>
Total	61,887,348
Sec. B.908 Transportation - public transit	
Personal services	1,026,301
Operating expenses	81,224
Grants	<u>51,587,709</u>
Total	52,695,234

Source of funds	
Transportation fund	10,007,534
Federal funds	42,547,700
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>140,000</u>
Total	52,695,234
Sec. B.909 Transportation - central garage	
Personal services	5,957,587
Operating expenses	<u>19,696,966</u>
Total	25,654,553
Source of funds	
Internal service funds	<u>25,654,553</u>
Total	25,654,553
Sec. B.910 Department of motor vehicles	
Personal services	36,447,934
Operating expenses	<u>13,070,367</u>
Total	49,518,301
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	46,709,524
Federal funds	2,687,081
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>121,696</u>
Total	49,518,301
Sec. B.911 Transportation - town highway structures	
Grants	<u>7,200,000</u>
Total	7,200,000
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	<u>7,200,000</u>
Total	7,200,000
Sec. B.912 Transportation - town highway local technical assistance program	
Personal services	449,763
Operating expenses	<u>31,689</u>
Total	481,452
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	121,452
Federal funds	<u>360,000</u>
Total	481,452
Sec. B.913 Transportation - town highway class 2 roadway	
Grants	<u>8,600,000</u>
Total	8,600,000

Source of funds	
Transportation fund	<u>8,600,000</u>
Total	8,600,000
Sec. B.914 Transportation - town highway bridges	
Personal services	10,034,000
Operating expenses	<u>27,759,406</u>
Total	37,793,406
Source of funds	
TIB fund	3,596,983
Federal funds	31,716,311
Local match	<u>2,480,112</u>
Total	37,793,406
Sec. B.915 Transportation - town highway aid program	
Grants	<u>30,418,736</u>
Total	30,418,736
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	<u>30,418,736</u>
Total	30,418,736
Sec. B.916 Transportation - town highway class 1 supplemental grants	
Grants	<u>128,750</u>
Total	128,750
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	<u>128,750</u>
Total	128,750
Sec. B.917 Transportation - town highway: state aid for nonfederal disasters	
Grants	<u>1,150,000</u>
Total	1,150,000
Source of funds	
Special funds	<u>1,150,000</u>
Total	1,150,000
Sec. B.918 Transportation - town highway: state aid for federal disasters	
Grants	<u>4,000,000</u>
Total	4,000,000
Source of funds	
Federal funds	<u>4,000,000</u>
Total	4,000,000

Sec. B.919 Transportation - municipal mitigation assistance program

Personal services	100,000
Operating expenses	325,500
Grants	<u>6,467,500</u>
Total	6,893,000
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	715,000
Special funds	4,750,000
Federal funds	<u>1,428,000</u>
Total	6,893,000

Sec. B.921 Transportation board

Personal services	181,233
Operating expenses	<u>22,938</u>
Total	204,171
Source of funds	
Transportation fund	<u>204,171</u>
Total	204,171

Sec. B.922 Total transportation

Source of funds	
Transportation fund	330,605,399
TIB fund	19,000,000
Special funds	6,180,000
Federal funds	452,025,811
Internal service funds	25,654,553
Interdepartmental transfers	30,261,468
Local match	<u>19,650,159</u>
Total	883,377,390

Sec. B.1000 Debt service

Operating expenses	<u>675,000</u>
Total	675,000
Source of funds	
General fund	<u>675,000</u>
Total	675,000

Sec. B.1001 Total debt service

Source of funds	
General fund	<u>675,000</u>
Total	675,000

* * * Fiscal Year 2026 One-Time Appropriations * * *Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2026 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

(a) Agency of Administration Secretary's Office. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$1,100,000 General Fund for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

(2) \$220,000 General Fund for the Office of Racial Equity to continue the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Action, Leadership Vermont program an additional two years; and

(3) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 3709(a), \$1,000,000 PILOT Special Fund for the Municipal Technical Assistance Program as established by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 95.

(b) Department of Human Resources. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$1,575,000 General Fund for the Classification Modernization project.

(c) Department of Taxes. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$1,000,000 PILOT Special Fund for the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program as established per Sec. E.142.2 of this act. These funds shall carry forward each fiscal year until fully expended or reverted.

(d) Department of Public Safety. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$600,000 General Fund for State match for federal cybersecurity grant funds;

(2) \$800,000 General Fund for the purchase of mobile and portable radio equipment; and

(3) \$150,000 General Fund for the Vermont Community Radio Grant Program established in Sec. E.208.2 of this act.

(e) Agency of Human Services Secretary's Office. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$4,448,520 General Fund and \$6,351,480 federal funds for the Department of Vermont Health Access' Global Commitment appropriation for the Support and Services at Home program, the Primary Care Medical Home, and Community Health Team services under the Blueprint for Health;

(2) \$2,250,000 General Fund for feasibility analysis and transformation plan development with hospitals, designated agencies, primary care organizations, and other community-based providers;

(3) \$125,000 General Fund for the development of quality and access measures, targets, and monitoring strategies for a statewide population health plan;

(4) \$125,000 General Fund for the development of hospital global budgets and other alternative payment models for Medicare; and

(5) \$6,200 General Fund for per diems and expense reimbursement for members of the Office of New Americans Study Committee.

(f) Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$500,000 General Fund for the Vermont Serve, Learn, and Earn Program.

(g) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$240,000 General Fund for Polychlorinated Biphenyl testing;

(2) \$40,000 General Fund for a grant to Empty Arms Vermont;

(3) \$300,000 Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences;

(4) \$800,000 Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund for recovery centers;

(5) \$200,000 Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund for grants to youth mentoring programs; and

(6) \$500,000 Tobacco Litigation Settlement Special Fund for grants to Parent Child Centers for smoking cessation initiatives.

(h) Department for Children and Families. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$2,000,000 General Fund for shelter capacity expansion;

(2) \$30,500,000 General Fund for the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program;

(3) \$1,000,000 General Fund for direct aid to the Vermont Foodbank's network partner food shelves and pantries through an equitable statewide distribution of food or subgrants or both;

(4) \$500,000 General Fund for the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity Community Resource Center; and

(5) \$156,000 General Fund for the Child Care Apprenticeship Program.

(i) Department of Corrections. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$250,000 General Fund to retain a consultant and develop an implementation plan to transition the Northeast Correctional Complex or the Caledonia County Work Camp or parts of either or of both to a treatment-focused facility for incarcerated Vermonters.

(j) Agency of Education. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$150,000 General Fund for administrative costs relating to home-based child care meals.

(k) Vermont State Colleges. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$5,000,000 General Fund for the final transformation bridge financing payment.

(l) Department of Fish and Wildlife. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$185,000 Fish and Wildlife Nondedicated Special Fund to sustain current operations as the Department undergoes a financial restructuring. These funds shall carry forward each fiscal year until fully expended or reverted;

(2) \$80,000 General Fund for the purchase of mobile and portable radio equipment; and

(3) \$30,000 General Fund for the Lake Champlain International Fishing Derby.

(m) Department of Environmental Conservation. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$50,000 General Fund for Municipal Wastewater Connections database;

(2) \$850,000 General Fund for the Concentrated Animals Feeding Operation database project and contractor support;

(3) \$9,520,000 Environmental Contingency Fund For Polychlorinated Biphenyl testing and remediation in schools. These funds shall carry forward each fiscal year until fully expended or reverted; and

(4) \$14,500,000 Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves Fund for the State match to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and Clean Water State Revolving Fund, in accordance with the provisions of 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.108(b).

(n) Department of Housing and Community Development. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$9,100,000 General Fund for the Vermont Bond Bank Vermont Infrastructure Sustainability Fund;

(2) \$14,500,000 General Fund for the Vermont Housing Finance Agency Rental Revolving Loan Fund, the Middle-Income Homeownership Development Program, and the First Generation Homebuyer Program. No less than \$1,000,000 of these funds shall be for the First Generation Homebuyer Program;

(3) \$4,300,000 General Fund for the Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 and for staff to support the Program; and

(4) \$15,000 General Fund for the Residential Universal Design Study Committee.

(o) Department of Economic Development. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$200,000 General Fund for the Vermont Professionals of Color Network;

(2) \$780,000 General Fund for the Small Business Technical Assistance Exchange;

(3) \$15,000 General Fund for the Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission; and

(4) \$1,000,000 General Fund for the Brownfields Revitalization Fund.

(p) Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$5,000,000 General Fund to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units, including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home and community-based services.

(q) Office of the State Treasurer. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$148,000 General Fund for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program; and

(2) \$700,000 General Fund for financial modeling. In fiscal year 2026, the Office of the State Treasurer may, through an interdepartmental transfer, transfer up to \$700,000 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program Fund.

(r) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$835,420 General Fund for the Payment Reform Unit;

(2) \$3,119,310 General Fund for the OneCare primary care model transition; and

(3) \$10,800,000 Global Commitment for the Support and Services at Home program, the Primary Care Medical Home, and Community Health Team services under the Blueprint for Health.

(s) University of Vermont. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$750,000 General Fund for the Vermont Gallium Nitride Tech Hub.

(t) Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$450,000 General Fund for a grant to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont for the Crop Cash and Crop Cash Plus programs;

(2) \$500,000 General Fund for a grant to Vermont Foodbank for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program;

(3) \$1,000,000 General Fund to offer Vermont Local Food for Schools and Child Care grants within the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Grants Program to fund grants for the purchase and distribution of local food to schools and registered or licensed child care programs; and

(4) \$500,000 General Fund to support Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

(u) Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$235,000 General Fund for a grant to HomeShare Vermont; and

(2) \$500,000 General Fund for grants to skilled nursing facilities to increase the pipeline of employed licensed nursing assistants, including increasing the capacity of new and existing facility-based training programs, and developing or expanding collaborations with other programs, including career and technical education programs. Grants may support training program costs, paid internships, student support, and recruitment and retention bonuses.

(A) Of the funds appropriated in subdivision (u)(2) of this section, \$150,000 shall be for grants of \$30,000 or less.

(B) Of the funds appropriated in subdivision (u)(2) of this section, \$350,000 shall be for up to three grants.

(v) Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$1,500,000 General Fund for Freedom and Unity grants.

(w) Military Department. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$10,000 General Fund for the USS Vermont Support Group.

(x) Vermont Council on the Arts. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$68,737 General Fund for State match for federal funds.

(y) Agency of Transportation. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$1,400,000 Transportation Fund for transfer to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for programs to increase access to level 1 and 2 Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment charging ports at workplaces or multiunit dwellings, or both; and

(2) \$600,000 Transportation Fund for the purpose of providing grants to the public transit agencies to hire volunteer coordinators who shall be responsible for the identification, recruitment, and retention of volunteers to provide transportation services to individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs.

(z) Department of Labor. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$150,000 General Fund for a grant to Advance Vermont.

(aa) Office of the Secretary of State. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

- (1) \$50,000 General Fund for grants to support local civic journalism;
- (2) \$306,210 General Fund for staff and IT costs at the Office of Professional Regulation relating to the implementation of S.119 of 2025;
- (3) \$963,681 General Fund for fee waivers relating to the implementation of S.119 of 2025; and
- (4) \$25,000 General Fund for staff and IT costs at the Office of Professional Regulation relating to the implementation of certifications of perinatal doulas and birthing centers.

(bb) Green Mountain Care Board. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

- (1) \$500,000 General Fund for contracts, including contracts for assistance with implementing reference-based pricing; and
- (2) Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 10301 to the contrary, \$150,000 Vermont Health Information Technology Special Fund for expenses associated with increased standardization of electronic hospital budget data submissions.

(cc) Office of the Defender General. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

- (1) \$30,000 General Fund to enhance IT server capacity;
- (2) \$87,500 General Fund for the Orleans County staff office; and
- (3) \$20,000 General Fund for the Addison County staff office.

(dd) Land Use Review Board. In fiscal year 2026, funds are appropriated for the following:

- (1) \$100,000 General Fund for development of digital infrastructure relating to regional planning commission mapping projects.

Sec. B.1101 FISCAL YEAR 2025 CLOSEOUT

(a) As part of the fiscal year 2025 closeout, the Department of Finance and Management shall execute the requirements of 32 V.S.A. § 308. If any balance remains after meeting these requirements, then, notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308c, the Department of Finance and Management shall designate the first \$138,970,000 as unallocated carryforward for use in meeting the requirements of the fiscal year 2026 appropriations act as passed by the General Assembly. The Department of Finance and Management shall then, notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 308c, calculate the maximum number of

contingent transactions that can be funded, in the order provided in subsection (b) of this section, and designate that money to remain unallocated for such purpose in fiscal year 2026. Any residual balance remaining after such designations shall be reserved in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 308c.

(b) In fiscal year 2026, the following contingent transactions shall be executed in the following order from the designated unallocated balance as determined in subsection (a) of this section:

(1) \$5,000,000 is transferred to the Communications and Information Technology Special Fund to cover the costs of transitioning billable services from a service level agreement model to a core enterprise services model.

(2) \$45,000,000 is appropriated to the Agency of Administration to be transferred by the Emergency Board pursuant to 32 V.S.A. §133 if federal funds are reduced while the General Assembly is not in session.

Sec. B.1103 CASH FUND FOR CAPITAL AND ESSENTIAL
INVESTMENTS; FISCAL YEAR 2026 ONE-TIME CAPITAL
APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2026, \$14,061,099 is appropriated from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount in the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments for the following:

(1) Department of Buildings and General Services:

(A) \$861,599 for statewide major maintenance;

(B) \$250,000 for statewide planning, reuse, and contingency;

(C) \$250,000 for statewide physical security enhancements;

(D) \$219,500 for State House repointing;

(E) \$250,000 for an uninterruptable power supply system for the Middlesex print and postal facility; and

(F) \$6,900,000 for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction.

(2) Vermont Veterans' Home:

(A) \$1,500,000 for the design and construction of the American Unit.

(3) Department of Housing and Community Development:

(A) \$1,100,000 for Bennington, high school redevelopment housing infrastructure;

(B) \$1,000,000 for Barre, Prospect Heights housing infrastructure;

(C) \$1,000,000 for Brattleboro, Winston Prouty Center housing infrastructure;

(D) \$100,000 for a grant to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to support a site study focused on economic development, parking, housing, and flood mitigation for the 1.6-acre parcel at 87 State Street and parcels at 89 State Street and 42 Court Street; and

(E) \$250,000 for a competitive grant to establish a new recovery residence, per the criteria of the Vermont Recovery Housing Program Action Plan.

(4) Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation:

(A) \$275,000 for the purchase of a fire apparatus.

(5) Department of Fish and Wildlife:

(A) \$25,000 for the Lake Champlain Walleye Association, Inc. to upgrade and repair the Walleye rearing, restoration, and stocking infrastructure.

(6) Department of Public Safety:

(A) \$35,000 for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the dry hydrant program.

(7) Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets:

(A) \$45,000 for the Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm at the Vermont Veterans' Home.

* * * Fiscal Year 2025 Adjustments, Appropriations, and Amendments * * *

Sec. C.100 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.209 is amended to read:

Sec. B.209 Public safety - state police

Personal services	74,755,468	<u>76,655,468</u>
Operating expenses		15,992,094
Grants		1,137,841
Total	91,885,403	<u>93,785,403</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	57,891,409	<u>59,791,409</u>
Transportation fund		20,250,000
Special funds		3,170,328
Federal funds		8,967,252
Interdepartmental transfers		1,606,414
Total	91,885,403	<u>93,785,403</u>

Sec. C.101 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.702 is amended to read:

Sec. B.702 Fish and wildlife - support and field services

Personal services	22,597,844	<u>22,887,844</u>
Operating expenses		6,843,095
Grants		853,066
Total	30,294,005	<u>30,584,005</u>
Source of funds		
General fund	8,267,967	<u>8,557,967</u>
Special funds		365,427
Fish and wildlife fund		10,418,331
Federal funds		9,751,683
Interdepartmental transfers		1,490,597
Total	30,294,005	<u>30,584,005</u>

Sec. C.102 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.101 is amended to read:

Sec. D.101 FUND TRANSFERS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following amounts are transferred from the funds indicated:

(1) From the General Fund to the:

(A) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100):
~~\$73,212,880~~ \$78,235,088.34.

* * *

(J) Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (#21555): ~~\$830,000~~
\$6,500,000.

(K) Education Fund (#20205): ~~\$25,000,000.~~

(L) Medical Insurance Fund (#55100): ~~\$18,500,000.~~

(M) Correctional Industries Fund (#59100): ~~\$3,135,443.~~

(N) Act 250 Permit Fund (#21260): ~~\$900,000.~~

(O) State Liability Self-Insurance Fund (#56200): ~~\$3,000,000.~~

(P) Emergency Personnel Survivor's Benefit Fund (#21884):
~~\$220,000.~~

(2) From the Transportation Fund to the:

(A) ~~Vermont Recreational Trails Fund (#21455): \$370,000.~~

(B) Downtown Transportation and Related Capital Improvements
Fund (#21575): ~~\$523,966.~~

~~(C)~~(B) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100): \$316,745.

(C) Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund (#20191): \$900,000.

(D) Notwithstanding 19 V.S.A. § 13(c), the Transportation Fund transfer to the Central Garage fund in fiscal year 2025 shall be \$0.

* * *

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025:

(1) The following amounts shall be transferred to the General Fund from the funds indicated:

(A) Cannabis Regulation Fund (#21998): ~~\$12,000,000~~
\$15,417,084.32.

(B) AHS Central Office Earned Federal Receipts (#22005): \$4,641,960.

(C) Sports Wagering Enterprise Fund (#50250): ~~\$7,000,000~~
\$6,139,162.

(D) Liquor Control Fund (#50300): ~~\$21,100,000~~ \$9,543,353.

(E) ~~Tobacco Litigation Settlement Fund (#21370): \$3,000,000.~~

(F) Financial Institutions Supervision Fund (#21065): \$1,100,000.

(F) Workforce Education and Training Fund (#21913):
\$2,598,921.75.

(G) Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund (#21994): the balance of the fund at the close of fiscal year 2025.

(2) The following estimated amounts, which may be all or a portion of unencumbered fund balances, shall be transferred from the following funds to the General Fund. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July meeting the final amounts transferred from each fund and certify that such transfers will not impair the agency, office, or department reliant upon each fund from meeting its statutory requirements.

(A) AG-Fees & Reimbursements-Court Order Fund (#21638): \$2,000,000.

(B) Unclaimed Property Fund (#62100): ~~\$6,500,000~~ \$8,242,871.

(3) ~~\$66,935,000~~ \$65,260,450.50 of the net unencumbered fund balances in the Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21075), the Captive Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21085), and the Securities Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21080) shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(c)(1) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.3 of the Rules for State Matching Funds under the Federal Public Assistance Program, in fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may provide funding from the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund that was transferred pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(J) of this section to subgrantees prior to the completion of a project. In fiscal year years 2025 and 2026, up to 70 percent of the State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project for municipalities that were impacted by ~~the August and December 2023~~ and 2024 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT ~~and~~, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT may be advanced at the request of a municipality.

(2) Notwithstanding Sec. 1.4.1 of the Rules for State Matching Funds Under the Federal Public Assistance Program, the Secretary of Administration shall increase the standard State funding match on the nonfederal share of an approved project to the highest percentage possible given available funding for municipalities in counties that were impacted by ~~the August and December 2023~~ and 2024 flooding events and are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT ~~and~~, DR-4762-VT, DR-4810-VT, DR-4816-VT, and DR-4826-VT.

* * *

Sec. C.103 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100 is amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2025 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

* * *

(d) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(8) \$835,073 General Fund for the Bridges to Health Program; ~~and~~

(9) ~~\$400,000~~ \$550,000 General Fund for the Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey; and

(10) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity.

(e) Department for Children and Families. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$16,500,000 General Fund for the General Assistance Emergency Housing program;

(2) \$1,034,065 General Fund to extend 10 Economic Services Division limited service positions, including associated operating costs, in support of the General Assistance Emergency Housing program; and

(3) \$332,000 General Fund for a 2-1-1 service line contract to operate 24 hours seven days per week;

(4) \$340,000 General Fund and \$660,000 federal funds for the Office of Child Support mainframe transition planning. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 703, unless otherwise reverted by a future act of the General Assembly, these appropriations shall carry forward until fully expended; and

(5) \$1,800,000 General Fund shall be added to the appropriation made in Sec. B.1102(b)(4) of this act for the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System.

* * *

(n) Agency of Human Services Secretary's Office. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$3,913,200~~ \$5,586,324 General Fund and ~~\$5,366,383~~ \$7,713,259 federal funds to be used for Global Commitment match for the Medicaid Global Payment Program. To the extent that at a future date the Global Payment Program ceases to operate as a program or changes methodology to a retrospective payment program, any resulting one-time General Fund spending authority remaining at that time shall be reverted. If the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b has not been replenished in accordance with subdivision (b)(21) of Sec. B.1102 of this act, the remaining unallocated General Fund balance shall be reserved in the Human Services Caseload Reserve established in 32 V.S.A. § 308b up to the amount appropriated in this subdivision.

(o) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) ~~\$9,279,583~~ \$13,299,583 Global Commitment for the Medicaid Global Payment Program;

(2) \$150,000 General Fund to conduct a technical analysis of Vermont's health insurance markets; and

(3) \$100,000 General Fund to implement the expansion of Medicare Savings Programs eligibility;

(4) \$10,000,000 General Fund for Provider Stabilization Grants; and

(5) \$11,000,000 General Fund for an alternative payment model reconciliation payment to Brattleboro Retreat. All or a portion of these funds may also be used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match. If funds are used as matching funds to the Agency of Human Services Global Commitment Program to provide State match, the commensurate amount of Global Commitment Fund spending authority may be requested during the Global Commitment Transfer process pursuant to Sec. E.301.1 of this act.

* * *

(v) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

~~(1) \$200,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities that were impacted by the August and December 2023 flooding events in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4744-VT and DR-4762-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of the August and December 2023 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on Federal Emergency Management Agency related projects~~ \$1,800,000 General Fund for local economic damage grants to municipalities in counties that are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance funds under federal disaster declarations DR-4810-VT and DR-4744-VT. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these local economic damage grants be distributed to municipalities throughout the State to address the secondary economic impacts of 2023 and 2024 flooding events. Monies from these grants shall not be expended on Federal Emergency Management Agency-related projects.

(A) The funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) for local economic damage grants shall be distributed as follows:

(i) \$75,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has at least \$5,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(ii) \$50,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$5,000,000 and at least \$2,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iii) \$30,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$2,000,000 and at least \$1,000,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(iv) \$20,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$1,000,000 and at least \$250,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(v) \$10,000 to each municipality that as of June 1, 2025 has less than \$250,000 and at least \$100,000 in estimated reported damages to public infrastructure relating to 2023 and 2024 flooding events.

(B) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) have not been granted on or before September 30, 2025, they shall revert to the General Fund and be transferred to the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund.

(C) To the extent that the funds appropriated in this subdivision (v)(1) are insufficient to distribute grants to all eligible municipalities in their full amount, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511, utilize excess receipt authority to establish spending authority from the PILOT Special Fund for this purpose.

(w) Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$2,800,000 General Fund to complete pilot projects identified pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 186.

(x) Judiciary. In fiscal year 2025, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$800,000 General Fund to upgrade the network wiring and security systems in county court houses; and

(2) \$50,000 General Fund to upgrade or construct bathrooms in the Essex Meeting House that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Sec. C.104 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. B.1100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 40, is further amended to read:

Sec. B.1100 MISCELLANEOUS FISCAL YEAR 2024 ONE-TIME
APPROPRIATIONS

(a) Agency of Administration. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$2,300,000 General Fund to create, implement, and oversee a comprehensive statewide language access plan;

(2) \$15,000,000 General Fund to be used to offset the cost of denied claims for ~~Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)~~ federal reimbursement related to presidentially declared disasters in fiscal year 2024 or 2025, or to fund unanticipated statewide costs related to recovery efforts from declared disasters or administering programs created by funds from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery Fund, including the costs of related limited-service positions, and contracting for programs and services.

(3) \$500,000 General Fund for community grants related to health equity. These funds shall not be released until the recommendation and report required by Sec. E.100.1 of this act, regarding the permanent administrative location for the Office of Health Equity, is provided to the committees of jurisdiction listed in Sec. E.100.1 of this act and the positions in the Office of Health Equity created by this act are filled.

(4) \$30,000,000 General Fund to be used as ~~Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) matching funds~~ nonfederal share related to disaster spending for costs incurred due to ~~the July 2023 flooding event~~ federally declared disasters in fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

* * *

(l) Agency of Human Services Central Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

* * *

(2) \$8,834,000 General Fund and \$11,483,302 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program. Funds shall be used to expand the substances covered by the program, include mental health and pediatric screenings, and make strategic investments with community partners; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(m) Department of Vermont Health Access. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$366,066 General Fund and \$372,048 Federal Revenue Fund #22005 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

(2) \$15,583,352 Global Commitment Fund #20405 for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose; and

* * *

(n) Department of Health. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$4,595,448 Global Commitment Fund #20405 to the Division of Substance Use Programs for a ~~two-year~~ pilot to expand the Blueprint for Health Hub and Spoke program; unexpended appropriations shall carry forward into subsequent fiscal years and remain available for this purpose;

* * *

(ee) Joint Fiscal Office. In fiscal year 2024, funds are appropriated for the following:

(1) \$250,000 for ~~per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for members of the Task Force on Economic Development Incentives and for consulting services approved by the Task Force~~ consulting services related to legislative needs identified in the 2025–2026 biennium, including analysis of legislative staff compensation and organizational structure and implementation of adjustments in accordance with policies adopted by the Joint Legislative Management Committee.

* * *

Sec. C.105 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. C.110 is amended to read:

Sec. C.110 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;
REVERSION AND REALLOCATION

(a) The Secretary of Administration ~~shall revert~~ may reimburse up to ~~\$5,000,000~~ \$14,300,000 of prior fiscal year federal funds ~~appropriated~~ expended through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, as approved by the Joint Fiscal Committee pursuant to Grant Request #3034. ~~An amount of spending authority equal to these reversions shall be provided, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511, to existing State programs that meet the eligibility criteria~~

established by the U.S. Treasury with new General Fund appropriations transferred from existing State programs that meet the eligibility criteria established by the U.S. Treasury. These programs shall receive an amount of funds from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program equal to the amount of General Fund appropriation transferred.

Sec. C.106 [Deleted.]

Sec. C.107 BUSINESS EMERGENCY GAP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;
VERMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
GRANT

(a) Of the \$7,000,000 General Fund authorized by unanimous vote of the Emergency Board on August 12, 2024 for the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program, \$2,000,000 shall be used for a grant to the Vermont Economic Development Authority to establish a disaster relief fund for use by businesses following a natural disaster.

* * * Fiscal Year 2026 Fund Transfers and Reserve Allocations * * *

Sec. D.100 PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX ALLOCATIONS

(a) This act contains the following amounts allocated to special funds that receive revenue from the property transfer tax. These allocations shall not exceed available revenues.

(1) The sum of \$591,137 is allocated from the Current Use Administration Special Fund to the Department of Taxes for administration of the Use Tax Reimbursement Program. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), amounts in excess of \$591,137 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Current Use Administration Special Fund shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(2) Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, amounts in excess of \$36,964,250 from the property transfer tax and the surcharge established by 32 V.S.A. § 9602a deposited into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(A) The dedication of \$2,500,000 in revenue from the property transfer tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9610(d) for the debt payments on the affordable housing bond pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 314 shall be offset by the reduction of \$1,500,000 in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and \$1,000,000 from the surcharge established by 32 V.S.A. § 9602a. The fiscal year 2026 appropriation of \$36,964,250 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board reflects the \$1,500,000 reduction. The affordable housing bond and related property transfer tax and surcharge provisions are repealed after the life of the bond on July 1, 2039. Once the

bond is retired, the \$1,500,000 reduction in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board shall be restored.

(3) Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a)(2), amounts in excess of \$10,000,705 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Municipal and Regional Planning and Resilience Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund. Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a)(3), the \$10,000,705 shall be allocated as follows:

(A) \$7,740,546 for disbursement to regional planning commissions in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b);

(B) \$1,260,089 for disbursement to municipalities in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b); and

(C) \$1,000,070 to the Agency of Digital Services for the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

Sec. D.101 FUND TRANSFERS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the following amounts shall be transferred from the funds indicated:

(1) From the General Fund (#10000) to the:

(A) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100): \$81,155,462.

(B) Capital Infrastructure Fund (#21952): \$10,272,469.

(C) Tax Computer System Modernization Fund (#21909): \$4,300,000.

(D) Fish and Wildlife Fund – Nondedicated (#20305): \$185,000.

(E) Education Fund (#20205): \$77,200,000.

(F) Communications and Information Technology Fund (#58100): \$10,000,000.

(G) Environmental Contingency Fund (#21275): \$9,520,000.

(H) Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund (#21926): \$450,000.

(I) Farm Security Special Fund: \$1,000,000.

(2) From the Transportation Fund (#20105) to the:

(A) General Obligation Bonds Debt Service Fund (#35100): \$305,825.

(B) Downtown Transportation and Related Capital Improvements Fund (#21575): \$523,966.

(3) From the Education Fund (#20205) to the:

(A) Tax Computer System Modernization Fund (#21909): \$1,500,000.

(4) From the Clean Water Fund (#21932) to the:

(A) Agricultural Water Quality Special Fund (#21933): \$11,000,000.

(B) Lake in Crisis Response Program Special Fund (#21938): \$120,000.

(5) From the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments and Reserves Subaccount in the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments (#21953) to the:

(A) Transportation Fund (#20105): \$12,500,000.

(B) Capital Infrastructure Subaccount in the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments Fund (#21952): \$1,000,000.

(6) From the Agency of Human Services Central Office Earned Federal Receipts (#22005) to the:

(A) General Fund (#10000): \$4,641,960.

(7) From the Attorney General Fees and Reimbursement Court Order Fund (#21638) to the:

(A) General Fund (#10000): \$2,000,000.

(8) From the Cannabis Regulation Fund (#21998) to the:

(A) General Fund (#10000): 70 percent of the unencumbered and unexpended balance of the fund in excess of \$4,035,000 following the close of fiscal year 2025. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report the amount of this transfer to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July 2025 meeting. For purposes of developing the fiscal year 2026 budget, this amount is estimated to be \$8,900,000.

(B) Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund (#21995): 30 percent of the unencumbered and unexpended balance of the fund in excess of \$4,035,000 following the close of fiscal year 2025. The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report the amount of this transfer to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July 2025 meeting. For purposes of developing the fiscal year 2026 budget, this amount is estimated to be \$3,800,000.

(b) The following transfers shall be in accordance with the citations provided. Transfer estimates are for purposes of developing the fiscal year 2026 budget and do not supersede the actual year-end transfer amounts.

(1) To the General Fund (#10000) from the:

(A) 8 V.S.A. § 80(d). Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21075): \$46,204,523.

(B) 9 V.S.A. § 5613(c). Securities Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21085): \$21,745,635.

(C) 27 V.S.A. § 1543. Unclaimed Property Fund (#62100): \$6,541,757.

(2) To the Captive Insurance Regulatory and Supervision Fund (#21085) from the:

(A) General Fund (#10000): \$1,053,073

(c) Transfers from the following enterprise funds to the General Fund (#10000) shall not exceed the actual fiscal year end profits earned by the enterprise net of any amount necessary to absolve the fund of a deficit. The following estimated transfers are for purposes of developing the fiscal year 2026 budget only.

(1) From the Sports Wagering Enterprise Fund (#50250): \$7,600,000.

(2) From the Liquor Control Fund (#50300): \$14,849,754.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary in fiscal year 2026, \$19,000,000 shall be transferred from the Child Care Contribution Special Fund to the General Fund.

Sec. D.102 REVERSIONS

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2026, the following amounts shall revert to the General Fund from the accounts indicated:

<u>1100892208 AOA – VHFA</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
<u>1210892201 LEG – Pension Benefit Consul</u>	<u>\$8,821.25</u>
<u>1220891803 VT Tax Structure Comm</u>	<u>\$59,673.09</u>
<u>1220891901 Contract Services for Research</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
<u>1220892201 JFO – AAHC Task Force Consult</u>	<u>\$7,155.00</u>
<u>1220892301 JFO – Studies and Reports</u>	<u>\$21,125.50</u>
<u>1230891301 Security</u>	<u>\$39.10</u>
<u>1230892301 SAA – Capitol Police</u>	<u>\$0.99</u>
<u>1260892201 TRE – Bond Redemption</u>	<u>\$6,000,000.00</u>

Sec. D.103 RESERVES

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2026, the following reserve transactions shall be implemented for the funds provided:

(1) General Fund.

(A) The General Fund Budget Stabilization Reserve shall be adjusted in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 308. For purposes of developing this budget, \$1,875,385 is expected to be unreserved in fiscal year 2026.

(B) The General Fund Human Services Caseload Reserve shall be adjusted in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 308b. For purposes of developing this budget, \$2,721,375 is expected to be unreserved in fiscal year 2026.

(C) The General Fund 27/53 Reserve shall be adjusted in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 308e. For purposes of developing this budget, \$5,700,000 is expected to be reserved in fiscal year 2026.

(2) Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments and Reserves Subaccount in the Cash for Capital and Essential Investments Fund.

(A) \$12,500,000 is unreserved for transfer to the Transportation Fund for use by the Agency of Transportation in accordance with the provisions for which the funds were originally reserved in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1102(b)(17).

(B) \$14,500,000 is unreserved for use by the Department of Environmental Conservation in accordance with the provisions for which the funds were originally reserved in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.108(b).

(3) Transportation Fund.

(A) For the purpose of calculating the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Fund Stabilization Reserve's requirement of five percent of prior year appropriations, fiscal year 2025 Transportation Fund reversions are deducted from the fiscal year 2025 total appropriations amount.

(b) In fiscal year 2025, \$5,000,000 shall be reserved within the Child Care Contribution Special Fund. If in fiscal year 2026 the Child Care Contribution Special Fund is found to have an undesignated fund deficit, these funds shall be unreserved and used to the extent necessary to offset the deficit as determined by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. If these funds are used in fiscal year 2026, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, or the

Joint Fiscal Committee when the General Assembly is not in session, on the amount used.

* * * General Government * * *

Sec. E.100 POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of 12 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2026 for the following:

(1) Permanent classified positions:

(A) Office of the Attorney General:

(i) one Pre-charge Administrator.

(B) Office of the Secretary of State:

(i) one Administrative Services Coordinator IV.

(C) Green Mountain Care Board:

(i) one Reference-based Pricing Director;

(ii) one Reference-based Pricing Project Manager; and

(iii) one Operations, Procurement, and Contractual Oversight Manager.

(D) Department of Fish and Wildlife:

(i) one Fish and Wildlife Specialist.

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

(A) State Labor Relations Board:

(i) one Staff Attorney; and

(ii) one Labor Relations IT Staff.

(B) Office of the Attorney General:

(i) one Assistant Attorney General.

(C) Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs:

(i) one Financial and IT Specialist; and

(ii) two Transport Deputies.

(b) The establishment of four permanent positions to be established through existing vacant positions is authorized in fiscal year 2026 for the following:

(1) Permanent classified positions:

(A) Criminal Justice Council:

(i) one Canine Head Trainer.

(B) Cannabis Control Board:

(i) one Compliance and Enforcement Attorney.

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

(A) Human Rights Commission:

(i) one Intake Specialist; and

(ii) one Staff Attorney Investigator.

(c) The establishment of one classified limited service position is authorized in fiscal year 2026:

(1) Office of the State Treasurer:

(A) one Climate Superfund Specialist.

(d) The conversion of 11 limited service positions to permanent exempt status is authorized in fiscal year 2026 as follows:

(1) Land Use Review Board:

(A) two District Coordinators.

(2) Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs:

(A) six Deputy State's Attorneys;

(B) two Legal Assistants; and

(C) one Victim Advocate.

Sec. E.100.1 [Deleted.]

Sec. E.100.2 SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION; REPORT ON
STATUS OF FEDERAL FUNDS

(a) The Secretary of Administration shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July, September, and November 2025 meetings, and at other meetings as requested, on any reductions to federal revenues to the State and the status of any appropriations impacted by such reductions.

Sec. E.100.3 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT; CORONAVIRUS STATE
FISCAL RECOVERY FUND APPROPRIATIONS;
REPORTING

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Administration shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee on a quarterly basis, and upon the request of the

Committee, on the status of appropriations made from the American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund.

(1) Reports shall include information on:

(A) the original amounts appropriated;

(B) outstanding obligations against appropriations; and

(C) any remaining spending authority.

(b) In fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Administration shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee on a quarterly basis, and upon the request of the Committee, on the status of any new spending authority established pursuant to 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.106.

(1) Reports shall include information on:

(A) the original amounts appropriated;

(B) outstanding obligations against appropriations; and

(C) any remaining spending authority.

(c) Any spending authority established pursuant to 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.106(a) and (c) that remains unexpended and unencumbered on December 31, 2027 shall revert to the General Fund. Any unallocated balance resulting from this reversion shall be reserved in the General Fund Balance Reserve.

(d) The Secretary of Administration shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on or before January 15, 2028 on the amount reverted to the General Fund and reserved in the General Fund Balance Reserve pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

**Sec. E.105 AGENCY OF DIGITAL SERVICES; COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FUND TRANSFER**

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the Agency of Digital Services shall utilize from the Internal Service Fund appropriation in Sec. B.105 of this act an amount of funds equal to that transferred from the General Fund to the Communications and Information Technology Fund in this act to cover the costs of transitioning billable services from a service level agreement model to a core enterprise services model. To the extent to which these funds are insufficient to complete this transition, the Agency shall, as part of its fiscal year 2026 budget adjustment presentation, request an additional appropriation or transfer of funds and shall not bill other agencies or departments to cover the costs of the transition.

Sec. E.111 32 V.S.A. § 5824 is amended to read:

§ 5824. ADOPTION OF FEDERAL INCOME TAX LAWS

The statutes of the United States relating to the federal income tax, as in effect on December 31, 2023 2024, but without regard to federal income tax rates under 26 U.S.C. § 1, are hereby adopted for the purpose of computing the tax liability under this chapter and shall continue in effect as adopted until amended, repealed, or replaced by act of the General Assembly.

Sec. E.111.1 32 V.S.A. § 7402 is amended to read:

§ 7402. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter unless the context requires otherwise:

* * *

(8) “Laws of the United States” means the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended through December 31, 2023 2024. As used in this chapter, “Internal Revenue Code” has the same meaning as “laws of the United States” as defined in this subdivision. The date through which amendments to the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are adopted under this subdivision shall continue in effect until amended, repealed, or replaced by act of the General Assembly.

* * *

Sec. E.111.2 32 V.S.A. § 5861(c) is amended to read:

(c) Spouses or a surviving spouse ~~may~~ shall file a joint Vermont personal income tax return for any taxable year for which the spouses file or the surviving spouse ~~are permitted to file~~ files a joint federal income tax return under the laws of the United States, unless the Commissioner allows a different filing status.

Sec. E.111.3 TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS; TAX YEAR 2025

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for purposes of determining the tax-exempt status of an organization, Vermont tax laws for tax year 2025 shall follow 26 U.S.C. §§ 501–506 and all other federal statutory provisions, federal regulations, and federal case law relating to the determination of an organization’s tax-exempt status for purposes of federal income taxation, as in effect on April 1, 2025, regardless of any amendments or other changes affecting implementation or interpretation of those sections between April 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025, whether due to an act of Congress, federal regulation, federal bulletin, federal guidance, presidential executive order, federal administrative or judicial decision, or other federal source.

Sec. E.127 32 V.S.A. § 704 is amended to read:

§ 704. INTERIM BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENTS

(a) The General Assembly recognizes that acts of appropriations and their sources of funding reflect the priorities for expenditures of public funds enacted by the General Assembly and that major reductions or transfers, when required by reduced State revenues or other reasons, ought to be made whenever possible by an act of the General Assembly reflecting its revisions of those priorities. Nevertheless, the General Assembly also recognizes that when it is not in session, it may be necessary to reduce authorized appropriations and their sources of funding, and funds may need to be transferred, to maintain a balanced State budget. Under these limited circumstances, it is the intent of the General Assembly that appropriations may be reduced and funds transferred when the General Assembly is not in session pursuant to the provisions of this section.

(b)(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (f) of this section, in each instance that the official State revenue estimate for the General Fund, the Transportation Fund, or federal funds has been reduced by one percent or more from the estimates determined and assumed for purposes of the current fiscal year's appropriations, the Secretary of Administration shall prepare an expenditure reduction plan for consideration and approval by the Joint Fiscal Committee pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, provided that any total reductions in appropriations and transfers of funds are not greater than the reductions in the official State revenue estimate.

(2) In each instance that the official State revenue estimate for the General Fund, the Transportation Fund, or federal funds has been reduced by less than one percent from the estimates determined and assumed for purposes of the current fiscal year's appropriations, the Secretary of Administration may prepare and implement an expenditure reduction plan without the approval of the Joint Fiscal Committee, provided that any total reductions in appropriations and transfers of funds are not greater than the reductions in the official State revenue estimate. The Secretary may implement an expenditure reduction plan under this subdivision if plan reductions to the total amount appropriated in any section or subsection do not exceed five percent, the plan is designed to minimize any negative effects on the delivery of services to the public, and the plan does not have any unduly disproportionate effect on any single function, program, service, benefit, or county. Plans not requiring the approval of the Joint Fiscal Committee shall be filed with the Joint Fiscal Office prior to implementation. If the Secretary's plan consists of reductions greater than five percent to the total amount appropriated in any section or

subsection, such plan shall only be implemented in the manner provided for in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

* * *

Sec. E.127.1 32 V.S.A. § 133 is amended to read:

§ 133. DUTIES

(a) The Board shall have authority to make expenditures necessitated by unforeseen emergencies and may draw on the State's General Fund and General Fund Balance Reserve for that purpose.

(b) Pursuant to section 706 of this title, the Board shall also have authority to transfer appropriations made to other agencies and to use the transferred amounts to make expenditures necessitated by unforeseen emergencies.

(c) In a fiscal year, the sum of the Board's expenditures under subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall not exceed two percent of the total General Fund appropriation for the year of the expenditures.

Sec. E.127.2 32 V.S.A. § 308c is amended to read:

§ 308c. GENERAL FUND AND TRANSPORTATION FUND BALANCE
RESERVES

(a) There is hereby created within the General Fund a General Fund Balance Reserve, also known as the "Rainy Day Reserve." After satisfying the requirements of section 308 of this title, and after other reserve requirements have been met, any remaining unreserved and undesignated end of fiscal year General Fund surplus shall be reserved in the General Fund Balance Reserve. The General Fund Balance Reserve shall not exceed ~~five~~ 10 percent of the appropriations from the General Fund for the prior fiscal year without legislative authorization.

(1), (2) [Repealed.]

(3) Of the funds that would otherwise be reserved in the General Fund Balance Reserve under this subsection, the following amounts shall be reserved as necessary and transferred from the General Fund as follows:

(A) 25 percent to the Vermont State Retirement Fund established by 3 V.S.A. § 473; and

(B) 25 percent to the Postretirement Adjustment Allowance Account established in 16 V.S.A. § 1949a.

(b)(1) The General Assembly may specifically unreserve and appropriate ~~the use of up to 50 percent of the amounts added in the prior fiscal year from or transfer an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the General Fund Balance~~

Reserve to fund unforeseen or emergency needs. It is the intent of the General Assembly that any General Fund Balance Reserve funds utilized in accordance with this section be replenished.

(2) If the official State revenue estimates of the Emergency Board for the General Fund, determined under section 305a of this title, have been reduced by two percent or more from the estimates determined and assumed for purposes of the ~~general~~ appropriations act or budget adjustment act, funds in the General Fund Balance Reserve may be unreserved and appropriated or transferred to compensate for a reduction of revenues.

(c) There is hereby created within the Transportation Fund a Transportation Fund Balance Reserve. After satisfying the requirements of section 308a of this title, and after other reserve requirements have been met, any remaining unreserved and undesignated end of fiscal year Transportation Fund surplus shall be reserved in the Transportation Fund Balance Reserve. Monies from this Reserve shall be available for appropriation by the General Assembly.

(d) Determination of the amounts of the General Fund and Transportation Fund Balance Reserves shall be made by the Commissioner of Finance and Management and reported, along with the amounts appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, to the legislative Joint Fiscal Committee at its first meeting following September 1 of each year.

Sec. E.127.3 FEDERAL FUNDING; CALCULATION OF
APPROPRIATION REDUCTION; SECRETARY OF
ADMINISTRATION; JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Unduplicated appropriation" means the total appropriation set forth in this act for a governmental function excluding Global Commitment funds, Interdepartmental Transfer funds, and Internal Service funds. For purposes of this section, the determination of unduplicated appropriations shall not include Education Fund.

(2) "Governmental function unit" refers to the governmental function areas set forth in Sec. A.108 of this act.

(b) In each instance that a reduction in federal funds to the State results in:

(1) the unduplicated appropriation for each governmental function unit to decrease by less than one half of one percent, the Secretary of Administration shall notify the Joint Fiscal Committee.

(2) the unduplicated appropriation for any governmental function unit to decrease by one half to one percent:

(A) the Secretary of Administration shall prepare an expenditure reduction and transfer plan for consideration and approval by the Joint Fiscal Committee pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 704(e), provided that any total reductions in appropriations and transfers of funds are not greater than the reductions in federal funds; and

(B) to maintain a balanced State budget, minimize the impact to Vermonters and to abide by the legislative intent set forth by the General Assembly in this act, the Joint Fiscal Committee may make a recommendation to the Emergency Board to:

(i) pursuant to Sec. E.127.4 of this act, utilize the General Fund Balance Reserve or the appropriation set forth in Sec. B.1101(b)(2) of this act, or both, to support impacted programs at not more than the current fiscal year funding level until the General Assembly is in session;

(ii) revert any unexpended and unobligated funds; and

(iii) make such reductions or transfers in appropriations necessary to support the priorities of the General Assembly, and the recommended reduction is limited to not more than 10 percent of any fund or 10 percent of any appropriation.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, for the purpose of calculating any appropriation reduction that triggers the actions set forth in this section, the baseline federal funding amounts shall be the federal funding set forth in this act. The Secretary of Administration shall monitor any changes in federal funding as the difference between the baseline federal funding amount for use in fiscal year 2026 and any updated State federal funds revenue forecast adopted by the Emergency Board and shall calculate the percent reduction of the unduplicated appropriations for each governmental function unit.

Sec. E.127.4 EMERGENCY BOARD; REPLENISH REDUCED SPENDING AUTHORITY

(a) The Emergency Board, in response to a declared emergency pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 9 occurring while the General Assembly is not in session, or a reduction in State revenue estimates or federal funding pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 704(b) occurring while the General Assembly is not in session, may unreserve and make available an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the General Fund Balance Reserve to replenish the spending authority impacted by the declared emergency or reduction in funding in order to maintain a balanced State budget, minimize the impact to Vermonters, and to abide by the

legislative intent set forth by the General Assembly in the most recent fiscal year appropriations act. In no event shall the amount provided to any agency or department under this section exceed the original amount appropriated by the General Assembly.

Sec. E.127.5 FISCAL YEAR 2026 FEE REPORT; GENERAL
GOVERNMENT

(a) Fiscal year 2026 fee information. Agencies, departments, boards, and offices that receive appropriations in Secs. B.100-199, B.400-599, and B. 800-999 of this act shall, in collaboration with the Joint Fiscal Office, prepare a comprehensive fee report for each fee that is in effect in fiscal year 2026. The fee report shall contain the following information for each fee:

- (1) the statutory authorization and termination date, if any;
- (2) the current rate or amount of the fee and the date the fee was last set or adjusted by the General Assembly or Joint Fiscal Committee;
- (3) the Fund into which the fee revenues are deposited;
- (4) the amount of the revenues derived from the fee in each of the five fiscal years preceding fiscal year 2026;
- (5) the number of times that the fee was paid in each of the two fiscal years preceding fiscal year 2026;
- (6) a projection of the fee revenues in fiscal years 2026 and 2027;
- (7) a description of the service or product provided or the regulatory function performed by the agency, department, board or office supported by the fee;
- (8) the amount of the fee if adjusted for inflation from the last time the fee amount was modified using an appropriate index chosen in consultation with the Joint Fiscal Office. The inflation adjustment shall be calculated as the percentage change between the value of the index in the July of the year the fee was last adjusted by the General Assembly and July 2025;
- (9) if any portion of the fee revenue is deposited into a special fund, the percentage of the special fund's revenues that the fee represents;
- (10) any available information regarding comparable fees in other jurisdictions;
- (11) any policies or trends that might affect the viability of the fee amount; and
- (12) any other relevant considerations for setting the fee amount.

(b) Reports.

(1) The Joint Fiscal Office shall provide guidance as necessary to the agencies, departments, boards, and offices described in subsection (a) of this section on the methodology to be used for compiling the information requested in the fee reports. On or before October 15, 2025, the agencies, departments, boards, and offices described in subsection (a) of this section shall submit a draft report of the information required in subdivisions (a)(1)–(12) of this section to the Joint Fiscal Office for review. Agencies, departments, boards, and offices shall work with the Joint Fiscal Office to finalize the report before submitting the final report described in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) On or before December 15, 2025, the agencies, departments, boards, and offices described in subsection (a) shall submit a jointly prepared final report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Finance.

(3) If any of the information requested in this section cannot be provided for any reason, the agencies, departments, boards, and offices described in subsection (a) shall include in both the draft and final reports a written explanation for why the information cannot be provided.

(c) As used in this section, as it pertains to Executive Branch agencies, departments, boards, and offices, “fee” means any source of State revenue classified by the Department of Finance and Management Accounting System as “fees,” “business licenses,” “nonbusiness licenses,” and “fines and penalties.”

(d) Executive Branch fee report moratorium. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 605, in fiscal year 2026, the Governor shall not be required to submit the consolidated Executive Branch fee annual report and request to the General Assembly.

Sec. E.131 3 V.S.A. chapter 18 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 18. ~~VT~~ VERMONT SAVES

§ 531. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(3) “Covered employer” means a person, entity, or subsidiary engaged in a business, industry, profession, trade, or other enterprise in the State, whether for profit or not for profit, that ~~has~~ does not offered currently offer to an employee, or is within a control group that maintains or contributes to, ~~effective in form or operation at any time within the current calendar year or~~

~~two preceding calendar years~~, a specified tax-favored retirement plan. If an employer does not maintain a specified tax-favored retirement plan for a portion of a calendar year ending on or after the effective date of this chapter but does adopt such a plan for the remainder of that calendar year, the employer is not a covered employer for the remainder of the year. A covered employer does not include:

(A) the federal government, the State or any other state, any county or municipal corporation, or any of the State's or any other state's units or instrumentalities;

(B) any employer that has ~~not only~~ been in business during both the current calendar year ~~and the preceding calendar year~~.

(4) "ERISA" means the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended, 29 U.S.C § 1001 et seq.

(5) "Internal Revenue Code" means the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

(6) "IRA" means a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA.

(7) "Participant" means an individual who has an IRA under the Program.

(8) "Payroll deduction IRA or payroll deduction IRA arrangement" means an arrangement by which an employer allows employees to contribute to an IRA by means of payroll deduction.

(9) "Program" means the ~~VT~~ Vermont Saves Program established in accordance with this chapter.

* * *

§ 532. ~~VT~~ VERMONT SAVES PROGRAM; ESTABLISHMENT

(a) Establishment; purpose. There is established the ~~VT~~ Vermont Saves Program (Program), administered by the Office of the State Treasurer, for the purpose of increasing financial security for Vermonters by providing access to an IRA for Vermont employees of companies that do not currently offer a retirement savings program. The Program shall be designed to facilitate portability of benefits through withdrawals, rollovers, and direct transfers from an IRA and achieve economies of scale and other efficiencies to minimize costs. The Program shall:

* * *

(b) Type of IRA. The type of IRA to which contributions are made pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be a Roth IRA; provided, however, the Treasurer is authorized to add an option for all participants to:

(1) affirmatively elect to contribute to a traditional IRA instead of a Roth IRA; or

(2) open both a Roth IRA and a traditional IRA.

(c) Contributions.

(1) Unless otherwise specified by the covered employee, a covered employee shall automatically initially contribute five percent of the covered employee's salary or wages to the Program. A covered employee may elect to opt out of the Program at any time or contribute at any higher or lower rate, expressed as a percentage of salary or wages, or, as permitted by the Treasurer, expressed as a flat dollar amount, subject in all cases to the IRA contribution and eligibility limits applicable under the Internal Revenue Code at no additional charge.

(2) The Treasurer shall provide for, on a uniform basis, an annual increase of each active participant's contribution rate, by not less than one percent, but not more than eight percent, of salary or wages each year. Any such increases shall apply to active participants, including participants by default with an option to opt out or participants who are initiated by affirmative participant election, provided that any increase is subject to the IRA contribution and eligibility limits applicable under the Internal Revenue Code.

* * *

Sec. E.131.1 29 V.S.A. chapter 61 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 61. MUNICIPAL EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLE LOAN FUND

§ 1601. MUNICIPAL EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLE LOAN FUND

(a) There is hereby created the Municipal Equipment and Vehicle Loan Fund for the purpose of providing loans on favorable terms to municipalities for the purchase of ~~construction, fire, emergency, or heavy equipment or motorized highway building and maintenance equipment, heavy equipment, and authorized emergency vehicles as set forth in 23 V.S.A. § 4.~~

(b) The Municipal Equipment and Vehicle Loan Fund shall be administered by a committee composed of the State Treasurer and the State Traffic Committee established by 19 V.S.A. § 1(24), pursuant to policies and procedures approved by the Traffic ~~this Committee established by 19 V.S.A. § 1(24) with administrative support from the Office of the State Treasurer.~~

The Committee shall establish criteria for distribution of available loan funds among municipalities considering at least financial need, equitable geographic distribution, and ability to repay. The Fund shall be a revolving fund and all principal and interest earned on loans and the fund balance remaining in the Fund at the end of any fiscal year shall ~~not revert but be carried over in the Fund~~ available for use in the succeeding fiscal year. The Committee shall meet upon request of the Treasurer to consider applications.

§ 1602. APPLICATION; LOANS; CONDITIONS

(a) Application forms shall be furnished by the Committee on request. Upon Committee approval of an application of a municipality or two or more municipalities applying jointly for purchases as set forth in subsection 1601(a) of this title, the State Treasurer may loan money from the Fund to ~~that municipality or municipalities for the purchase of equipment. Purchases of equipment eligible for loans~~ the applicants. Loans from the Fund shall ~~have be~~ used on equipment and vehicles with a useful life of at least five years and a purchase price of at least \$20,000.00 ~~but shall not be eligible for loans in excess of \$150,000.00 from this Fund.~~

(b) The State Treasurer is authorized to establish terms and conditions, including repayment schedules of up to five years for loans from the Fund to ensure repayment of loans to the Fund. The amount of any loan shall be not more than 75 percent of the purchase price or \$150,000, whichever is lower. Before a municipality may receive a loan from the Fund, it shall give to the State Treasurer security for the repayment of the funds. The security shall be in such form and amount as the Treasurer may determine and may include a lien on the equipment or emergency vehicle financed by the loan.

(c) The rates of interest shall be as established by this section to assist municipalities in purchasing equipment upon terms more favorable than in the commercial market. Such rates shall be not more than two percent per annum for a loan to a single municipality, and loans shall bear no interest charge if made to two or more municipalities purchasing equipment jointly.

(d) In any fiscal year, new loans from the ~~Municipal Equipment Loan Fund~~ shall not exceed an aggregate of \$1,500,000.00. ~~The Treasurer shall put forth recommendations to the General Assembly on maximum loan amount every five years, commencing January 15, 2028, based on requests received and loans granted pursuant to this chapter.~~

(e) When a municipality suffers the destruction of more than one piece of equipment or a vehicle at or near the same time or suffers some unanticipated hardship relating to the equipment or vehicle and the Committee finds that replacement would place an undue financial hardship on the municipality, the

Committee may waive one or both of the following loan limiting factors in subsection (b) of this section:

- (1) the \$150,000 annual limitation on each municipality; or
- (2) the 75 percent of the purchase price limitation.

(f) The State Treasurer shall put forth recommendations to the General Assembly on the maximum individual loan amount from the Fund every five years, commencing on January 15, 2028, based on requests received and loans granted pursuant to this chapter in the five preceding years.

* * *

Sec. E.131.2 32 V.S.A. § 1001 is amended to read:

§ 1001. CAPITAL DEBT AFFORDABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

* * *

(c) Committee estimate of a prudent amount of net State tax-supported debt; affordability considerations. On or before September 30 of each year , the Committee shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly the Committee's estimate of net State tax-supported debt that prudently may be authorized for the next fiscal year, together with a report explaining the basis for the estimate. The Committee's estimate shall not take into consideration the balance remaining at the end of each fiscal year in the subaccounts of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments, established pursuant to section 1001b of this title. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the report to be made under this subsection. In developing its annual estimate, and in preparing its annual report, the Committee shall consider:

* * *

(4) The criteria that recognized bond rating agencies use to judge the quality of issues of State bonds, including:

(A) existing and projected total debt service on net tax-supported debt as a percentage of combined General and Transportation Fund revenues, excluding surpluses in these revenues that may occur in an individual fiscal year; and

(B) existing and projected total net tax-supported debt outstanding as a percentage of total State personal income;

(C) existing and projected pension and other postemployment benefit liability metrics; and

(D) other metrics at the Committee's discretion, including long-term liabilities not covered in subdivisions (A)–(C) of this subdivision (4).

(5) The principal amounts currently outstanding, and balances for the next fiscal year, and annually for the following nine fiscal years, of existing:

(A) obligations of instrumentalities of the State for which the State has a contingent or limited liability;

(B) any other long-term debt of instrumentalities of the State not secured by the full faith and credit of the State, or for which the General Assembly is permitted to replenish reserve funds; and

(C) to the maximum extent obtainable, all long-term debt of municipal governments in Vermont that is secured by general tax or user fee revenues.

(6) The impact of capital spending upon the economic conditions and outlook for the State.

(7) The cost-benefit of various levels of debt financing, types of debt, and maturity schedules.

(8) Any projections of capital needs authorized or prepared by the Agency of Transportation, the Joint Fiscal Office, or other agencies or departments.

(9) Any other factor that is relevant to:

(A) the ability of the State to meet its projected debt service requirements for the next five fiscal years; or

(B) the interest rate to be borne by the credit rating on, or other factors affecting the marketability of State bonds.

(10) The effect of authorizations of new State debt on each of the considerations of this section.

(11) The capital asset depreciation ratio reflecting unfunded capital maintenance costs.

* * *

Sec. E.133 VERMONT STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
AND VERMONT PENSION INVESTMENT COMMISSION;
OPERATING BUDGET, SOURCE OF FUNDS

(a) Of the \$3,288,093 appropriated in Sec. B.133 of this act, \$2,247,471 constitutes the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System operating budget, and \$1,040,622 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension

Investment Commission's budget attributable to the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System.

Sec. E.134 VERMONT MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT
SYSTEM AND VERMONT PENSION INVESTMENT
COMMISSION; OPERATING BUDGET; SOURCE OF FUNDS

(a) Of the \$1,901,020 appropriated in Sec. B.134 of this act, \$1,494,924 constitutes the Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System operating budget, and \$406,096 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's budget attributable to the Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System.

Sec. E.134.1 [Deleted.]

Sec. E.134.2 [Deleted.]

Sec. E.139 GRAND LIST LITIGATION ASSISTANCE

(a) Of the appropriation in Sec. B.139 of this act, \$9,000 shall be transferred to the Attorney General and \$70,000 shall be transferred to the Department of Taxes' Division of Property Valuation and Review and used with any remaining funds from the amount previously transferred for final payment of expenses incurred by the Department or towns in defense of grand list appeals regarding the reappraisals of the hydroelectric plants and other expenses incurred to undertake utility property appraisals in Vermont.

Sec. E.142 PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

(a) This appropriation is for State payments in lieu of property taxes under 32 V.S.A. chapter 123, subchapter 4, and the payments shall be calculated in addition to and without regard to the appropriations for correctional facilities elsewhere in this act. Payments in lieu of taxes under this section shall be paid from the PILOT Special Fund under 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

Sec. E.142.1 32 V.S.A. § 3709 is amended to read:

§ 3709. PILOT SPECIAL FUND

(a) There is hereby established a PILOT Special Fund consisting of local option tax revenues paid to the Treasurer pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138. This Fund shall be managed by the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to chapter 7, subchapter 5 of this title. Notwithstanding subdivision 588(3) of this title, all interest earned on the Fund shall be retained in the Fund for use in meeting future obligations. The Fund shall be exclusively for payments required under chapter 123, ~~subchapter~~ subchapters 4 and 4C of this title, and for any additional State payments in lieu of taxes for correctional facilities ~~and to the~~

~~City of Montpelier.~~ The Commissioner of Finance and Management may draw warrants for disbursements from this Fund in anticipation of receipts.

* * *

Sec. E.142.2 32 V.S.A. chapter 123, subchapter 4C is added to read:

Subchapter 4C. Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program

§ 3710. MUNICIPAL GRAND LIST STABILIZATION PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program within the Department of Taxes to reimburse municipalities for municipal property taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title for flood-prone properties acquired by a municipality pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 51 or a prior voluntary buyout program operated by the Division of Emergency Management.

(b) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Public Safety shall certify to the Commissioner of Taxes the properties eligible for the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program and shall submit any other information required by the Commissioner of Taxes. To be eligible for the Program under this subchapter, a municipality must have acquired an eligible property on or after July 1, 2023 and preserved the property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall first certify properties to the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to this subsection on or before September 1, 2025.

(c) Upon notification by the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Commissioner of Taxes shall certify the payment amounts and make an annual payment to each municipality for each eligible property to compensate for the loss of municipal property tax. The payment shall be calculated using the grand list value of the acquired property for the year during which the property was either damaged by flooding or identified as flood-prone by the Commissioner of Public Safety, multiplied by the municipal tax rate, including any submunicipal tax rates, in effect each year. This payment shall be made on or before January 1 of each year for five years.

(d) A property shall not be eligible for reimbursement payments for more than 10 years. The Commissioner shall make an annual payment for the full amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section for five years. After a municipality has received payments for an eligible property for five consecutive years, the Commissioner shall make an annual payment to the municipality for any subsequent year of eligibility in an amount equal to one-half of the amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section.

(e) Payment under this section shall be calculated and issued from the PILOT Special Fund under section 3709 of this title only after all other grants under subchapter 4 of this chapter are calculated and issued. If the PILOT Special Fund balance is insufficient to pay the full amount of all payments authorized under this subchapter, then payments calculated under this section and due to each municipality for each property shall be reduced proportionately.

Sec. E.142.3 20 V.S.A. § 51 is added to read:

§ 51. FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTIES; ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Division of Emergency Management and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall establish and maintain the Voluntary Buyout Program for flood-prone properties. The Program shall allow a municipality, at the request of the owner of a flood-prone property, to apply for funding to cover the purchase price of the property. The purchase price shall be the full fair market value of the flood-prone property. The municipality shall maintain the acquired property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property.

Sec. E.144 PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES; CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

(a) Payments in lieu of taxes under this section shall be paid from the PILOT Special Fund under 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

Sec. E.200 ATTORNEY GENERAL

(a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Office of the Attorney General, Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit, is authorized to retain, subject to appropriation, one-half of the State share of any recoveries from Medicaid fraud settlements, excluding interest, that exceed the State share of restitution to the Medicaid Program. All such designated additional recoveries retained shall be used to finance Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit activities.

(b) Of the revenue available to the Attorney General under 9 V.S.A. § 2458(b)(4), \$1,802,200 is appropriated in Sec. B.200 of this act.

Sec. E.200.1 9 V.S.A. § 2473 is amended to read:

§ 2473. NOTICE OF SOLICITATION

* * *

(f)(1) For each calendar year in which a paid fundraiser solicits in this State on behalf of a charitable organization, the paid fundraiser shall pay a registration fee of ~~\$500.00~~ \$675 to the Attorney General ~~no not~~ later than ~~ten~~ 10 days prior to its first solicitation in this State.

(2) Each notice of solicitation filed in accordance with this section shall be accompanied by a fee of ~~\$200.00~~ \$270. In the case of a campaign lasting more than 12 months, an additional ~~\$200.00~~ \$270 fee shall be paid annually on or before the date of the anniversary of the commencement of the campaign.

(3) Fees paid under this subsection shall be deposited in a special fund managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, and shall be available to the Attorney General for the costs of administering sections 2471–2479 of this title.

Sec. E.200.2 18 V.S.A. § 4632 is amended to read:

§ 4632. DISCLOSURE OF ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES AND GIFTS
BY MANUFACTURERS OF PRESCRIBED PRODUCTS

* * *

(b)(1) Annually on or before April 1, the Office of the Attorney General shall collect a ~~\$500.00~~ \$765 fee from each manufacturer of prescribed products filing annual disclosures of expenditures greater than zero described in subsection (a) of this section.

(2) Fees collected under this section shall fund collection and analysis of information on activities related to the marketing of prescribed products under section 4631a of this title and under this section. The fees shall be collected in a special fund assigned to the Office.

* * *

Sec. E.208 PUBLIC SAFETY; ADMINISTRATION

(a) The Commissioner of Public Safety is authorized to enter into a performance-based contract with the Essex County Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement service activities agreed upon by both the Commissioner of Public Safety and the Sheriff.

Sec. E.208.1 PUBLIC SAFETY; CAPITAL PLAN

(a) As part of its fiscal year 2027 budget presentation, the Department of Public Safety shall submit a capital plan for the replacement of firearms and mobile and portable radio equipment to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

Sec. E.208.2 VERMONT COMMUNITY RADIO GRANT PROGRAM(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Vermont's seven active community radio stations currently serve over 200,000 Vermonters, many in rural and underserved areas.

(2) Community radio stations have consistently provided critical information during emergencies, including Tropical Storm Irene, recent severe flooding, and other natural disasters.

(3) These stations operate with small budgets, primarily relying on volunteer staff and listener donations, and are ineligible for federal funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting due to their size.

(4) Upcoming FCC-approved stations in Bristol, Richmond-Underhill-Jericho, and Ludlow will expand coverage to nearly all Vermont counties, increasing statewide accessibility to vital community radio services.

(5) Investment in these stations strengthens Vermont's public safety network and promotes civic engagement by providing local, hyper-focused content that commercial and statewide media cannot replicate.

(b) Intent. The intent of this section is to ensure Vermont's community radio stations remain resilient and prepared to serve as lifelines during emergencies while fostering local engagement and preserving Vermont's unique community fabric.

(c) Grant program.

(1) The Vermont Community Radio Grant Program is established to provide one-time funding to community radio stations for the purpose of:

(A) upgrading equipment and infrastructure necessary for reliable emergency broadcasting;

(B) procuring and installing backup generators; and

(C) enhancing operational sustainability through software improvements and technical training.

(2) The Program shall be administered by the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Broadcasters.

(3) Grants shall be allocated as follows:

(A) up to \$25,000 per station for seven active community radio stations; and

(B) up to \$10,000 per station for three upcoming stations currently under construction.

(4) To be eligible for a grant under the Program, an applicant shall:

(A) be a nonprofit, noncommercial community radio station licensed in Vermont;

(B) demonstrate a history of providing emergency broadcasting services or show the capacity to provide those services upon funding; and

(C) submit a detailed implementation plan for the proposed use of grant funding.

(d) Report. On or before June 30, 2026, a community radio station that receives a grant under the Program shall provide to the Commissioner of Public Safety a report detailing the:

(1) use of grant funds, including itemized expenses;

(2) improvements achieved in emergency readiness and operational capacity; and

(3) impact on community service and engagement.

Sec. E.209 PUBLIC SAFETY; STATE POLICE

(a) Of the General Fund appropriation in Sec. B.209, \$35,000 shall be available to the Southern Vermont Wilderness Search and Rescue Team, which is composed of the State Police, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, county sheriffs, and local law enforcement personnel in Bennington, Windham, and Windsor Counties, for snowmobile enforcement.

(b) Of the General Fund appropriation in Sec. B.209 of this act, \$405,000 is allocated for grants in support of the Drug Task Force. Of this amount, \$190,000 shall be used by the Vermont Drug Task Force to fund three town task force officers. These town task force officers shall be dedicated to enforcement efforts with respect to both regulated drugs as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 4201(29) and the diversion of legal prescription drugs. Any unobligated funds may be allocated by the Commissioner to fund the work of the Drug Task Force or be carried forward.

(c) Of the General Fund appropriation in Sec. B.209 of this act, \$2,100,000 is allocated exclusively for the purchase, outfitting, assignment, and disposal of State Police vehicles.

Sec. E.212 PUBLIC SAFETY; FIRE SAFETY

(a) Of the General Fund appropriation in Sec. B.212 of this act, \$55,000 shall be granted to the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the purpose of designing dry hydrants.

Sec. E.215 MILITARY; ADMINISTRATION

(a) The amount of \$1,319,834 shall be disbursed to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for the National Guard Tuition Benefit Program established in 16 V.S.A. § 2857.

Sec. E.219 MILITARY; VETERANS' AFFAIRS

(a) Of the funds appropriated in Sec. B.219 of this act, \$1,000 shall be used for continuation of the Vermont Medal Program; \$2,000 shall be used for the expenses of the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council; \$7,500 shall be used for the Veterans' Day parade; and \$10,000 shall be granted to the American Legion for the Boys' State and Girls' State programs.

Sec. E.232 SECRETARY OF STATE; VERMONT ACCESS NETWORK
BUDGET

(a) The Secretary of State shall grant the \$1,350,000 General Fund appropriation, provided in Section B.232 of this act, to the Vermont Access Network to maintain current operations and programming.

Sec. E.232.1 SECRETARY OF STATE; LOCAL CIVIC JOURNALISM
AWARDS

(a) As part of its civic engagement and education activities, the Office of the Secretary of State shall, in collaboration with the University of Vermont Center for Community News, make cash awards to local civic journalism organizations or businesses with funds appropriated to it in Sec. B.1100(aa)(1) of this act. The Office of the Secretary of State shall, in collaboration with the University of Vermont Center for Community News, establish award criteria and assemble a panel of three to five journalists, academics, and industry veterans who neither work for eligible organizations nor are eligible to receive awards themselves to determine award recipients. Awards shall be made in amounts between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

Sec. E.236.1 LIQUOR AND LOTTERY; APPROPRIATION; BUSINESS
-TO-BUSINESS WEBSITE

(a) Of the funds appropriated in Sec. B.236.1 of this act, \$1,820,000 Enterprise Fund shall be used for the business-to-business website design and implementation to improve the ordering and payment for on-premise licensees.

Sec. E.300 FUNDING FOR THE OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE
ADVOCATE, VERMONT LEGAL AID

(a) Of the funds appropriated in Sec. B.300 of this act:

(1) \$2,000,406 shall be used for the contract with the Office of the Health Care Advocate;

(2) \$1,717,994 for Vermont Legal Aid services, including the Poverty Law Project and mental health services; and

(3) \$650,000 is for the purposes of maintaining current Vermont Legal Aid program capacity and addressing increased requests for services, including eviction prevention and protection from foreclosure and consumer debt.

Sec. E.300.1 REPORT; RESIDENTIAL BEDS FOR YOUTH

(a) As part of their fiscal year 2027 budget presentations to the General Assembly, the Agency of Human Services and departments within the Agency of Human Services shall provide coordinated information regarding:

(1) the basis for the projected number of beds per facility to create 41 new beds for youth in high-end facilities under the Departments for Children and Families, of Mental Health, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for inpatient, psychiatric residential, stabilization, and treatment services, including projected reductions in out-of-state placements;

(2) the status of capacity at lower level residential and crisis facilities and their capabilities in preventing higher level needs if investments would enable full capacity use; and

(3) a projected five-year operating budget across the Agency and departments for full utilization of the new high-end system components as currently planned, including:

(A) costs to the Department of Vermont Health Access' budget; and

(B) how these costs will impact the overall budgets for lower-level, community-based, prevention, and other services needed to prevent escalation to higher levels of care.

Sec. E.300.2 EVALUATION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE
OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES AT COMMUNITY-BASED
SERVICE PROVIDERS; REPORT

(a) The Agency of Human Services shall evaluate the organizational and funding structures of certain community-based service providers to identify opportunities for coordinating and consolidating functions across providers in order to achieve operational efficiencies and cost savings.

(1) The community-based service providers that the Agency shall evaluate pursuant to this section may include area agencies on aging, community action agencies, designated and specialized service agencies, and parent-child centers.

(2) The functions that the Agency considers for potential coordination or consolidation may include human resources responsibilities, business processes, information technology systems, contracting and other legal services, and other functions that the Agency finds are being carried out by or on behalf of many community-based service providers in this State and that may be able to be performed more efficiently and cost-effectively across multiple service providers.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committees on Appropriations, Health Care, and Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with the results of its evaluation and its findings and recommendations for ways in which specific functions may be coordinated or consolidated across community-based service providers in order to achieve operational efficiencies and cost savings.

Sec. E.300.3 SETTLEMENT FUNDS; PRIMARY CARE; LEGISLATIVE
INTENT; REPORT

(a) On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations regarding the funding mechanism used to distribute \$11,000,000 from the University of Vermont Medical Center to non-hospital primary care providers pursuant to the Settlement Agreement entered into by the University of Vermont Medical Center, Inc., University of Vermont Health Network, Inc., and the Green Mountain Care Board in April 2025 and regarding the timing of the fund distribution.

(b) Following receipt of the report set forth in subsection (a) of this section, it is the intent of the General Assembly to identify funds appropriated by this act to address shortfalls in primary care investments in fiscal year 2026 that may be duplicated by the distribution of settlement funds described in subsection (a) of this section and that can be redirected through the fiscal year 2026 budget adjustment act to provide additional supports to providers of primary care, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and other health care services in this State.

Sec. E.301 SECRETARY'S OFFICE; GLOBAL COMMITMENT

(a) The Agency of Human Services shall use the funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act for payment required under the intergovernmental agreement between the Agency of Human Services and the managed care entity, the Department of Vermont Health Access, as provided for in the Global Commitment for Health Waiver approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under Section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

(b) In addition to the State funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, a total estimated sum of \$27,887,533 is anticipated to be certified as State matching funds as follows:

(1) \$24,714,000 certified State match available from local education agencies for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment. This amount, combined with \$35,286,000 of federal funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, equals a total estimated expenditure of \$60,000,000. An amount equal to the amount of the federal matching funds for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment shall be transferred from the Global Commitment Fund to the Medicaid Reimbursement Special Fund established by 16 V.S.A. § 2959a.

(2) \$3,173,533 certified State match available from local designated mental health and developmental services agencies for eligible mental health services provided under Global Commitment.

(c) Up to \$4,997,210 is transferred from the Agency of Human Services Federal Receipts Holding Account to the Interdepartmental Transfer Fund consistent with the amount appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act.

Sec. E.301.1 GLOBAL COMMITMENT APPROPRIATIONS; TRANSFER;
REPORT

(a) To facilitate fiscal year 2026 closeout, the Secretary of Human Services, with the approval of the Secretary of Administration, may make transfers among the appropriations authorized for Medicaid and Medicaid waiver program expenses, including Global Commitment appropriations outside the Agency of Human Services. At least three business days prior to any transfer, the Agency of Human Services shall submit to the Joint Fiscal Office a proposal of transfers to be made pursuant to this section. A final report on all transfers made under this section shall be made to the Joint Fiscal Committee for review at the Committee's September 2026 meeting. The purpose of this section is to provide the Agency with limited authority to modify the appropriations to comply with the terms and conditions of the Global Commitment section 1115 demonstration approved by the Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services under section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

Sec. E.301.2 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 72a, as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.105, 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.301.2, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.300.2, is further amended to read:

Sec. 72a. MEDICAID HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES
(HCBS) PLAN

* * *

(f) The Global Commitment Fund appropriated in subsection (e) of this section obligated in fiscal years 2023, 2024, ~~and 2025, and 2026~~ for the purposes of bringing HCBS plan spending authority forward into fiscal year ~~years~~ 2024, ~~and fiscal year~~ 2025, ~~and 2026~~, respectively. The funds appropriated in subsections (b), (c), and (e) of this section may be transferred on a net-neutral basis in fiscal years 2023, 2024, ~~and 2025, and 2026~~ in the same manner as the Global Commitment appropriations in 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. E.301. The Agency shall report to the Joint Fiscal Committee in September 2023, September 2024, ~~and September 2025, and September 2026~~, respectively, on transfers of appropriations made and final amounts expended by each department in fiscal years 2023, 2024, ~~and 2025, and 2026~~, respectively, and any obligated funds carried forward to be expended in fiscal year ~~years~~ 2024, ~~and fiscal year~~ 2025, ~~and 2026~~, respectively.

Sec. E.301.3 GLOBAL COMMITMENT FUND; HOSPITAL DIRECTED
PAYMENT PROGRAM

(a) The Agency of Human Services may seek a State Directed Payment model with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This payment model will be for a Hospital Directed Payment program. Upon approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Agency of Human Services' Department of Vermont Health Access, the University of Vermont, and the University of Vermont Medical Center may enter into a mutual agreement on the implementation of the Hospital Directed Payment program.

(b) If the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approves a Vermont Hospital Directed Payment program within the State's Global Commitment to Health Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver in fiscal year 2026 while the General Assembly is not in session, then, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511 and notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Department of Finance and Management may approve the Agency of Human Services' allocation and expenditure of excess receipts for Global Commitment Fund

spending up to the amount approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for the Vermont Hospital Directed Payment program.

(c) In fiscal year 2026, the Agency of Human Services may, to the extent permitted under federal law, to reasonably manage the timing of federal fiscal year 2026 Disproportionate Share Hospital payments to hospitals due to the impact the Vermont Hospital Directed Payment program payments received in fiscal year 2026 may have on hospitals' eligibility for Disproportionate Share Hospital payments.

(d) The Agency of Human Services shall report on the status of the Vermont Hospital Directed Payment program, the expenditure of excess receipts, and the status of the program's potential impacts on Disproportionate Share Hospital payments at the September and November 2025 meetings of the Joint Fiscal Committee.

Sec. E.301.4 FISCAL YEAR 2026 RATE INCREASES; EFFECTIVE
DATES

(a) The appropriations made in Secs. B.301, B.307, B.313, B.314, B.330, B.333, B.334, and B.334.1 of this act for rate increases for community providers shall take effect on November 1, 2025.

(b) The appropriation made in Sec. B.307 of this act for rate increases for Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics shall take effect on November 1, 2025.

Sec. E.306 NURSING HOMES; SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES;
EXTRAORDINARY FINANCIAL RELIEF

(a) On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access' Division of Rate Setting shall submit a report to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare containing proactive measures and targeted interventions that may be used to reduce the use and amount of future extraordinary financial relief for nursing homes.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Departments of Vermont Health Access and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living shall present to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare on the following:

(1) the number and name of all nursing homes in the State, including:

(A) whether a nursing home is a for-profit or nonprofit organization and the owner's contact information;

(B) the payer mix of each nursing home;

(C) the ratio of employees versus contracted traveler positions at each nursing home and the specific job titles of the contracted traveler positions; and

(D) the average length of patient stay at each nursing home;

(2) the number of skilled nursing facilities seeking extraordinary financial relief in fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025; and

(3) the number of skilled nursing facilities receiving extraordinary financial relief in fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025, including:

(A) the name of each skilled nursing facility;

(B) whether a skilled nursing facility receiving extraordinary financial relief is a for-profit or nonprofit organization;

(C) the amount of extraordinary financial relief received by each skilled nursing facility;

(D) the reason extraordinary financial relief was sought by each skilled nursing facility; and

(E) the reason extraordinary financial relief was awarded to each skilled nursing facility.

Sec. E.306.1 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.306.4 is amended to read:

Sec. E.306.4 MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS; INCOME
ELIGIBILITY

(a) The Agency of Human Services shall make the following changes to the Medicare Savings Programs:

(1) increase the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program income threshold to 145 150 percent of the federal poverty level; and

(2) increase the Qualifying Individual Program income threshold to the maximum percent of the federal poverty level allowed under federal law based on the increase to the income threshold for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

Sec. E.306.2 OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE VERMONT HEALTH
BENEFIT EXCHANGE

(a) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall maintain open enrollment for the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange from November 1, 2025 through January 15, 2026. The Department of Vermont Health Access and

registered carriers shall allow a period of one calendar month beyond the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' deadline of December 15, 2025 for 2026 plan selection in order to encourage enrollment and to allow enrollees to make plan selection changes.

Sec. E.306.3 33 V.S.A. § 1811 is amended to read:

§ 1811. HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SMALL EMPLOYERS

* * *

(m) A registered carrier shall allow for the enrollment through the Exchange of an individual, and of any individual who is eligible for coverage under the terms of the health benefit plan because of a relationship to the individual, who is eligible for advance payments of federal premium tax credits under 26 U.S.C. § 36B, and whose household income is expected to be no greater than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment may take place at any time during the benefit year.

Sec. E.307 33 V.S.A. § 1902 is amended to read:

§ 1902. QUALIFICATION FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

* * *

(b) Workers with disabilities whose income is less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level shall be eligible for Medicaid. The income also must not exceed the Medicaid protected income level for one or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment level for two, whichever is higher, after disregarding the earnings of the working individual with disabilities; Social Security disability insurance benefits, including Social Security retirement benefits converted automatically from Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), if applicable; any veteran's disability benefits; and, if the working individual with disabilities is married, all income of the spouse. ~~Earnings of the working individual with disabilities shall be documented by evidence of Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax payments, Self-Employment Contributions Act tax payments, or a written business plan approved and supported by a third-party investor or funding source.~~ Vermont Medicaid shall verify earnings of the working individual with disabilities. The Agency shall adopt rules governing the verification of earned income of the working individual with disabilities. The resource limit for this program shall be \$10,000.00 for an individual and \$15,000.00 for a couple at the time of enrollment in the program. Assets attributable to earnings made after enrollment in the program shall be disregarded.

Sec. E.307.1 MEDICAID PROGRAM EMERGENCY RULEMAKING

(a) The Agency of Human Services may adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to amend Vermont's rules regarding the Medicaid program and the operation of the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange in response to state and federal law. The Agency may use the emergency rules process pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 844, but only in the event that new state or federal law require Vermont to amend or adopt its rules in a time frame that cannot be accomplished under the traditional rulemaking process. An emergency rule adopted under these exigent circumstances shall be deemed to meet the standard for the adoption of emergency rules required pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 844(a).

Sec. E.311 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 109, Sec. 4 is amended to read:

Sec. 4. ~~SUNSET OF STATE YOUTH COUNCIL~~

~~3 V.S.A. § 3097 (State Youth Council) is repealed on February 1, 2026. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. E.312 HEALTH; PUBLIC HEALTH

(a) HIV/AIDS funding:

(1) In fiscal year 2026 and as provided in this section, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of \$475,000 in AIDS Medication Rebates special funds to the Vermont AIDS service and peer-support organizations for client-based support services. The Department of Health AIDS Program shall meet at least quarterly with the Community Advisory Group with current information and data relating to service initiatives. The funds shall be allocated according to a Request for Proposal process.

(2) In fiscal year 2026, and as provided by this section, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of \$295,000 from the General Fund for HIV and Harm Reduction Services to the following organizations:

(A) Vermont CARES: \$140,000;

(B) AIDS Project of Southern Vermont: \$100,000; and

(C) HIV/HCV Resource Center: \$55,000.

(3) Ryan White Title II funds for AIDS services and the Vermont Medication Assistance Program shall be distributed in accordance with federal guidelines. The federal guidelines shall not apply to programs or services funded solely by State General Fund.

(A) The Secretary of Human Services shall immediately notify the Joint Fiscal Committee if at any time there are insufficient funds in Vermont Medication Assistance Program to assist all eligible individuals. The Secretary

shall work in collaboration with persons living with HIV/AIDS to develop a plan to continue access to Vermont Medication Assistance Program medications until such time as the General Assembly can take action.

(B) As provided in this section, the Secretary of Human Services shall work in collaboration with the Vermont Medication Assistance Program Advisory Committee, which shall be composed of not less than 50 percent of members who are living with HIV/AIDS. If a modification to the program's eligibility requirements or benefit coverage is considered, the Committee shall make recommendations regarding the program's formulary of approved medication, related laboratory testing, nutritional supplements, and eligibility for the program.

(4) In fiscal year 2026, the Department of Health shall provide grants in the amount of \$400,000 General Fund for HIV and Harm Reduction Services not later than September 1, 2025. The method by which these prevention funds are distributed shall be determined by mutual agreement of the Department of Health and the Vermont AIDS service organizations and other Vermont HIV/AIDS prevention providers.

(5) In fiscal year 2026, the Department of Health shall not reduce any grants to the Vermont AIDS service and peer-support organizations or syringe service programs from funds appropriated for HIV/AIDS services to levels below those in fiscal year 2025 without receiving prior approval from the Joint Fiscal Committee.

Sec. E.312.1 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.100, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 87, Sec. 56, is further amended to read:

Sec. E.100 EXECUTIVE BRANCH POSITIONS

(a) The establishment of 75 permanent positions is authorized in fiscal year 2024 for the following:

* * *

(2) Permanent exempt positions:

* * *

(F) Office of the State Treasurer:

(i) one Director – ~~VT Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;

and

(ii) one Communications and Outreach Manager – ~~VT Saves~~ Economic Empowerment Division;

* * *

(d) The establishment of 23 new exempt limited service positions is authorized in fiscal year 2024 as follows:

* * *

(2) ~~Agency of Administration~~ Department of Health – Health Equity Advisory Commission:

(A) one Private Secretary.

* * *

Sec. E.312.2 3 V.S.A. § 5003 is amended to read:

§ 5003. DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY

(a) The Executive Director of Racial Equity (Director) shall work with the agencies and departments to implement a program of continuing coordination and improvement of activities in State government in order to combat systemic racial disparities and measure progress toward fair and impartial governance, including:

(1) overseeing a comprehensive organizational review to identify systemic racism in each of the three branches of State government and inventory systems in place that engender racial disparities;

(2) managing and overseeing the statewide collection of race-based data to determine the nature and scope of racial discrimination within all systems of State government; and

(3) developing a model fairness and diversity policy and reviewing and making recommendations regarding the fairness and diversity policies held by all State government systems; ~~and~~

(4) ~~temporarily overseeing the establishment of the Health Equity Advisory Commission established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 252 until the Office of Health Equity is established.~~

* * *

Sec. E.312.3 18 V.S.A. § 252 is amended to read:

§ 252. HEALTH EQUITY ADVISORY COMMISSION

* * *

(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Commission shall:

(1) provide guidance on the development of the Office of Health Equity, ~~which shall be established based on the Advisory Commission's recommendations not later than January 1, 2023,~~ including on:

-
- (A) the structure, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the Office;
 - (B) whether the Office shall be independent and, if not, in which State agency or department it shall be situated;
 - (C) how the Office shall be staffed;
 - (D) the populations served and specific issues addressed by the Office; and
 - (E) the duties of the Office, including how grant funds shall be managed and distributed; ~~and~~
 - ~~(F) the time frame and necessary steps to establish the Office;~~
- (2) provide advice and make recommendations to the Office of Health Equity, Commissioner, and General Assembly once established, including input on:
- (A) any rules or policies proposed by the Office or Department of Health;
 - (B) the awarding of grants and the development of programs and services;
 - (C) the needs, priorities, programs, and policies relating to the health of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities; and
 - (D) any other issue on which the Office of Health Equity, Department of Health, or General Assembly requests assistance from the Advisory Commission;
- (3) review, monitor, and advise all State agencies regarding the impact of current and emerging State policies, procedures, practices, laws, and rules on the health of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;
- (4) identify and examine the limitations and problems associated with existing laws, rules, programs, and services related to the health status of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities;
- (5) advise the Department of Health and the General Assembly on any funding decisions relating to eliminating health disparities and promoting health equity, including the distribution of federal monies related to COVID-19;

(6) to the extent funds are available for the purpose, distribute grants that stimulate the development of community-based and neighborhood-based projects that will improve the health outcomes of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities; and

(7) advise the General Assembly on efforts to improve cultural competency, cultural humility, and antiracism in the health care system through training and continuing education requirements for health care providers and other clinical professionals.

(d) Assistance. The Advisory Commission shall have the administrative, legal, and technical assistance of the ~~Agency of Administration at the request of the Executive Director of Racial Equity~~ Department of Health.

* * *

(f) Meetings.

(1) ~~The Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Commission to occur on or before September 1, 2021.~~

(2) The Advisory Commission shall select a chair and vice chair at its first meeting and annually thereafter.

~~(3)~~(2) The Advisory Commission shall adopt procedures to govern its proceedings, including voting procedures and how the staggered terms shall be apportioned among members.

~~(4)~~(3) All meetings of the Advisory Commission and any subcommittees of the Advisory Commission shall be open to the public with opportunities for public comment provided on a regular basis.

* * *

(h) Compensation and reimbursement. Appointed members of the Advisory Commission shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for meetings ~~as deemed appropriate by the Advisory Commission within the appropriation provided.~~ These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the ~~Agency of Administration~~ Department of Health.

Sec. E.312.4 18 V.S.A. § 254 is added to read:

§ 254. OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

(a) There is established the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health for the purpose of eliminating avoidable and unjust disparities in

health among Vermonters. The Office shall use a systemic and comprehensive approach that addresses those social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health outcomes.

(b) The Office of Health Equity shall be directed by an Executive Director, an individual who shall be qualified by reason of education, expertise, and experience and who may have a professional degree in public health, social or environmental justice, or a related field. The Executive Director shall serve on a full-time basis and shall be exempt from classified service.

Sec. E.312.5 18 V.S.A. § 4812 is added to read:

§ 4812. SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION SPECIAL FUND

(a) The Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund is established and managed by the Vermont Department of Health in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5.

(b) Thirty percent of the revenues raised by the cannabis excise tax imposed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 7902, not to exceed \$10,000,000 per fiscal year, shall be deposited into this fund for substance misuse prevention costs.

(c) Any unencumbered and unexpended spending authority reverted in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 703 may be immediately re-established the following fiscal year in accordance with 32 V.S.A. § 511.

(d) Notwithstanding any provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5 to the contrary, all interest earned by this fund shall be retained by this fund.

Sec. E.312.6 SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION FUNDING; REPEAL

(a) 32 V.S.A. § 7909 (substance misuse prevention funding) is repealed.

Sec. E.312.7 PREVENTION EXPENDITURES; REPORT

(a) On or before January 15, 2026, the Department of Health shall, in consultation with other departments of the Agency of Human Services, provide a report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with information on total or estimated expenditures made by the State on substance use prevention efforts in fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026.

(1) The report shall include information on the following:

(A) all State and federal funds, including special funds, monies have been appropriated from or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts;

(B) the total amounts appropriated from the funds specified in subdivision (1)(A) of this section or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts;

(C) the recipients of appropriations made from the funds specified in subdivision (1)(A) of this section or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts or the beneficiaries of grants or subgrants and how monies have been used both according to policy priorities and expenditure category;

(D) the amount of monies appropriated from the funds specified in subdivision (1)(A) of this section or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts that have been obligated;

(E) the amount of monies appropriated from the funds specified in subdivision (1)(A) of this section or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts that remain unencumbered or unexpended; and

(F) the extent to which monies appropriated from the funds specified in subdivision (1)(A) of this section or otherwise designated for substance use prevention efforts are subject to reversion or any federal obligation deadlines.

Sec. E.316 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.316 is amended to read:

Sec. E.316 **STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP; FACILITY
PLANNING FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH**

(a) The Department for Children and Families, in consultation with the Department of Buildings and General Services, shall assemble a stakeholder working group to provide regular input on the planning, design, development, and implementation of the temporary stabilization facility for youth and on the development of a long-term plan for the high-end system of care.

* * *

(f) The stakeholder working group shall cease to exist on June 30, ~~2025~~ 2027.

Sec. E.316.1 33 V.S.A. § 125 is added to read:

§ 125. BUDGETARY INFLATION; DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Annually, as part of its budget presentation, the Department shall inform the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare the cost of adding a one percent increase over the previous fiscal year's funding for community-contracted direct service providers.

Sec. E.316.2 SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAMS; REPORT

(a) On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner for Children and Families and the Chief Superior Judge shall jointly submit a report to the House Committees on Human Services and on Judiciary and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Judiciary containing a proposal for funding supervised visitation programs. The proposal shall address and recommend sustainable funding for statewide coordination, equitable funding among supervised visitation locations, and access for residents of counties that do not currently provide supervised visitation services. The Commissioner and Chief Superior Judge shall consult the Center for Crime Victim Services, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and supervised visitation providers in the preparation of the report.

Sec. E.317 33 V.S.A. § 4922 is amended to read:

§ 4922. RULEMAKING

(a) On or before September 1, ~~2025~~ 2026, the Commissioner shall file proposed rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 implementing the provisions of this subchapter to become effective on April 1, ~~2026~~ 2027. These shall include:

- (1) rules setting forth criteria for determining whether to conduct an assessment or an investigation;
- (2) rules setting out procedures for assessment and service delivery;
- (3) rules outlining procedures for investigations;
- (4) rules for conducting the administrative review conference;
- (5) rules regarding access to and maintenance of Department records of investigations, assessments, reviews, and responses;
- (6) rules regarding the tiered Registry as required by section 4916 of this title;
- (7) rules requiring notice and appeal procedures for alternatives to substantiation; and
- (8) rules implementing subsections 4916(c) and (e) of this title.

(b) The rules shall strike an appropriate balance between protecting children and respecting the rights of a parent or guardian, including a parent or guardian with disabilities, and shall recognize that persons with a disability can be successful parents. The rules shall include the possible use of adaptive equipment and supports.

~~(c) These rules shall be adopted no later than July 1, 2009.~~

Sec. E.318 33 V.S.A. § 3505 is amended to read:

§ 3505. SUPPLEMENTAL CHILD CARE GRANTS

(a)(1) The Commissioner for Children and Families may ~~reserve~~ utilize up to one-half of one percent of ~~the child care family assistance program~~ funds appropriated for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program in a fiscal year for extraordinary financial relief to assist child care programs that are at risk of closing due to financial hardship. The Commissioner shall develop guidelines for providing assistance and shall prioritize extraordinary financial relief to child care programs in areas of the State with high poverty and low access to high quality child care. If the Commissioner determines a child care program is at risk of closure because its operations are not fiscally sustainable, ~~he or she~~ they may provide assistance to transition children served by the child care operator in an orderly fashion and to help secure other child care opportunities for children served by the program in an effort to minimize the disruption of services. The Commissioner has the authority to request tax returns and other financial documents to verify the financial hardship and ability to sustain operations.

* * *

Sec. E.321 GENERAL ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY HOUSING

(a) To the extent emergency housing is available and within the funds appropriated, the Commissioner for Children and Families shall ensure that General Assistance Emergency Housing is provided in fiscal year 2026 to households that attest to lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and have a member who:

(1) is 65 years of age or older;

(2) has a disability that can be documented by:

(A) receipt of Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance; or

(B) a form developed by the Department as a means of documenting a qualifying disability or health condition that requires:

(i) the applicant's name, date of birth, and the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number or other identifying number;

(ii) a description of the applicant's disability or health condition;

(iii) a description of the risk posed to the applicant's health, safety, or welfare if temporary emergency housing is not authorized pursuant to this section; and

(iv) a certification of a health care provider, as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9481, that includes the provider's credentials, credential number, address, and phone number;

(3) is a child 19 years of age or under;

(4) is pregnant;

(5) has experienced the death of a spouse, domestic partner, or minor child that caused the household to lose its housing;

(6) has experienced a natural disaster, such as a flood, fire, or hurricane;

(7) is under a court-ordered eviction or constructive eviction due to circumstances over which the household has no control; or

(8) is experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, hate violence, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a household member that caused the household to lose its housing.

(b)(1) General Assistance Emergency Housing shall be provided in a community-based shelter whenever possible. If there is inadequate community-based shelter space available within the Agency of Human Services district in which the household presents itself, the household shall be provided emergency housing in a hotel or motel within the district, if available, until adequate community-based shelter space becomes available in the district. The utilization of hotel and motel rooms pursuant to this subdivision shall be capped at 1,100 rooms per night between July 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025 and between April 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026.

(2) The maximum number of days that an eligible household receives emergency housing in a hotel or motel under this section, per 12-month period, shall not exceed 80 days.

(3) The Department shall provide emergency winter housing to households meeting the eligibility criteria in subsection (a) of this section between December 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026. Emergency housing in a hotel or motel provided pursuant to this subdivision shall not count toward the maximum days of eligibility per 12-month period provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(4)(A) Notwithstanding any rule or law to the contrary, the Department shall require all households applying for or receiving General Assistance Emergency Housing to engage in their own search for and accept any available alternative housing placements. All applicants and eligible households shall regularly provide information to the Department, not less frequently than

monthly, about their efforts to secure an alternative housing placement. If the Department determines that a household, at the time of application or during the term of the household's authorization, has not made efforts to secure an alternative housing placement, or has access to an alternative housing placement, the Department shall deny the application or terminate the authorization at the end of the current authorization period.

(B) For purposes of this subdivision (4), "alternative housing placements" may include shelter beds and pods; placements with family or friends; permanent housing solutions, including tiny homes, manufactured homes, and apartments; residential treatment beds for physical health, long-term care, substance use, or mental health; nursing home beds; and recovery homes.

(c) Emergency housing provided pursuant to this section shall replace the catastrophic and noncatastrophic categories previously adopted by the Department in rule.

(d) Emergency housing required pursuant to this section may be provided through approved community-based shelters, new unit generation, open units, licensed hotels or motels, or other appropriate shelter space. The Department shall, when available, prioritize emergency housing at housing or shelter placements other than hotels or motels.

(e) Case management services provided by case managers employed by or under contract with the Agency of Human Services or reimbursed through an Agency-funded grant shall include assisting clients with finding appropriate housing.

(f) The Commissioner for Children and Families shall apply the General Assistance Emergency Housing rules approved by the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules on March 13, 2025 for the administration of this section.

(g) On or before the last day of each month from July 2025 through June 2026, the Department for Children and Families, or other relevant agency or department, shall continue submitting a similar report to that due pursuant to 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 81, Sec. 6(b) to the Joint Fiscal Committee, House Committee on Human Services, and Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. Additionally, this report shall include the Department's monthly expenditure on General Assistance Emergency Housing.

(h) For emergency housing provided in a hotel or motel beginning on July 1, 2024 and thereafter, the Department for Children and Families shall not pay a hotel or motel establishment more than the hotel's lowest advertised room rate and not more than \$80 a day per room to shelter a household experiencing

homelessness. The Department for Children and Families may shelter a household in more than one hotel or motel room depending on the household's size and composition.

(i) The Department for Children and Families shall apply the following rules to participating hotels and motels:

(1) Section 2650.1 of the Department for Children and Families' General Assistance (CVR 13-170-260);

(2) Department of Health, Licensed Lodging Establishment Rule (CVR 13-140-023); and

(3) Department of Public Safety, Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code (CVR 28-070-001).

(j)(1) The Department for Children and Families may work with either a shelter provider or a community housing agency to enter into a full or partial facility lease or sales agreement with a hotel or motel provider. Any facility conversion under this section shall comply with the Office of Economic Opportunity's shelter standards.

(2) If the Department for Children and Families determines that a contractual agreement with a licensed hotel or motel operator to secure temporary emergency housing capacity is beneficial to improve the quality, cleanliness, or access to services for those households temporarily housed in the facility, the Department shall be authorized to enter into such an agreement in accordance with the per-room rate identified in subsection (h) of this section; provided, however, that in no event shall such an agreement cause a household to become unhoused. The Department for Children and Families may include provisions to address access to services or related needs within the contractual agreement.

(k) Of the amount appropriated to implement this section, not more than \$500,000 shall be used for security costs.

(l) As used in this section:

(1) "Community-based shelter" means a shelter that meets the Vermont Housing Opportunity Grant Program's Standards of Provision of Assistance.

(2) "Household" means an individual and any dependents for whom the individual is legally responsible and who live in Vermont. "Household" includes individuals who reside together as one economic unit, including those who are married, parties to a civil union, or unmarried.

Sec. E.321.1 CONTRACTING FOR EMERGENCY SHELTER
OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

(a) In contracting with emergency shelter organizations for operations and services, the Department for Children and Families shall prioritize contracts with organizations that are in close proximity to the community served to ensure that an organization familiar with the specific needs of a community serve its population of unhoused residents.

Sec. E.324 EXPEDITED CRISIS FUEL ASSISTANCE

(a) The Commissioner for Children and Families or designee may authorize crisis fuel assistance to those income-eligible households that have applied for an expedited seasonal fuel benefit but have not yet received it if the benefit cannot be executed in time to prevent them from running out of fuel. The crisis fuel grants authorized pursuant to this section count toward the crisis fuel grants allowed per household for the winter heating season pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 2609(b).

Sec. E.325 DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES; OFFICE
OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

(a) Of the General Fund appropriation in Sec. B.325 of this act, \$29,343,655 shall be used by the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to issue grants to community agencies to assist individuals experiencing homelessness by preserving existing services, increasing services, or increasing resources available statewide. These funds may be granted alone or in conjunction with federal Emergency Solutions Grants funds. Grant decisions and the administration of funds shall be done in consultation with the two U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-recognized continuum of care programs.

Sec. E. 326 DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES; OFFICE
OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY; WEATHERIZATION
ASSISTANCE

(a) Of the special fund appropriation in Sec. B.326 of this act, \$750,000 is for the replacement and repair of home heating equipment.

Sec. E.329 33 V.S.A. § 506 is added to read:

§ 506. BUDGETARY INFLATION; DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Annually, as part of its budget presentation, the Department shall inform the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare the cost of adding a one percent increase over the previous fiscal year's funding for community-contracted direct service providers.

Sec. E.333 DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES; PAYMENT REFORM

(a) The Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living's payment reform process for developmental disability services shall not be implemented prior to July 1, 2026.

(b) Between July 1, 2025 and implementation of the payment reform process for developmental disability services, the Department shall align conflict-free case management with the existing payment model.

Sec. E.338 CORRECTIONS; CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

(a) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 3709(a), the special fund appropriation of \$152,000 for the supplemental facility payments to Newport and Springfield shall be paid from the PILOT Special Fund under 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

Sec. E.338.1 [Deleted.]

Sec. E.338.2 CORRECTIONS; TREATMENT-FOCUSED FACILITY

(a) The \$250,000 General Fund appropriated to the Department of Corrections in Sec. B.1100(i)(1) of this act shall be used to retain a consultant and develop an implementation plan to transition the Northeast Correctional Complex or the Caledonia County Work Camp, or parts of either or of both, to a treatment-focused facility for incarcerated Vermonters.

(b) On or before December 1, 2025, the Department of Corrections shall submit a written report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee concerning the consultant's findings and recommendations related to transitioning either the Northeast Correctional Complex or the Work Camp, or parts of either or of both, to a treatment-focused facility. The report shall contain the following:

(1) a detailed transition plan;

(2) expected outcomes and measures of success;

(3) an assessment of how transitioning either the Northeast Correctional Complex or Caledonia County Work Camp, or parts of either or of both, to a treatment-focused facility aligns with best practices for residential treatment programs; and

(4) input from the Department's current medical providers, including an analysis of how the program developed would impact any contract with the Department's third-party medical provider.

Sec. E.345 18 V.S.A. § 9374(h) is amended to read:

(h)(1)(A) Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions (1)(C) and (2) of this subsection (h), the expenses of the Board shall be borne as follows:

(i) 40.0 percent by the State from State monies;

(ii) ~~28.8~~ 36.0 percent by the hospitals;

(iii) ~~23.2~~ 24.0 percent by nonprofit hospital and medical service corporations licensed under 8 V.S.A. chapter 123 or 125, health insurance companies licensed under 8 V.S.A. chapter 101, and health maintenance organizations licensed under 8 V.S.A. chapter 139; ~~and~~

(iv) ~~8.0 percent by accountable care organizations.~~

(B) Expenses under subdivision (A)(iii) of this subdivision (1) shall be allocated to persons licensed under Title 8 based on premiums paid for health care coverage, which for the purposes of this subdivision (1) shall include major medical, comprehensive medical, hospital or surgical coverage, and comprehensive health care services plans, but shall not include long-term care, limited benefits, disability, credit or stop loss, or excess loss insurance coverage.

(C) ~~Expenses~~ Amounts assessed pursuant to the provisions of ~~section~~ sections 9441 and 9382 of this title shall not be assessed in accordance with the formula set forth in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1).

(2) The Board may determine the scope of the incurred expenses to be allocated pursuant to the formula set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection if, in the Board's discretion, the expenses to be allocated are in the best interests of the regulated entities and of the State.

(3) If the amount of the proportional assessment to any entity calculated in accordance with the formula set forth in subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection would be less than \$150.00, the Board shall assess the entity a minimum fee of \$150.00. The Board shall apply the amounts collected based on the difference between each applicable entity's proportional assessment amount and \$150.00 to reduce the total amount assessed to the regulated entities pursuant to subdivisions (1)(A)(ii)-(iv)(iii) of this subsection.

* * *

Sec. E.500 EDUCATION; FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

(a) The Global Commitment appropriation in Sec. B.500 of this act shall be used for physician claims for determining medical necessity of Individualized Education Programs. These services are intended to increase

access to quality health care for uninsured persons, underinsured persons, and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Sec. E.500.1 AGENCY OF EDUCATION; EDUCATION
TRANSFORMATION FUNDING

(a) The \$1,000,000 General Fund appropriated to the Agency of Education in Sec. B.500 of this act is to provide additional resources during the State's education transformation. Prior to the expenditure of these funds, the Agency shall submit a detailed, unambiguous plan of expenditures related to the transformation of the public education system to the Joint Fiscal Committee, which shall consult with the chairs of the House and Senate Committees on Education when reviewing the Agency's plan.

Sec. E.502 EDUCATION; SPECIAL EDUCATION: FORMULA GRANTS

(a) Of the appropriation authorized in Sec. B.502 of this act, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, an amount not to exceed \$5,236,200 shall be used by the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 as funding for 16 V.S.A. § 2967(b)(2)-(6). In distributing such funds, the Secretary shall not be limited by the restrictions contained within 16 V.S.A. § 2969(c) and (d).

(b) Of the appropriation authorized in Sec. B.502 of this act, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 shall be used by the Agency of Education in fiscal year 2026 as funding for 16 V.S.A. § 2975. In distributing such funds, the Secretary shall not be limited by the restrictions contained within 16 V.S.A. § 2969(c) and (d).

Sec. E.503 EDUCATION; STATE-PLACED STUDENTS

(a) The Independence Place Program of ANEW Place shall be considered a 24-hour residential program for the purposes of reimbursement of education costs.

Sec. E.504 ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

(a) Of the appropriation in Sec. B.504 of this act, \$3,958,344 General Fund shall be granted to adult education and literacy providers, pursuant to the Adult Education and Secondary Credential Program established in 16 V.S.A. § 945.

Sec. E.504.1 EDUCATION; FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 4025, of the Education Fund appropriation in Sec. B.504.1 of this act, the amount of:

(1) \$921,500 is available for dual enrollment programs notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 944(f)(2);

(2) \$2,400,000 is available to support the Vermont Virtual High School;

(3) \$400,000 is available for secondary school reform grants;

(4) \$4,200,000 is available for Early College pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 947(b); and

(5) \$2,638,896 is available for the Adult Education and Secondary Credential Program.

(b) Of the appropriation in Sec. B.504 of this act, \$921,500 from the General Fund is available for dual enrollment programs.

Sec. E.504.2 16 V.S.A. § 4011 is amended to read:

§ 4011. EDUCATION PAYMENTS

(a) Annually, the General Assembly shall appropriate funds to pay for statewide education spending and a portion of a base education amount for each adult education and secondary credential program student.

(b) For each fiscal year, the base education amount shall be \$6,800.00, increased by the most recent New England Economic Project Cumulative Price Index, as of November 15, for state and local government purchases of goods and services from fiscal year 2005 through the fiscal year for which the amount is being determined, plus an additional one-tenth of one percent.

* * *

(f) ~~Annually, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program from funds appropriated for this subsection to the Agency in an amount equal to 26 percent of the base education amount for each student who completes the diagnostic portions of the an adult education and secondary credential program, based on an average of the previous two years; 40, the Secretary shall pay to a local adult education and literacy provider, as defined in section 942 of this title, that provides an adult education and secondary credential program an amount that shall be calculated pursuant to the funding formula contained in the State Board of Education adult education rules. Forty percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the Education Fund and 60 percent of the payment required under this subsection shall be from State funds appropriated from the General Fund.~~

* * *

Sec. E.504.3 ADULT EDUCATION; FUNDING; REPORT

(a) On or before December 1, 2025, the Agency of Administration and Agency of Education, in consultation with local adult education and literacy providers, shall jointly submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations with recommendations to modernize adult education funding to ensure funds are distributed equitably across all regions of the State.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary of Administration shall make a recommendation to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations on any updates to the adult education funding formula pursuant to the recommendations made in the report in subsection (a) of this section. The Secretary of Administration shall also make a recommendation on any administrative changes to adult education, including which agency or department outside of the Agency of Education is best suited to manage adult education grants.

(c) For fiscal year 2026, the Agency of Education shall negotiate in good faith to extend the existing contracts with local adult education and literacy providers for a term of one year. The Agency of Education shall endeavor to maintain the terms of the existing contracts to the greatest extent possible.

Sec. E.507.1 ENGLISH LEARNER; CATEGORICAL AID

(a) The funds appropriated in Sec. B.507.1 of this act shall be used to provide categorical aid to school districts for English Learner services, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 4013.

Sec. E.511 EDUCATION; TECHNICAL EDUCATION

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. 1561(c) and (d) or any other provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2026 career technical center supplemental assistance grants shall be calculated using the fiscal year 2025 base education amount.

Sec. E.514 STATE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

(a) In accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 1944(g)(2), the annual contribution to the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System shall be \$212,752,627, of which \$199,377,627 shall be the State's contribution and \$13,375,000 shall be contributed from local school systems or educational entities pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 1944c.

(b) In accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 1944(c)(2), of the annual contribution, \$41,414,649 is the “normal contribution” and \$171,337,978 is the “accrued liability contribution.”

Sec. E.514.1 VERMONT STATE TEACHERS’ RETIREMENT SYSTEM
AND VERMONT PENSION INVESTMENT COMMISSION;
OPERATING BUDGET; SOURCE OF FUNDS

(a) Of the \$3,810,655 appropriated in Sec. B.514.1 of this act, \$2,719,271 constitutes the Vermont State Teachers’ Retirement System operating budget, and \$1,091,384 constitutes the portion of the Vermont Pension Investment Commission’s budget attributable to the Vermont State Teachers’ Retirement System.

Sec. E.515 RETIRED TEACHERS’ HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL
BENEFITS

(a) In accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 1944b(b)(2) and 16 V.S.A. § 1944b(h)(1), the annual contribution to the Retired Teachers’ Health and Medical Benefits plan shall be \$79,952,589, of which \$71,052,589 shall be the State’s contribution and \$8,900,000 shall be from the annual charge for teacher health care contributed by employers pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §1944d. Of the annual contribution, \$24,712,382 is the “normal contribution” and \$55,240,207 is the “accrued liability contribution.”

Sec. E.600 UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

(a) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall issue warrants to pay 1/12 of the appropriation in Sec. B.600 of this act to the University of Vermont on or about the 15th day of each calendar month of the year.

(b) Of this appropriation, \$380,362 shall be transferred to the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) to comply with State matching fund requirements necessary for the receipt of available federal or private funds, or both.

Sec. E.602 VERMONT STATE COLLEGES

(a) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall issue warrants to pay 1/12 of the appropriation in Sec. B.602 of this act to the Vermont State Colleges on or about the 15th day of each calendar month of the year.

(b) Of this appropriation, \$427,898 shall be transferred to the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center to comply with State matching fund requirements necessary for the receipt of available federal or private funds, or both.

Sec. E.602.1 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. E.602.2, as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 67, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.101, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113 Sec. E.602.1, is further amended to read:

Sec. E.602.2 VERMONT STATE COLLEGES

(a) The Vermont State College (VSC) system shall transform itself into a fully integrated system that achieves financial stability in a responsible and sustainable way in order to meet each of these strategic priorities:

* * *

(b) VSC shall meet the following requirements during the transformation of its system required under subsection (a) of this section and shall accommodate the oversight of the General Assembly in so doing.

(1) VSC shall reduce its structural deficit by \$5,000,000.00 per year for three years and by \$3,500,000.00 ~~per year for the following two years year~~ through a combination of annual operating expense reductions and increased enrollment revenues, for a total ~~\$22,000,000.00~~ \$18,500,000 by the end of fiscal year 2026. These reductions shall be structural in nature and shall not be met by use of one-time funds. The VSC Board of Trustees, through the Chancellor or designee, shall report the results of these structural reductions to the House and Senate Committees on Education and on Appropriations annually during the Chancellor's budget presentation.

* * *

Sec. E.603 VERMONT STATE COLLEGES; ALLIED HEALTH

(a) If Global Commitment Fund monies are unavailable, the total grant funding for the Vermont State Colleges shall be maintained through the General Fund or other State funding sources.

(b) The Vermont State Colleges shall use the Global Commitment appropriation in Sec. B.603 of this act to support the dental hygiene, respiratory therapy, and nursing programs that graduate approximately 315 health care providers annually. These graduates deliver direct, high-quality health care services to Medicaid beneficiaries or uninsured or underinsured persons.

Sec. E.605 VERMONT STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

(a) Of the funds appropriated to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in Sec. B.605 of this act:

(1) \$25,000 shall be deposited into the Trust Fund established in 16 V.S.A. § 2845;

(2) not more than \$300,000 may be used by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for a student aspirational initiative to serve one or more high schools; and

(3) not less than \$1,000,000 shall be used to continue the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program established in 2022 Act and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 14.

(b) Of the funds appropriated to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in Sec. B.605 of this act that remain after accounting for the expenditures set forth in subsection (a) of this section, not less than 93 percent shall be used for direct student aid.

(c) After accounting for the expenditures set forth in subsection (a) of this section, up to seven percent of the funds appropriated to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in Sec. B.605 of this act or otherwise currently or previously appropriated to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation or provided to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation by an agency or department of the State for the administration of a program or initiative may be used by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for its costs of administration. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation may recoup its reasonable costs of collecting the forgivable loans in repayment. Funds shall not be used for indirect costs. To the extent that any of these funds are federal funds, allocation for expenses associated with administering the funds shall be consistent with federal grant requirements.

**Sec. E.605.1 NEED-BASED STIPEND FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT AND
EARLY COLLEGE STUDENTS**

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 4025, the sum of \$41,225 Education Fund and \$41,225 General Fund is appropriated to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for dual enrollment and need-based stipend purposes to fund a flat-rate, need-based stipend or voucher program for financially disadvantaged students enrolled in a dual enrollment course pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 944 or in early college pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 946 to be used for the purchase of books, cost of transportation, and payment of fees. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall establish the criteria for program eligibility. Funds shall be granted to eligible students on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall report on the program to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Commerce and Economic Development and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

Sec. E.715 REPEALS; SUNSET OF PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX
CLEAN WATER SURCHARGE

(a) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.10 (sunset of clean water surcharge), as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, is repealed.

(b) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.11(a)(5) (effective date of sunset of clean water surcharge) is repealed.

Sec. E.715.1 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.1(b) is amended to read:

(b) Purpose and intent.

(1) The purpose of Secs. I.1–I.12 of this act is to promote the development and improvement of housing for Vermonters.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly:

(A) to extend the clean water surcharge to provide ~~an interim~~ a source of revenue for addressing water quality issues throughout the State; and

(B) to continue its work on identifying a long-term funding source or sources that are sufficient in scope and targeted in design to address these water quality issues; ~~and~~

~~(C) once one or more long-term funding sources are identified and enacted, but not later than July 1, 2027, to reduce the amount of the clean water surcharge to 0.04 percent.~~

Sec. E.715.2 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.12 is amended to read:

Sec. I.12. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Secs. I.1–I.12 shall take effect on July 1, 2017, ~~except that Sec. I.10 (allocating clean water surcharge revenue to Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund) shall take effect on July 1, 2027.~~

Sec. E.715.3 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.7(d) is amended to read:

(d) To compensate for this reduction of available property transfer tax revenue, it is the intent of the General Assembly through this act to provide for the transfer of \$2,500,000.00 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, as follows:

(1) Sec. D.100 of this act appropriates \$11,304,840.00 in fiscal year 2018 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Upon the effective date of this act, \$1,500,000.00 shall revert to the Fund, resulting in a fiscal year 2018 total appropriation to the Board of \$9,804,840.00. In fiscal year 2018 only, the amount of \$1,500,000.00 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(2) As provided in Sec. I.9 of this act, ~~from July 1, 2017 until July 1, 2027~~, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602a, the first \$1,000,000.00 in revenue generated by the clean water surcharge of ~~0.2~~ 0.22 percent shall be transferred to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. In fiscal year 2018 only, the Commissioner shall transfer the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund to the General Fund.

(3) ~~After July 1, 2027, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602a as amended in Sec. I.10 of this act, \$1,000,000.00 in total revenue generated by the clean water surcharge of 0.04 percent shall be transferred to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. [Repealed.]~~

(4) ~~As provided in Sec. I.11 of this act, the clean water surcharge will be repealed in its entirety on July 1, 2039. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. E.900 19 V.S.A. § 11a is amended to read:

§ 11a. ~~TRANSPORTATION FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THE~~
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY FUND APPROPRIATIONS

(a) No transportation funds shall be appropriated for the support of government other than for the Agency, the Board, Transportation Pay Act Funds, construction of transportation capital facilities, transportation debt service, and the operation of information centers by the Department of Buildings and General Services, ~~and the Department of Public Safety. The amount of transportation funds appropriated to the Department of Public Safety shall not exceed:~~

- ~~(1) \$25,250,000.00 in fiscal year 2014;~~
- ~~(2) \$22,750,000.00 in fiscal years 2015 and 2016;~~
- ~~(3) \$21,150,000.00 in fiscal year 2017; and~~
- ~~(4) \$20,250,000.00 in fiscal year 2018 and in succeeding fiscal years.~~

~~(b) In fiscal year 2018 and in succeeding fiscal years, of the funds appropriated to the Department of Public Safety pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the amount of \$2,100,000.00 is allocated exclusively for the purchase, outfitting, assignment, and disposal of State Police vehicles. Any unexpended and unencumbered funds remaining in this allocation at the close of a fiscal year shall revert to the Transportation Fund. The Department of Public Safety may periodically recommend to the General Assembly that this allocation be adjusted to reflect market conditions for the vehicles and equipment.~~

Sec. E.917 TOWN HIGHWAY NON-FEDERAL DISASTERS; PILOT
FUND

(a) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 3709(a), the amount of \$1,150,000 is appropriated in fiscal year 2026 from the PILOT Special Fund established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3709 to the Agency of Transportation for the Town Highway Non-Federal Disasters Program.

(b) The amounts appropriated pursuant to this section shall only be spent for the purpose of providing grants in relation to non-federal disasters pursuant to the provisions of 19 V.S.A. § 306(d). Any amounts appropriated pursuant to this section that remain unused at the close of fiscal year 2026 shall revert to the PILOT Special Fund established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

* * * Fiscal Year 2025 Adjustments, Appropriations, and Amendments * * *

Sec. F.100 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.105 is amended to read:

Sec. B.105 Agency of digital services - communications and information
technology

Personal services	82,994,362	82,994,362
Operating expenses	<u>62,547,212</u>	<u>61,761,212</u>
Total	145,541,574	144,755,574
Source of funds		
General fund	209,808	209,808
Special funds	511,723	511,723
Internal service funds	<u>144,820,043</u>	<u>144,034,043</u>
Total	145,541,574	144,755,574

Sec. F.101 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.145 is amended to read:

Sec. B.145 Total general government

Source of funds		
General fund	117,405,610	117,405,610
Transportation fund	4,292,149	4,292,149
Special funds	31,882,209	31,882,209
Federal funds	1,467,374	1,467,374
Internal service funds	<u>214,635,950</u>	<u>213,849,950</u>
Interdepartmental transfers	7,053,789	7,053,789
Enterprise funds	4,298	4,298
Pension trust funds	4,800,305	4,800,305
Private purpose trust funds	<u>1,329,205</u>	<u>1,329,205</u>
Total	382,870,889	382,084,889

Sec. F.102 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.204 is amended to read:

Sec. B.204 Judiciary

Personal services	58,439,095	58,827,799
Operating expenses	12,479,384	14,640,960
Grants	<u>121,030</u>	<u>121,030</u>
Total	71,039,509	73,589,789
Source of funds		
General fund	63,414,698	65,964,978
Special funds	4,503,401	4,503,401
Federal funds	953,928	953,928
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>2,167,482</u>	<u>2,167,482</u>
Total	71,039,509	73,589,789

Sec. F.103 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.205 is amended to read:

Sec. B.205 State's attorneys

Personal services	17,309,679	17,548,979
Operating expenses	<u>2,034,016</u>	<u>2,202,516</u>
Total	19,343,695	19,751,495
Source of funds		
General fund	18,734,634	19,142,434
Federal funds	31,000	31,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>578,061</u>	<u>578,061</u>
Total	19,343,695	19,751,495

Sec. F.104 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.206.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.206.1 Crime Victims Advocates

Personal services	3,016,156	3,016,156
Operating expenses	<u>104,396</u>	<u>142,396</u>
Total	3,120,552	3,158,552
Source of funds		
General fund	<u>3,120,552</u>	<u>3,158,552</u>
Total	3,120,552	3,158,552

Sec. F.105 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.208 is amended to read:

Sec. B.208 Public safety - administration

Personal services	4,620,756	5,397,783
Operating expenses	<u>6,022,923</u>	<u>6,022,923</u>
Total	10,643,679	11,420,706
Source of funds		
General fund	6,179,193	8,092,770

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1347

Special funds	4,105	4,105
Federal funds	396,362	396,362
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,064,019</u>	<u>2,927,469</u>
Total	10,643,679	11,420,706

Sec. F.106 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.210 is amended to read:

Sec. B.210 Public safety - criminal justice services

Personal services	5,387,100	4,705,897
Operating expenses	<u>2,152,467</u>	<u>2,152,467</u>
Total	7,539,567	6,858,364

Source of funds

General fund	1,829,099	2,172,295
Special funds	4,975,847	3,951,448
Federal funds	<u>734,621</u>	<u>734,621</u>
Total	7,539,567	6,858,364

Sec. F.107 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.236 is amended to read:

Sec. B.236 Human rights commission

Personal services	927,697	952,559
Operating expenses	<u>115,103</u>	<u>125,378</u>
Total	1,042,800	1,077,937

Source of funds

General fund	953,800	988,937
Federal funds	<u>89,000</u>	<u>89,000</u>
Total	1,042,800	1,077,937

Sec. F.108 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.241 is amended to read:

Sec. B.241 Total protection to persons and property

Source of funds

General fund	228,238,448	233,526,438
Transportation fund	20,250,000	20,250,000
Special funds	<u>119,824,272</u>	<u>118,799,873</u>
Tobacco fund	672,579	672,579
Federal funds	162,959,452	162,959,452
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>16,031,869</u>	<u>14,895,319</u>
Enterprise funds	<u>15,070,107</u>	<u>15,070,107</u>
Total	563,046,727	566,173,768

Sec. F.109 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.300 is amended to read:

Sec. B.300 Human services - agency of human services - secretary's office

Personal services	16,219,746	18,219,746

Operating expenses	7,220,486	6,062,286
Grants	<u>3,795,202</u>	<u>3,795,202</u>
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234
Source of funds		
General fund	12,913,202	11,923,905
Special funds	135,517	135,517
Federal funds	13,565,080	11,606,177
Global Commitment fund	0	4,300,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>621,635</u>	<u>111,635</u>
Total	27,235,434	28,077,234

Sec. F.110 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.301 is amended to read:

Sec. B.301 Secretary's office - global commitment

Grants	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988
Total	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988
Source of funds		
General fund	~~668,380,623~~	716,109,638
Special funds	32,047,905	32,047,905
Tobacco fund	21,049,373	21,049,373
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
Federal funds	~~1,285,494,243~~	1,363,223,270
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,487,210</u>	<u>4,124,245</u>
Total	~~2,039,512,911~~	2,164,607,988

Sec. F.111 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.305 is amended to read:

Sec. B.305 AHS - administrative fund

Personal services	330,000	330,000
Operating expenses	<u>13,170,000</u>	<u>16,870,000</u>
Total	~~13,500,000~~	17,200,000
Source of funds		
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>13,500,000</u>	<u>17,200,000</u>
Total	~~13,500,000~~	17,200,000

Sec. F.112 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.306 is amended to read:

Sec. B.306 Department of Vermont health access - administration

Personal services	~~134,929,148~~	136,693,560
Operating expenses	~~44,171,193~~	39,250,661
Grants	<u>3,112,301</u>	<u>3,112,301</u>
Total	~~182,212,642~~	179,056,522
Source of funds		
General fund	~~39,872,315~~	42,023,781

Special funds	4,733,015	4,733,015
Federal funds	128,790,580	124,836,223
Global Commitment fund	4,308,574	4,308,574
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>4,508,158</u>	<u>3,154,929</u>
Total	182,212,642	179,056,522

Sec. F.113 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.307 is amended to read:

Sec. B.307 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program –
global commitment

Personal services	547,983	547,983
Grants	<u>899,550,794</u>	<u>964,407,046</u>
Total	900,098,777	964,955,029

Source of funds

Global Commitment fund	<u>900,098,777</u>	<u>964,955,029</u>
Total	900,098,777	964,955,029

Sec. F.114 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.309 is amended to read:

Sec. B.309 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid program –
state only

Grants	<u>63,033,948</u>	<u>67,780,595</u>
Total	63,033,948	67,780,595

Source of funds

General fund	62,151,546	62,308,757
Global Commitment fund	<u>882,402</u>	<u>5,471,838</u>
Total	63,033,948	67,780,595

Sec. F.115 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.310 is amended to read:

Sec. B.310 Department of Vermont health access - Medicaid non-waiver
matched

Grants	<u>34,994,888</u>	<u>38,232,431</u>
Total	34,994,888	38,232,431

Source of funds

General fund	12,511,405	13,459,034
Federal funds	<u>22,483,483</u>	<u>24,773,397</u>
Total	34,994,888	38,232,431

Sec. F.116 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.311 is amended to read:

Sec. B.311 Health - administration and support

Personal services	8,373,168	8,373,168
Operating expenses	<u>7,519,722</u>	<u>8,166,662</u>
Grants	<u>7,985,727</u>	<u>7,985,727</u>

Total	23,878,617	24,525,557
Source of funds		
General fund	3,189,843	3,513,313
Special funds	2,308,186	2,308,186
Federal funds	11,040,433	11,363,903
Global Commitment fund	7,173,924	7,173,924
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>166,231</u>	<u>166,231</u>
Total	23,878,617	24,525,557

Sec. F.117 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.312 is amended to read:

Sec. B.312 Health - public health

Personal services	67,812,371	67,812,371
Operating expenses	11,025,497	11,025,497
Grants	<u>46,766,832</u>	<u>46,866,832</u>
Total	~~125,604,700~~	125,704,700
Source of funds		
General fund	12,908,892	13,008,892
Special funds	24,906,804	24,906,804
Tobacco fund	1,088,918	1,088,918
Federal funds	64,038,301	64,038,301
Global Commitment fund	17,036,150	17,036,150
Interdepartmental transfers	5,600,635	5,600,635
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	~~125,604,700~~	125,704,700

Sec. F.118 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.313 is amended to read:

Sec. B.313 Health - substance use programs

Personal services	6,570,967	6,570,967
Operating expenses	511,500	511,500
Grants	<u>58,215,510</u>	<u>59,240,635</u>
Total	~~65,297,977~~	66,323,102
Source of funds		
General fund	~~6,672,061~~	7,697,186
Special funds	2,413,678	2,413,678
Tobacco fund	949,917	949,917
Federal funds	15,456,754	15,456,754
Global Commitment fund	<u>39,805,567</u>	<u>39,805,567</u>
Total	~~65,297,977~~	66,323,102

Sec. F.119 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.314 is amended to read:

Sec. B.314 Mental health - mental health

Personal services	50,191,086	50,191,086
Operating expenses	5,517,999	5,709,973
Grants	<u>270,625,138</u>	<u>272,536,080</u>
Total	326,334,223	328,437,139
Source of funds		
General fund	25,555,311	26,279,270
Special funds	1,718,092	1,718,092
Federal funds	11,436,913	12,661,803
Global Commitment fund	287,609,767	287,763,834
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,140</u>	<u>14,140</u>
Total	326,334,223	328,437,139

Sec. F.120 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.316 is amended to read:

Sec. B.316 Department for children and families - administration & support services

Personal services	46,644,080	44,844,080
Operating expenses	17,560,755	19,402,705
Grants	<u>5,627,175</u>	<u>5,627,175</u>
Total	69,832,010	69,873,960
Source of funds		
General fund	39,722,724	40,113,958
Special funds	2,781,912	2,781,912
Federal funds	24,448,223	24,098,939
Global Commitment fund	2,417,024	2,417,024
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>462,127</u>	<u>462,127</u>
Total	69,832,010	69,873,960

Sec. F.121 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.317 is amended to read:

Sec. B.317 Department for children and families - family services

Personal services	45,197,694	45,286,553
Operating expenses	5,315,309	5,315,309
Grants	<u>98,251,027</u>	<u>97,732,465</u>
Total	148,764,030	148,334,327
Source of funds		
General fund	58,838,741	59,984,059
Special funds	729,587	729,587
Federal funds	34,666,196	36,180,206
Global Commitment fund	54,514,506	51,425,475
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>15,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>

Total	148,764,030	148,334,327
Sec. F.122 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.318 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.318 Department for children and families - child development		
Personal services	5,908,038	5,908,038
Operating expenses	813,321	813,321
Grants	<u>223,329,336</u>	<u>211,815,836</u>
Total	230,050,695	218,537,195
Source of funds		
General fund	76,723,518	51,443,165
Special funds	96,312,000	109,512,000
Federal funds	43,511,414	42,902,383
Global Commitment fund	<u>13,503,763</u>	<u>14,679,647</u>
Total	230,050,695	218,537,195
Sec. F.123 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.319 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.319 Department for children and families - office of child support		
Personal services	13,157,660	13,061,794
Operating expenses	<u>3,759,992</u>	<u>3,759,992</u>
Total	16,917,652	16,821,786
Source of funds		
General fund	5,200,064	5,163,429
Special funds	455,719	455,719
Federal funds	10,874,269	10,815,038
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>387,600</u>	<u>387,600</u>
Total	16,917,652	16,821,786
Sec. F.124 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.320 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.320 Department for children and families - aid to aged, blind and disabled		
Personal services	2,252,206	2,481,741
Grants	<u>10,717,444</u>	<u>10,369,155</u>
Total	12,969,650	12,850,896
Source of funds		
General fund	7,376,133	7,368,843
Global Commitment fund	<u>5,593,517</u>	<u>5,482,053</u>
Total	12,969,650	12,850,896
Sec. F.125 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.321 is amended to read:		
Sec. B.321 Department for children and families - general assistance		
Personal services	15,000	15,000

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1353

Grants	<u>11,054,252</u>	<u>10,702,625</u>
Total	11,069,252	10,717,625
Source of funds		
General fund	10,811,345	10,486,987
Federal funds	11,320	11,070
Global Commitment fund	<u>246,587</u>	<u>219,568</u>
Total	11,069,252	10,717,625

Sec. F.126 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.322 is amended to read:

Sec. B.322 Department for children and families - 3SquaresVT

Grants	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	44,377,812	45,677,812
Source of funds		
Federal funds	<u>44,377,812</u>	<u>45,677,812</u>
Total	44,377,812	45,677,812

Sec. F.127 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.323 is amended to read:

Sec. B.323 Department for children and families - reach up

Operating expenses	23,821	23,821
Grants	<u>37,230,488</u>	<u>36,730,493</u>
Total	37,254,309	36,754,314
Source of funds		
General fund	24,733,042	24,233,047
Special funds	5,970,229	5,970,229
Federal funds	2,806,330	2,806,330
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,744,708</u>	<u>3,744,708</u>
Total	37,254,309	36,754,314

Sec. F.128 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.325 is amended to read:

Sec. B.325 Department for children and families - office of economic opportunity

Personal services	817,029	1,042,639
Operating expenses	100,407	100,407
Grants	<u>35,466,283</u>	<u>35,812,536</u>
Total	36,383,719	36,955,582
Source of funds		
General fund	28,178,010	28,687,068
Special funds	83,135	83,135
Federal funds	4,935,273	4,998,078
Global Commitment fund	<u>3,187,301</u>	<u>3,187,301</u>
Total	36,383,719	36,955,582

Sec. F.129 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.329 is amended to read:

Sec. B.329 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - administration & support

Personal services	<u>45,217,977</u>	46,217,977
Operating expenses	<u>6,472,558</u>	<u>6,714,680</u>
Total	<u>51,690,535</u>	52,932,657
Source of funds		
General fund	22,916,281	24,037,342
Special funds	1,390,457	1,390,457
Federal funds	26,063,097	26,184,158
Global Commitment fund	35,000	35,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,285,700</u>	<u>1,285,700</u>
Total	<u>51,690,535</u>	52,932,657

Sec. F.130 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.330 is amended to read:

Sec. B.330 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - advocacy and independent living grants

Grants	<u>24,571,060</u>	<u>24,781,798</u>
Total	<u>24,571,060</u>	24,781,798
Source of funds		
General fund	8,392,303	8,504,605
Federal funds	7,321,114	7,321,114
Global Commitment fund	<u>8,857,643</u>	<u>8,956,079</u>
Total	<u>24,571,060</u>	24,781,798

Sec. F.131 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.332 is amended to read:

Sec. B.332 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - vocational rehabilitation

Grants	<u>10,179,845</u>	<u>9,179,845</u>
Total	<u>10,179,845</u>	9,179,845
Source of funds		
General fund	1,371,845	371,845
Federal funds	7,558,000	7,558,000
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>1,250,000</u>	<u>1,250,000</u>
Total	<u>10,179,845</u>	9,179,845

Sec. F.132 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.333 is amended to read:

Sec. B.333 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - developmental services

Grants	<u>329,299,344</u>	<u>331,262,271</u>

Total	329,299,344	331,262,271
Source of funds		
General fund	132,732	132,732
Special funds	15,463	15,463
Federal funds	403,573	403,573
Global Commitment fund	328,697,576	330,660,503
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
Total	329,299,344	331,262,271

Sec. F.133 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334 Disabilities, aging, and independent living - TBI home and community based waiver

Grants	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520
Source of funds		
Global Commitment fund	<u>6,845,005</u>	<u>6,864,520</u>
Total	6,845,005	6,864,520

Sec. F.134 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.334.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.334.1 Disabilities, aging and independent living - Long Term Care

Grants	<u>293,584,545</u>	<u>347,376,122</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122
Source of funds		
General fund	498,579	498,579
Federal funds	2,450,000	2,450,000
Global Commitment fund	<u>290,635,966</u>	<u>344,427,543</u>
Total	293,584,545	347,376,122

Sec. F.135 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.338 is amended to read:

Sec. B.338 Corrections - correctional services

Personal services	147,472,104	148,472,104
Operating expenses	<u>24,914,205</u>	<u>25,249,795</u>
Total	172,386,309	173,721,899
Source of funds		
General fund	162,807,888	163,643,478
Special funds	935,963	935,963
ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	499,888	999,888
Global Commitment fund	2,746,255	2,746,255
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>396,315</u>	<u>396,315</u>
Total	172,386,309	173,721,899

Sec. F.136 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.342 is amended to read:

Sec. B.342 Vermont veterans' home - care and support services

Personal services	17,631,222	17,595,290
Operating expenses	5,013,462	13,247,462
Grants	0	<u>1,583,157</u>
Total	22,644,684	32,425,909
Source of funds		
General fund	4,320,687	11,224,018
Special funds	10,051,903	12,450,095
Federal funds	<u>8,272,094</u>	<u>8,751,796</u>
Total	22,644,684	32,425,909

Sec. F.137 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.347 is amended to read:

Sec. B.347 Total human services

Source of funds		
General fund	1,328,118,806	1,364,156,647
Special funds	202,800,452	218,398,644
Tobacco fund	23,088,208	23,088,208
State health care resources fund	28,053,557	28,053,557
ARPA State Fiscal	5,000,000	5,000,000
Federal funds	1,803,398,922	1,882,012,745
Global Commitment fund	1,980,839,553	2,108,560,133
Internal service funds	490,853	490,853
Interdepartmental transfers	32,893,535	34,367,341
Permanent trust funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Total	5,404,708,886	5,664,153,128

Sec. F.138 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.501 is amended to read:

Sec. B.501 Education - education services

Personal services	28,237,700	28,312,700
Operating expenses	1,134,912	1,134,912
Grants	<u>322,345,763</u>	<u>322,345,763</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375
Source of funds		
General fund	6,387,955	6,462,955
Special funds	3,033,144	3,033,144
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Federal funds	340,584,414	340,584,414
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>962,474</u>	<u>962,474</u>
Total	351,718,375	351,793,375

Sec. F.139 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.503 is amended to read:

Sec. B.503 Education - state-placed students

Grants	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	20,000,000	19,000,000
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>20,000,000</u>	<u>19,000,000</u>
Total	20,000,000	19,000,000

Sec. F.140 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504 Education - adult education and literacy

Grants	<u>4,694,183</u>	<u>4,997,820</u>
Total	4,694,183	4,997,820
Source of funds		
General fund	3,778,133	4,081,770
Federal funds	<u>916,050</u>	<u>916,050</u>
Total	4,694,183	4,997,820

Sec. F.141 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.504.1 is amended to read:

Sec. B.504.1 Education - Flexible Pathways

Grants	<u>11,361,755</u>	<u>11,564,179</u>
Total	11,361,755	11,564,179
Source of funds		
General fund	921,500	921,500
Education fund	<u>10,440,255</u>	<u>10,642,679</u>
Total	11,361,755	11,564,179

Sec. F.142 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.505 is amended to read:

Sec. B.505 Education - adjusted education payment

Grants	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	1,893,267,394	1,882,267,394
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>1,893,267,394</u>	<u>1,882,267,394</u>
Total	1,893,267,394	1,882,267,394

Sec. F.143 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.508 is amended to read:

Sec. B.508 Education - nutrition

Grants	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>
Total	20,400,000	17,500,000
Source of funds		
Education fund	<u>20,400,000</u>	<u>17,500,000</u>

Total	20,400,000	17,500,000

Sec. F.144 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.516 is amended to read:

Sec. B.516 Total general education

Source of funds

General fund	228,890,519	229,269,156
Special funds	23,651,687	23,651,687
Tobacco fund	750,388	750,388
Education fund	2,323,283,242	2,308,585,666
Federal funds	354,654,849	354,654,849
Global Commitment fund	260,000	260,000
Interdepartmental transfers	1,467,771	1,467,771
Pension trust funds	<u>3,572,780</u>	<u>3,572,780</u>
Total	2,936,531,236	2,922,212,297

Sec. F.145 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.704 is amended to read:

Sec. B.704 Forests, parks and recreation - forestry

Personal services	7,880,566	7,913,766
Operating expenses	1,005,046	1,005,046
Grants	<u>1,712,423</u>	<u>1,713,923</u>
Total	10,598,035	10,632,735

Source of funds

General fund	6,299,512	6,334,212
Special funds	547,215	547,215
Federal funds	3,394,931	3,394,931
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>356,377</u>	<u>356,377</u>
Total	10,598,035	10,632,735

Sec. F.146 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.710 is amended to read:

Sec. B.710 Environmental conservation - air and waste management

Personal services	27,995,328	27,995,328
Operating expenses	10,788,954	10,816,954
Grants	<u>4,943,000</u>	<u>4,943,000</u>
Total	43,727,282	43,755,282

Source of funds

General fund	199,372	227,372
Special funds	24,643,580	24,643,580
Federal funds	18,800,064	18,800,064
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>84,266</u>	<u>84,266</u>
Total	43,727,282	43,755,282

Sec. F.147 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.711 is amended to read:

Sec. B.711 Environmental conservation - office of water programs

Personal services	50,153,806	50,153,806
Operating expenses	<u>8,362,915</u>	8,370,915
Grants	<u>92,365,140</u>	<u>92,365,140</u>
Total	~~150,881,861~~	150,889,861
Source of funds		
General fund	11,887,629	11,895,629
Special funds	30,967,150	30,967,150
Federal funds	107,154,542	107,154,542
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>872,540</u>	<u>872,540</u>
Total	~~150,881,861~~	150,889,861

Sec. F.148 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.714 is amended to read:

Sec. B.714 Total natural resources

Source of funds		
General fund	42,792,800	42,863,500
Special funds	81,275,829	81,275,829
Fish and wildlife fund	10,418,331	10,418,331
Federal funds	152,068,301	152,068,301
Interdepartmental transfers	<u>14,131,324</u>	<u>14,131,324</u>
Total	~~300,686,585~~	300,757,285

Sec. F.149 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.100 is amended to read:

Sec. D.100 ALLOCATIONS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

(a) This act contains the following amounts allocated to special funds that receive revenue from the property transfer tax. These allocations shall not exceed available revenues.

(1) The sum of \$575,662 is allocated from the Current Use Administration Special Fund to the Department of Taxes for administration of the Use Tax Reimbursement Program. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), amounts in excess of \$575,662 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Current Use Administration Special Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(2) Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, amounts in excess of \$22,106,740 \$28,238,050 from the property transfer tax and surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a deposited into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund.

(A) The dedication of \$2,500,000 in revenue from the property transfer tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9610(d) for the debt payments on the affordable housing bond pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 314 shall be offset by the reduction of \$1,500,000 in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and \$1,000,000 from the surcharge established in 32 V.S.A. § 9602a. The fiscal year 2025 appropriation of ~~\$22,106,740~~ \$28,238,050 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board reflects the \$1,500,000 reduction. The affordable housing bond and related property transfer tax and surcharge provisions are repealed after the life of the bond on July 1, 2039. Once the bond is retired, the \$1,500,000 reduction in the appropriation to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board shall be restored.

(3) Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), amounts in excess of ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 from the property transfer tax deposited into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund shall be transferred into the General Fund. The ~~\$7,772,373~~ \$9,052,113 shall be allocated as follows:

(A) ~~\$6,404,540~~ \$7,300,358 for disbursement to regional planning commissions in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b);

(B) ~~\$931,773~~ \$1,187,721 for disbursement to municipalities in a manner consistent with 24 V.S.A. § 4306(b); and

(C) ~~\$436,060~~ \$564,034 to the Agency of Digital Services for the Vermont Center for Geographic Information.

Sec. F.150 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. D.102 is amended to read:

Sec. D.102 REVERSIONS

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the General Fund from the accounts indicated:

* * *

3150892104 MH – Case Management Serv	~~\$350,000.00~~	<u>\$350,199.34</u>

* * *

1100892208 AOA – VT Housing Finance Agency	<u>\$3,000,000.00</u>

1100892403 AOA – Health Equity Community Grants	<u>\$500,000.00</u>

1120020000 Tuition Assistance Program	<u>\$133,877.86</u>

1120892401 DHR – New Position in DHR Ops	<u>\$477,769.00</u>

1120892402 DHR – New Position in VTHR Ops	<u>\$40,726.07</u>

FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2025

1361

<u>1140010000 Tax Operation Costs</u>	<u>\$1,267,062.22</u>
<u>1140060000 Reappraisal and Listing Payments</u>	<u>\$35,270.75</u>
<u>1140070000 Use Tax Reimbursement Program</u>	<u>\$37,864.25</u>
<u>1140330000 Renter Rebates</u>	<u>\$2,186,940.33</u>
<u>1140892403 Tax – Child Care Contr Positions</u>	<u>\$3,591,823.02</u>
<u>1260980000 Debt Service</u>	<u>\$235,445.15</u>
<u>1266892401 VPIC – Pension System Assets</u>	<u>\$5,000.00</u>
<u>2100892201 AG – Racial Disparities</u>	<u>\$48,465.00</u>
<u>2120892203 JUD – County Court House HVAC</u>	<u>\$800,000.00</u>
<u>2120892402 JUD – Essex County Courthouse Reno</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
<u>2130400000 SIUS Parent Account</u>	<u>\$395,749.64</u>
<u>2150010000 Mil Admin/TAGO</u>	<u>\$142,789.80</u>
<u>2150050000 Mil Vet Affairs Office</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>2160892201 CCVS – VT Forensic Nursing</u>	<u>\$246.43</u>
<u>2160892304 CCVS – Kurn Hattin Survivor</u>	<u>\$250.00</u>
<u>2200010000 Administration Division</u>	<u>\$167,222.00</u>
<u>3310000000 Commission on Women</u>	<u>\$25,390.43</u>
<u>3330892401 GMCB – VHCURES Database Implemen</u>	<u>\$545,782.90</u>
<u>3400892111 Supp New Americans Refugee</u>	<u>\$23,431.00</u>
<u>3400892301 AHSCO – Refugee Resettlement</u>	<u>\$1,293.00</u>
<u>3420892405 HD – Regional Emergency Med</u>	<u>\$8,295.01</u>
<u>3440050000 DCFS – AABD</u>	<u>\$35,310.73</u>
<u>3440892110 DCF – Grants to Reachup</u>	<u>\$5.10</u>
<u>3440892203 DCF – Parent Child Ctrs Cap Imp</u>	<u>\$20,708.22</u>
<u>3440892214 DCF – Child Care Provider Workfor</u>	<u>\$294.79</u>
<u>4100500000 VT Department of Labor</u>	<u>\$8,000,000.00</u>
<u>5100070000 Education Services</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
<u>5100892101 AOE – VSC Committee Per Diem</u>	<u>\$16,295.33</u>
<u>5100892102 AOA – Advisory Group Per Diem</u>	<u>\$9,018.00</u>
<u>5100892103 AOE – ESESAG Per Diems</u>	<u>\$8,960.00</u>

<u>5100892201 AOE – Comm Pub Sch Emp Hlth Ben</u>	<u>\$29,050.00</u>
<u>5100892202 AOE – Task Force Equit Inclusive</u>	<u>\$6,150.00</u>
<u>5100892302 AOE – Ethnic&Social Equity Per D</u>	<u>\$14,386.24</u>
<u>6100010000 Administration Management and Planning</u>	<u>\$402,052.99</u>
<u>6100040000 Property Tax Assessment Approp</u>	<u>\$11,692.11</u>
<u>6140880005 152/00 State Asst Munic Poll Cont</u>	<u>\$126.26</u>
<u>7100892301 Everyone Eats</u>	<u>\$144,565.43</u>
<u>7120892304 DED – Relocated and Remote Worker</u>	<u>\$127,314.33</u>
<u>8100002100 Department of Motor Vehicles</u>	<u>\$2,482.81</u>

* * *

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2025, the following amounts shall revert to the Education Fund from the accounts indicated:

<u>5100010000 Administration</u>	<u>\$301,041.03</u>
<u>5100050000 State-Placed Students</u>	<u>\$13,687,528.41</u>
<u>5100090000 Education Grant</u>	<u>\$359,570.31</u>
<u>5100110000 Small School Grant</u>	<u>\$593,700.00</u>
<u>5100200000 Education – Technical Education</u>	<u>\$1,802,347.44</u>
<u>5100210000 Education – Flexible Pathways</u>	<u>\$1,312,334.72</u>
<u>5100892405 AOE – Universal School Meals</u>	<u>\$6,201,479.69</u>

Sec. F.151 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.100 is amended to read:

Sec. E.100 POSITIONS

* * *

(d) The conversion of eight limited service positions to exempt permanent status is authorized in fiscal year 2025 as follows:

(1) Office of the Defender General:

(A) one Administrative Services Tech;

(B) two DG IT Specialist II's;

(C) one ODG Legal Assistant I;

(D) two Staff Attorney I's;

(E) one Financial Specialist III; and

(F) one Admin Secretary.

* * *

Sec. F.152 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.301 is amended to read:

Sec. E.301 SECRETARY'S OFFICE; GLOBAL COMMITMENT

* * *

(b) In addition to the State funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, a total estimated sum of ~~\$24,301,185~~ \$28,307,335 is anticipated to be certified as State matching funds under Global Commitment as follows:

(1) ~~\$21,295,850~~ \$25,302,000 certified State match available from local education agencies for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment. This amount, combined with ~~\$29,204,150~~ \$34,698,000 of federal funds appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act, equals a total estimated expenditure of ~~\$50,500,000~~ \$60,000,000. An amount equal to the amount of the federal matching funds for eligible special education school-based Medicaid services under Global Commitment shall be transferred from the Global Commitment Fund to the Medicaid Reimbursement Special Fund created in 16 V.S.A. § 2959a.

(2) \$3,005,335 certified State match available from local designated mental health and developmental services agencies for eligible mental health services provided under Global Commitment.

(c) Up to ~~\$4,487,210~~ \$3,614,245 is transferred from the Agency of Human Services Federal Receipts Holding Account to the Interdepartmental Transfer Fund consistent with the amount appropriated in Sec. B.301 of this act.

Sec. F.153 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. G.109 is amended to read:

Sec. G.109 PAY ACT APPROPRIATIONS; FISCAL YEARS 2025 AND 2026

(a) Executive Branch. The first and second years of the two-year agreements between the State of Vermont and the Vermont State Employees' Association for the Defender General, Non-Management, Supervisory, and Corrections bargaining units, and, for the purpose of appropriation, the State's Attorneys' offices bargaining unit, for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; the collective bargaining agreement with the Vermont Troopers' Association for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; and salary increases for employees in the Executive Branch not covered by the bargaining agreements shall be funded as follows:

(1) Fiscal year 2025.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control ~~Board~~ Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

(2) Fiscal year 2026.

* * *

(D) Transfers. With due regard to the possible availability of other funds, for fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Administration may transfer from the various appropriations and various funds and from the receipts of the Liquor Control ~~Board~~ Fund such sums as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act to the various agencies supported by State funds.

* * *

Sec. F.154 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 7 is amended to read:

Sec. 7. TELEPHONE TAX; REPEAL; TRANSITION

(a) 32 V.S.A. § 8521 (telephone personal property tax) is repealed on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. The final monthly installment payment of the telephone personal property tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8521 levied on the net book value of the taxpayer's personal property as of December 31, ~~2024~~ 2025 shall be due on or before July 25, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(b) 32 V.S.A. § 8522 (alternative telephone gross revenues tax) is repealed on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027. The final quarterly payment of the alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due on or before January 25, ~~2026~~ 2027.

(c) Any taxpayer who paid the alternative tax imposed by 32 V.S.A. § 8522 prior to the repeal of the tax on January 1, ~~2026~~ 2027 shall become subject to the income tax imposed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 151 beginning with the taxpayer's first income tax year starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. No alternative tax under 32 V.S.A. § 8522 shall be due for any period included in the taxpayer's income tax filing for tax years starting on or after January 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

(d) In fiscal year ~~2025~~ 2026, the Division of Property Valuation and Review of the Department of Taxes and all communications service providers with taxable communications property in Vermont shall be subject to the inventory and valuation provisions prescribed in 32 V.S.A. § 4452, as applicable.

Sec. F.155 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 145, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that:

* * *

(3) Secs. 8–12 (communications property tax) shall take effect on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026 and shall apply to grand lists lodged on or after April 1, ~~2025~~ 2026.

Sec. F.156 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 166, Sec. 15 is amended to read:

Sec. 15. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION

Notwithstanding 7 V.S.A. § 845(c), in fiscal year 2025:

(1) ~~\$500,000.00~~ is transferred from the Cannabis Regulation Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 845 to the Cannabis Business Development Fund established pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987; and

(2) ~~\$500,000.00~~ is appropriated from the Cannabis Business ~~49~~ Development Fund to the ~~Agency of Commerce and Community Development~~ Department of Economic Development to fund technical assistance and provide loans and grants pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 987.

Sec. F.157 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 78 is amended to read:

Sec. 78. ~~TRANSFERS; PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX~~

~~Notwithstanding 10 V.S.A. § 312, 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a), 32 V.S.A. § 9610(c), or any other provision of law to the contrary, amounts in excess of \$32,954,775.00 from the property transfer tax shall be transferred into the General Fund. Of this amount:~~

~~(1) \$6,106,335.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.~~

~~(2) \$1,279,740.00 shall be transferred from the General Fund into the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. F.158 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 96 is amended to read:

Sec. 96. APPROPRIATION; RENT ARREARS ASSISTANCE FUND

The sum of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the ~~Vermont State Housing Authority~~ Department of Housing and Community Development in fiscal year 2025 for the Rent Arrears Assistance Fund established by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 45.

Sec. F.159 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 182, Sec. 3, as amended by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 75, 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.119, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 106, is further amended to read:

Sec. 3. MANUFACTURED HOME IMPROVEMENT AND
REPAIR PROGRAM

(a) ~~Amounts~~ Of the amounts available from the American Rescue Plan Act – State Fiscal Recovery funds, \$4,000,000 is appropriated to the Department of Housing and Community Development for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program and shall be used for one or more of the following purposes:

* * *

Sec. F.160 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, Sec. 113b is amended to read:

Sec. 113b. APPROPRIATION; ~~NATURAL RESOURCES~~ LAND USE
REVIEW BOARD

The sum of ~~\$1,300,000.00~~ \$400,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the ~~Natural Resources~~ Land Use Review Board in fiscal year 2025.

Sec. F.161 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 24a is amended to read:

Sec. 24a. COMPENSATION FOR OVERPAYMENT

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, ~~the sum of \$29,224.00 a \$29,224 credit shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of~~ applied to the Canaan Town School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Canaan Town School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Canaan.

(b) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$5,924.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Bloomfield in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the~~

Town of Bloomfield for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Bloomfield.

(c) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,575.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Brunswick in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Brunswick for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Brunswick.~~

(d) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$6,145.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of East Haven in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of East Haven for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of East Haven.~~

(e) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,046.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Granby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Granby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Granby.~~

(f) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$10,034.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Guildhall in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Guildhall for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Guildhall.~~

(g) ~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$20,536.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Kirby in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Kirby for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Kirby.~~

~~(h) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,402.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Lemington in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Lemington for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Lemington.~~

~~(i) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$11,464.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Maidstone in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Maidstone for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Maidstone.~~

~~(j) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$4,349.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Norton in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Norton for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Norton.~~

~~(k) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the sum of \$2,657.00 shall be transferred from the Education Fund to the Town of Victory in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Town of Victory for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The transfer under this subsection shall be made directly to the Town of Victory.~~

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a \$68,132 credit shall be applied to the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District's education spending, as defined per 16 V.S.A. § 4001(6), in fiscal year 2025 to compensate the homestead taxpayers of the Northeast Kingdom Choice School District for an overpayment of education taxes in fiscal year 2024 due to erroneous accounting of certain students for the purposes of calculating average daily membership.

Sec. F.162 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1102, as added by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 3, Sec. 47, is amended to read:

Sec. B.1102 FISCAL YEAR 2023 ONE-TIME TECHNOLOGY
MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2023, funds are appropriated from the Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951) for new and ongoing initiatives as follows:

(1) \$40,010,000 to the Agency of Digital Services to be used as follows:

(A) \$11,800,000 for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system upgrade of Human Capital Management and core statewide financial accounting system and integration with the Department of Labor and Agency of Transportation financial systems;

* * *

Sec. F.163 3 V.S.A. § 3306 is amended to read:

§ 3306. TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION SPECIAL FUND

* * *

(b) Funds. The Fund shall consist of:

(1) any amounts transferred ~~or appropriated~~ to it by the General Assembly; and

(2) any interest earned by the Fund.

* * *

Sec. F.164 WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND;
REPEAL

(a) 10 V.S.A. § 543 (Workforce Education and Training Fund) is repealed.

Sec. F.165 18 V.S.A. § 9502 is amended to read:

§ 9502. TOBACCO TRUST FUND

(a)(1) The Tobacco Trust Fund is established in the Office of the State Treasurer for the purposes of creating a self-sustaining, perpetual fund for tobacco cessation and prevention that is not dependent upon tobacco sales volume.

(2) The Trust Fund shall ~~comprise~~ be composed of:

(A) ~~appropriations~~ transfers made by the General Assembly; and

~~(B) transfers from the Litigation Settlement Fund pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section; and~~

~~(C) contributions from any other source.~~

(3) The State Treasurer shall not disburse monies from the Trust Fund, except upon appropriation by the General Assembly. In any fiscal year, total appropriations from the Trust Fund shall not exceed seven percent of the fair market value of the Fund at the end of the prior fiscal year.

(4) The Trust Fund shall be administered by the State Treasurer. The Treasurer may invest monies in the Fund in accordance with the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 434. All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned shall remain in the Fund. The Treasurer's annual financial report to the Governor and the General Assembly shall contain an accounting of receipts, disbursements, and earnings of the Fund.

~~(b) Unless otherwise authorized by the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2000, and on June 30 of each subsequent fiscal year, any unencumbered balance in the Litigation Settlement Fund shall be transferred to the Trust Fund. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. F.166 32 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Loan" means a loan that is interest free or below market value.

(2) "State agency" means an Executive Branch agency, department, commission, office, or board.

* * *

Sec. F.167 32 V.S.A. § 706 is amended to read:

§ 706. TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS

Notwithstanding any authority granted elsewhere, all transfers of appropriations shall be made pursuant to this section upon the initiative of the Governor or upon the request of a secretary or commissioner.

(1) With the approval of the Governor, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may transfer balances of appropriations not to exceed ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$100,000 made under any appropriation act for the support of the government from one component of an agency, department, or other unit of State government to any component of the same agency, department, or unit.

(2) Except as specified in ~~subdivisions~~ subdivision (1) ~~and (4)~~ of this section, the transfer of balances of appropriations may be made only with the approval of the Emergency Board.

(3) For the specific purpose of balancing and closing out fund accounts at the end of a fiscal year, the Commissioner of Finance and Management may adjust a balance within an account of an agency or department in an amount not to exceed ~~\$100.00~~ \$200.

* * *

Sec. F.168 32 V.S.A. § 902 is amended to read:

§ 902. AUTHORIZATION TO BORROW MONEY

* * *

(b) The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of and expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing of such notes as the same fall due without further order or authority from the ~~General Fund or from the Transportation or other applicable funds or from the proceeds of bonds or notes~~ governmental debt service funds established in section 951a of this chapter. The authority hereby granted is in addition to and not in limitation of any other authority. Such notes shall be sold at public or private sale with or without published notice, as the State Treasurer may determine to be in the best interests of the State.

Sec. F.169 32 V.S.A. § 951a is amended to read:

§ 951a. DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

(a) Three governmental debt service funds are hereby established:

* * *

(b) Financial resources in each fund shall consist of ~~appropriations by the General Assembly to fulfill debt service obligations~~, the transfer of funding sources by the General Assembly to fulfill future debt service obligations, bond proceeds raised to fund a permanent reserve required by a trust agreement entered into to secure bonds, transfers of appropriations effected pursuant to section 706 of this title, investment income earned on balances held in trust agreement accounts as required by a trust agreement, and such other amounts as directed by the General Assembly or that are specifically authorized by provisions of this title. Each debt service fund shall account for the accumulation of resources and the fulfillment of debt service obligations within the current fiscal year and the accumulation of resources for debt service obligations maturing in future fiscal years.

* * *

Sec. F.170 32 V.S.A. § 954 is amended to read:

§ 954. PROCEEDS

(a) The proceeds arising from the sale of bonds, inclusive of any premiums, shall be applied to the purposes for which they were authorized, and the purposes shall may be considered to include ~~the expenses of preparing, issuing, and marketing the bonds and any notes issued under section 955 of this title, and underwriters' fees and~~ amounts for reserves, but no purchasers of the bonds shall be in any way bound to see to the proper application of the proceeds. The State Treasurer shall pay the interest on, principal of, investment return on, and maturity value of the bonds and notes as the same fall due or accrue without further order or authority. The State Treasurer, with the approval of the Governor, may establish sinking funds, reserve funds, or other special funds of the State as the State Treasurer may deem for the best interests of the State. To the extent not otherwise provided, the amount necessary each year to fulfill the maturing principal and interest of, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on all the bonds then outstanding shall be included in and made a part of the annual appropriation bill for the expense of State government, and the principal and interest on, investment return and maturity value of, and sinking fund installments on the bonds as may come due before appropriations for their fulfillment have been made shall be fulfilled from the applicable debt service fund.

(b) ~~The State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of bond issuance or issuances to the entities to which funds are appropriated by a capital construction act and for which bonding is required as the source of funds. If estimated receipts are insufficient, the State Treasurer shall allocate additional costs to the entities. Any remaining receipts shall not be expended, but carried forward to be available for future capital construction acts. If the source of funds appropriated by a capital construction act is other than by issuance of bonds, the State Treasurer is authorized to allocate the estimated cost of ongoing debt management services to the entities to which those funds are appropriated shall be appropriated annually from the funds from which transfers are made to fund debt service costs.~~

* * *

Sec. F.171 VERMONT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FUND; REPEAL

(a) 33 V.S.A. chapter 78 (Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Fund) is repealed.

Sec. F.172 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 47, Sec. 38 is amended to read:

Sec. 38. RENTAL HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

(a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Housing Finance Agency shall design and implement a Rental Housing Revolving Loan Program and shall create and administer a revolving loan fund to provide subsidized loans for rental housing developments that serve middle-income households.

(b) Loans; eligibility; criteria.

* * *

(7) The Agency shall use one or more legal mechanisms to ensure that:

(A) a subsidized unit remains affordable to a household earning the applicable percent of area median income for the longer of:

(i) seven years; or

(ii) full repayment of the loan plus three years; and

(B) during the affordability period determined pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7), the annual increase in rent for a subsidized unit does not exceed three percent or an amount otherwise authorized by the Agency.

* * *

Sec. F.173 32 V.S.A. § 308b is amended to read:

§ 308b. HUMAN SERVICES CASELOAD RESERVE

(a) There is created within the General Fund a Human Services Caseload Reserve. Expenditures from the Reserve shall be subject to an appropriation by the General Assembly or approval by the Emergency Board. Expenditures from the Reserve shall be limited to Agency of Human Services caseload-related needs primarily in the Departments for Children and Families, of Health, of Mental Health, of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, of Vermont Health Access, and settlement costs associated with managing the Global Commitment waiver.

(b) The Secretary of Administration may transfer to the Human Services Caseload Reserve any General Fund ~~carry-forward~~ carryforward directly attributable to Agency of Human Services caseload reductions and the effective management of related federal receipts, with the exclusion of the Department of Corrections.

(c) The Human Services Caseload Reserve shall contain two ~~sub-accounts~~ subaccounts:

(1) A ~~sub-account~~ subaccount for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses. Each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2020, the Department of Finance and Management shall adjust the amount reserved for incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses to equal the amount specified in the ~~Comprehensive~~ Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year occurring two years prior for the estimated amount of incurred but not reported Medicaid expenses associated with the current Medicaid Global Commitment waiver.

* * *

Sec. F.174 CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION SPECIAL FUND;
UNALLOCATED AND UNRESERVED BALANCE

(a) In fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Administration shall unreserve and transfer funds from the Human Services Caseload Reserve to the Child Care Contribution Special Fund established in 32 V.S.A. § 10554 as necessary to maintain a balance that appropriately supports the State's statutory obligations under the Child Care Financial Assistance Program established in 33 V.S.A. §§ 3512 and 3513.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that any unreserved and unallocated balance in the Child Care Contribution Special Fund shall remain in the Fund to support the future establishment of a reserve for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

Sec. F.175 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; FACILITY WORK
PROGRAMS; STRATEGIC PLAN

(a) Findings and intent.

(1) The General Assembly finds that a significant budget deficit has developed within previously existing programs despite a wage structure that pays incarcerated individuals in Vermont at rates ranging from \$0.25 to \$1.35 per hour, significantly below the federal minimum wage.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly that all Department of Corrections facility work programs operate in a manner that is fiscally sustainable to the extent possible within current statutory limitations and effective in preparing offenders for meaningful employment upon release.

(b) Strategic plan. On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Corrections shall, in consultation with the Department of Labor, submit a strategic plan with proposed benchmarks for improvement to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary. The strategic plan shall include:

(1) A business plan to improve program efficiency and self-sustainability to ensure all facility work programs, including Vermont Correctional Industries, vocational training programs, and other paid facility duties, operate without recurring deficits or to clearly identify funding sources to address the deficits.

(2) A comprehensive evaluation of the skills provided through facility work programs to determine if those skills are transferable to employment opportunities post-incarceration. The evaluation shall include consideration of expanding technical training and certification opportunities that carry recognized value in the labor market.

(3) An analysis of facility work programs to determine if each program serves a sufficient portion of the incarcerated population to justify its administration. The analysis shall also consider whether participants gain meaningful and valuable work experiences.

(4) A review of wages paid to facility work program participants, the implications of wage structures on program outcomes, and the appropriate use of funds in relation to program objectives.

(c) In fiscal years 2025 and 2026, the Department of Corrections shall submit timely reports to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Institutions, and on Judiciary, or the Joint Fiscal Committee and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee when the General Assembly is not in session, on the development of facility work program deficits. The Department shall include in these reports any financial or operational actions taken to address deficits, increase oversight, and prevent future deficits.

Sec. F.176 MEDICAID PROVIDERS WITH STABILIZATION NEEDS;
GRANT ELIGIBILITY

(a) All Vermont Medicaid participating providers with demonstrated stabilization needs and a plan to achieve sustainability shall be eligible to apply for funds appropriated pursuant to 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), including substance use residential treatment facilities, federally qualified health centers, residential mental health providers, and other providers of health care and human services.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall submit a report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations. The report shall include:

(1) A detailed account of grants distributed pursuant to the appropriation made in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1100(o)(4), as added by this act. This shall include the dollar amount and recipient of each grant.

(2) A description of each grant recipient's financial status prior to receipt of the grant, a summary of the impact of the grant for each recipient, and a summary of a revised long-term sustainability plan for each grant recipient.

(3) An analysis of grant outcomes and any recommendations for enhancing the financial stability of Vermont Medicaid providers.

Sec. F.177 ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM AND HIGH SCHOOL
COMPLETION PROGRAM TRANSITIONAL STUDENTS

(a) Notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 945 and any other provision of law to the contrary, a high school may award a high school diploma to any student who meets the following criteria:

(1) Prior to July 1, 2024, the student was participating in the High School Completion Program as the program existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

(2) The student has met the requirements of the student's individual graduation plan and would have been eligible to receive a diploma pursuant to the High School Completion Program as it existed under 16 V.S.A. § 943 on June 30, 2024.

Sec. F.178 SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;
DISCRETIONARY EXEMPTIONS

(a) For the remainder of federal fiscal year 2025, the Department for Children and Families shall utilize the State's allocation of discretionary exemptions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to the extent permitted by federal regulation for the purposes of:

(1) extending benefits to Program participants who would otherwise experience a disruption of benefits; and

(2) ensuring that Program participants are not accruing any time-limited benefit work requirement countable months.

Sec. F.179 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 19, Secs. 5 and 6 are amended to read:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Sec. 4 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

(b) ~~Sec. 5 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.~~

(e) All other sections shall take effect 30 calendar days after passage.

Sec. F.180 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 82, Sec. 1, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 108, Sec. 3, is further amended to read:

Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE
EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE
TO FLOODING

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for reimbursement under this section, prior to November 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, a municipality must have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

(2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

(A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on the property;

(B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more;

(C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

(D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

(b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, the municipality incurred unanticipated interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

* * *

Sec. F.181 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. E.106 is amended to read:

Sec. E.106 CORONAVIRUS STATE FISCAL RECOVERY FUND
APPROPRIATIONS; REVERSION AND ESTABLISHMENT
OF NEW SPENDING AUTHORITY

* * *

(b) The Commissioner of Finance and Management shall revert all unobligated American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund spending authority prior to December 31, 2024. The total amount of American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund spending authority reverted in accordance with this subsection shall equal the amount of new spending authority established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 511 for the following purposes in the following order:

* * *

(3) \$30,000,000 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to provide support and enhance capacity for the production and preservation of: affordable mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units; including improvements to manufactured homes and communities; permanent homes and emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness; recovery residences; and housing available to farm workers, refugees, and individuals who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home and community based services.

Sec. F.182 CARRYFORWARD AUTHORITY

(a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law and subject to the approval of the Secretary of Administration, General Fund, Transportation Fund, Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund, Education Fund, Technology Modernization Special Fund (21951), Clean Water Fund (21932), and Agricultural Water Quality Fund (21933) appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Executive Branch shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, General Fund appropriations remaining unexpended on June 30, 2025 in the Legislative and Judicial Branches shall be carried forward and shall be designated for expenditure.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. G.100 EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. B.1101, C.100, C.101, C.102, C.103, C.104, C.105, C.106, C.107, E.127.3, E.142.1, E.142.2, E.306.1, E.312.1, F.100, F.101, F.102, F.103, F.104, F.105, F.106, F.107, F.108, F.109, F.110, F.111, F.112, F.113, F.114, F.115, F.116, F.117, F.118, F.119, F.120, F.121, F.122, F.123, F.124, F.125, F.126, F.127, F.128, F.129, F.130, F.131, F.132, F.133, F.134, F.135, F.136, F.137, F.138, F.139, F.140, F.141, F.142, F.143, F.144, F.145, F.146, F.147, F.148, F.149, F.150, F.151, F.152, F.153, F.156, F.157, F.158, F.159, F.160, F.162, F.163, F.164, F.165, F.166, F.167, F.168, F.169, F.170, F.171, F.172, F.173, F.174, F.175, F.176, F.177, F.178, F.179, F.181, and F.182 shall take effect on passage.

(b) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Secs. E.111 and E.111.1 shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2025 and shall apply to taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2024.

(c) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. E.111.2 shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2025 and shall apply to taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2025.

(d) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. E.111.3 shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2025 and shall apply to taxable years and periods beginning on and after January 1, 2025 and ending on or before December 31, 2025.

(e) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Secs. F.154 and F.155 shall take effect retroactively on March 31, 2025.

(f) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. F.161 shall take effect retroactively on July 1, 2024.

(g) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. F.180 shall take effect retroactively on November 15, 2024.

(h) All remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

And by renumbering all of the sections of the bill to be numerically correct (including internal references) and adjusting all of the totals to be arithmetically correct.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Scheu of Middlebury** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

Rep. Scheu of Middlebury
Rep. Harrison of Chittenden
Reps. Bluemle of Burlington

On motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and House action on the bill was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration; Senate Proposal of Amendment Not Concurred in; Committee of Conference Requested and Appointed; Rules Suspended, Messaged to the Senate Forthwith

H. 488

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Transportation Program Adopted as Amended; Definitions * * *

Sec. 1. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ADOPTED; DEFINITIONS

(a) Adoption. The Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program appended to the Agency of Transportation's proposed fiscal year 2026 budget, as amended by this act, is adopted to the extent federal, State, and local funds are available.

(b) Definitions. As used in this act, unless otherwise indicated:

(1) "Agency" means the Agency of Transportation.

(2) "Candidate project" means a project approved by the General Assembly that is not anticipated to have significant expenditures for preliminary engineering or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the budget year and funding for construction is not anticipated within a predictable time frame.

(3) “Development and evaluation (D&E) project” means a project approved by the General Assembly that is anticipated to have preliminary engineering expenditures or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the budget year and that the Agency is committed to delivering to construction on a timeline driven by priority and available funding.

(4) “Electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)” and “electric vehicle supply equipment available to the public” have the same meanings as in 30 V.S.A. § 201.

(5) “Front-of-book project” means a project approved by the General Assembly that is anticipated to have construction expenditures during the budget year or the following three years, or both, with expected expenditures shown over four years.

(6) “Mileage-based user fee” or “MBUF” means a fee for vehicle use of the public road system with distance, stated in miles, as the measure of use.

(7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV),” “plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV),” and “battery electric vehicle (BEV)” have the same meanings as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85).

(8) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

(9) “TIB funds” means monies deposited in the Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund in accordance with 19 V.S.A. § 11f.

(10) The table heading “As Proposed” means the Proposed Transportation Program referenced in subsection (a) of this section; the table heading “As Amended” means the amendments as made by this act; the table heading “Change” means the difference obtained by subtracting the “As Proposed” figure from the “As Amended” figure; the terms “change” or “changes” in the text refer to the project- and program-specific amendments, the aggregate sum of which equals the net “Change” in the applicable table heading; and “State” in any tables amending authorizations indicates that the source of funds is State monies in the Transportation Fund, unless otherwise specified.

* * * Summary of Transportation Investments * * *

Sec. 1a. FISCAL YEAR 2026 TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS
INTENDED TO REDUCE TRANSPORTATION-RELATED
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, REDUCE FOSSIL FUEL
USE, AND SAVE VERMONT HOUSEHOLDS MONEY

This act includes the State’s fiscal year 2026 transportation investments intended to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, reduce fossil fuel use, and save Vermont households money in furtherance of the

policies articulated in 19 V.S.A. § 10b and the goals of the Comprehensive Energy Plan and the Vermont Climate Action Plan and to satisfy the Executive and Legislative Branches' commitments to the Paris Agreement climate goals. In fiscal year 2026, these efforts will include the following:

(1) Park and Ride Program. This act provides for a fiscal year expenditure of \$2,435,740.00, which will fund two construction projects to create new park-and-ride facilities, the construction of improvements to two existing park-and-ride facilities, funding for a municipal park-and-ride grant program, and paving projects for existing park-and-ride facilities. This year's Park and Ride Program will create 60 new State-owned spaces. Specific additions and improvements include:

(A) Manchester—construction of 50 new spaces; and

(B) Sharon—design and construction of 10 new spaces.

(2) Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Program. This act provides for a fiscal year expenditure, including local match, of \$21,879,965.00, which will fund 33 bike and pedestrian construction projects; 17 bike and pedestrian design, right-of-way, or design and right-of way projects for construction in future fiscal years; and 10 scoping studies. The construction projects include the creation, improvement, or rehabilitation of walkways, sidewalks, shared-use paths, bike paths, and cycling lanes. Projects are funded in Arlington, Bakersfield, Bennington, Bethel, Brattleboro, Bristol, Burke, Burlington, Castleton, Chester, Danville, Enosburg Falls, Fairfax, Greensboro, Hardwick, Hartford, Highgate, Hinesburg, Huntington, Hyde Park, Irasburg, Jericho, Lyndonville, Middlebury, Montpelier, Moretown, Newfane, Newport City, Northfield, Pawlet, Randolph, Royalton, Rutland City, Rutland Town, Sheffield, Shelburne, Sheldon, South Burlington, Springfield, St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, Swanton, Wallingford, Waterbury, West Rutland, Williston, Wilmington, and Windsor. This act also provides funding for:

(A) some of Local Motion's operation costs to run the bike ferry on the Colchester Causeway, which is part of the Island Line Trail;

(B) a small-scale municipal bicycle and pedestrian grant program for projects to be selected during the fiscal year;

(C) projects funded through the Safe Routes to School Program; and

(D) community grants along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT).

(3) Transportation Alternatives Program. This act provides for a fiscal year expenditure of \$6,471,054.00, including local funds, which will fund 17 transportation alternatives construction projects; 26 transportation alternatives design, right-of-way, or design and right-of-way projects; and eight scoping

studies. Of these 51 projects, 20 involve environmental mitigation related to clean water or stormwater concerns, or both clean water and stormwater concerns, and 32 involve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Projects are funded in Athens, Barre City, Bennington, Brandon, Brattleboro, Bridgewater, Bristol, Burke, Burlington, Castleton, Derby, Enosburg Falls, Fairfax, Fairlee, Ferrisburgh, Grafton, Guilford, Hartford, Hinesburg, Hyde Park, Jericho, Londonderry, Lyndon, Montgomery, Newark, Proctor, Rockingham, Rutland City, Shoreham, South Burlington, Springfield, St. Albans Town, Swanton, Tinmouth, Warren, Williston, and Wilmington.

(4) Public Transit Program. This act provides for a fiscal year expenditure of \$52,695,234.00 for public transit uses throughout the State. Included in the authorization are:

(A) Go! Vermont, with an authorization of \$380,000.00. This authorization supports transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, including the State's Trip Planner and commuter services, to promote the use of carpools and vanpools.

(B) Mobility and Transportation Innovations (MTI) Grant Program, with an authorization of \$340,000.00, which includes \$315,000.00 in federal funds. This authorization continues to support projects that improve both mobility and access to services for transit-dependent Vermonters, reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

(5) Rail Program. This act provides for a fiscal year expenditure of \$61,887,348.00, including local funds and \$31,894,436.00 in federal funds, for intercity passenger rail service, including funding for the Ethan Allen Express and Vermonter Amtrak services, and rail infrastructure that supports freight rail as well. Moving freight by rail instead of trucks lowers greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75 percent, on average.

* * * Rail Program; Technical Correction * * *

Sec. 2. RAIL PROGRAM

(a) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail the following project is deleted: Barre–Berlin–Montpelier 04-9038–WACR Subsidy.

(b) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail, the following project is added: Hartford HRRD(1) 25G002–White River Junction Depot Repairs.

(c) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail, spending authority for Hartford HRRD(1) 25G002-White River Junction Depot Repairs is authorized as follows:

<u>FY26</u>	<u>As Proposed</u>	<u>As Amended</u>	<u>Change</u>
Other	0	260,000	260,000
Total	0	260,000	260,000
<u>Sources of funds</u>			
State	0	260,000	260,000
Total	0	260,000	260,000

* * * Unobligated Fund Balance for Fiscal Year 2026 * * *

* * * Town Highway Non-Federal Disasters * * *

Sec. 2a. TOWN HIGHWAY NON-FEDERAL DISASTERS

(a) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Town Highway Non-Federal Disasters, spending is authorized as follows:

<u>FY26</u>	<u>As Proposed</u>	<u>As Amended</u>	<u>Change</u>
Grants	1,150,000	1,150,000	0
Total	1,150,000	1,150,000	0
<u>Sources of funds</u>			
State	1,150,000	0	-1,150,000
Other	0	1,150,000	1,150,000
Total	1,150,000	1,150,000	0

(b) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Town Highway Non-Federal Disasters, the following footnote is added: "Other funds of \$1,150,000 are amounts appropriated from the PILOT Special Fund established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3709."

Sec. 3. UNOBLIGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND BALANCE; FISCAL YEAR 2026

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Administration shall ensure an unobligated fund balance of at least \$686,000.00 exists in the Transportation Fund in fiscal year 2026 after the close of fiscal year 2025. It is the intent of the General Assembly that in the

creation of the fiscal year 2026 budget adjustment proposal and the fiscal year 2027 budget proposal, the unobligated fund balance required pursuant to this section shall be utilized to offset estimated Transportation Fund revenue losses from fee and tax reductions enacted during the 2025 legislative session.

* * * State and Federal Funding Updates * * *

Sec. 4. STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATES

(a) On or before September 30, 2025 and December 15, 2025, the Secretary of Transportation shall provide the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee with a briefing on the status of State Transportation Fund revenues and federal funding for the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, and any impacts on the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program. The briefing shall include:

(1) a summary of federal funding that has been received to date, federal funding that is anticipated later in the State fiscal year, federal funding that is delayed, and federal funding that has been reduced or subject to rescission;

(2) a summary of the Transportation Fund revenues to date in State fiscal year 2026;

(3) a summary of the impacts on the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program that are caused by changes in State Transportation Fund revenues from the consensus forecast or delays or reductions in federal funding; and

(4) a summary of any legislative action that may be necessary to address reductions in State revenues or federal funding.

(b) Upon becoming aware of a significant change in State revenues or a reduction in federal funding, rescission of federal grants, or delay of anticipated federal funding that will impact the Agency's ability to carry out significant portions of the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, the Secretary of Transportation may request that the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee meet within 14 days to review the Agency's plan to address the reduction in funding.

(c) In the event of a decrease in overall State or federal funding for the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program that is in excess of four percent, the Secretary shall submit to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee a written report detailing the impact of the decrease on projects that are in the 2026 Transportation Program.

* * * Project Dashboard * * *

Sec. 5. 19 V.S.A. § 10g is amended to read:

§ 10g. ANNUAL REPORT; TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM;
ADVANCEMENTS, CANCELLATIONS, AND DELAYS

* * *

(q)(1) The Agency's annual proposed Transportation Program shall include the following information depicted in a graphical dashboard:

(A) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation Program that have been delayed by more than one year from the preliminary plan projected completion date; and

(B) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation Program whose cost has increased by more than 50 percent or \$5,000,000.00, whichever is less, from the preliminary plan cost estimate.

(2) The Agency shall provide the House and Senate Committees on Transportation with quarterly updates to the dashboard provided pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 6. 19 V.S.A. § 10g(g) is amended to read:

~~(g) Project updates.—The Agency's annual proposed Transportation Program shall include project updates referencing this section and listing the following:~~

~~(1) all proposed projects in the Program that would be new to the State Transportation Program;~~

~~(2) all projects for which total estimated costs have increased by more than \$5,000,000.00 from the estimate in the adopted Transportation Program for the prior fiscal year or by more than 75 percent from the estimate in the adopted Transportation Program for the prior fiscal year;~~

~~(3) all projects for which the total estimated costs have, for the first time, increased by more than \$10,000,000.00 from the Preliminary Plan estimate or by more than 100 percent from the Preliminary Plan estimate; and~~

~~(4) all projects funded for construction in the prior fiscal year's adopted Transportation Program that are no longer funded in the proposed Transportation Program submitted to the General Assembly, the projected costs for such projects in the prior fiscal year's adopted Transportation Program, and the total costs incurred over the life of each such project.~~
[Repealed.]

* * * Relinquishment of Vermont Route 36 in the Town of St. Albans * * *

Sec. 7. RELINQUISHMENT OF VERMONT ROUTE 36 IN THE TOWN
OF ST. ALBANS

Pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 15(a)(2), the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Town of St. Albans to relinquish a segment of the State highway in the Town of St. Albans known as Vermont Route 36. The segment authorized to be relinquished begins at mile marker 0.00, just east of the “Black Bridge” (B2), and continues 14,963 feet (approximately 2.834 miles) easterly to mile marker 2.834, where Vermont Route 36 meets the boundary of the City of St. Albans, and includes the 0.106-mile westbound section of Vermont Route 36 and approaches at the entrance to the St. Albans Bay Town Park.

* * * State-Owned Railroads; Rail Trails * * *

Sec. 8. 5 V.S.A. chapter 58 is redesignated to read:

CHAPTER 58. STATE ACQUISITION OF STATE-OWNED RAILROADS
AND RAIL TRAILS

Sec. 9. 5 V.S.A. § 3408 is amended to read:

§ 3408. RAILBANKING; NOTIFICATION

(a) If the Secretary finds that the continued operation of any State-owned railroad property is not economically feasible under present conditions, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may place the line in railbanked status after giving advance notice of ~~such~~ the planned railbanking to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation when the General Assembly is in session, and when the General Assembly is not in session, to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee. The Agency, on behalf of the State, shall continue to hold the right-of-way of a railbanked line for reactivation of railroad service or for other public purposes not inconsistent with future reactivation of railroad service. ~~Such~~ The railbanking shall not be treated, for purposes of any law or rule of law, as an abandonment of the use of the rights-of-way for railroad purposes.

* * *

(c)(1) The Secretary may, after consulting with municipalities, adopt rules consistent with the provisions of section 3408a of this chapter governing the interim trail use of State-owned railroad rights-of-way that have been placed in railbanked status.

(2) Signs indicating the rules shall be conspicuously posted in or near all areas affected.

(3) Any person who violates these rules adopted pursuant to this subsection shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$300.00.

Sec. 10. 5 V.S.A. § 3408a is added to read:

§ 3408a. USE OF RAIL TRAILS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "Rail trail" means the right-of-way of a State-owned railroad line that has been authorized for railbanking and interim trail use pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d) or section 3408 of this chapter.

(2) "Trail sponsor" means the Agency of Transportation in the case of a rail trail maintained by the Agency or the municipality in the case of a rail trail maintained by a municipality.

(b) Use of rail trails. The following acts are prohibited within a rail trail right-of-way:

(1) Throwing, dropping, or discarding bottles, cans, paper, garbage, rubbish, sewage, or other material of any kind.

(2) Cutting, mutilating, or removing any tree, shrub, flower, plant, top soil, or sod or attempting to do so.

(3) Injury, defacement, removal, or destruction of the surface of the rail trail or a rail trail's structures, appurtenances, recreation facilities, or property.

(4) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, erecting, placing, or displaying any advertising materials, posters, or placards of any kind. This prohibition shall not apply to official signs erected by the trail sponsor.

(5) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, entering or remaining on the rail trail for the purpose of:

(A) selling, hiring, or leasing any goods or services; or

(B) distributing samples, pamphlets, or advertising materials, except for official information authorized by the trail sponsor.

(6) Parades, demonstrations, picnics, games, entertainment, or organizations, except at times and locations approved by the trail sponsor.

(7) Harassing or molesting wildlife, except for fishing.

(8) Using or discharging any firearms or other weapons or fireworks, except by a person authorized by the trail sponsor or as otherwise permitted by law.

(9) Igniting fires for any purpose, except in fireplaces or firepits at locations designated by the trail sponsor or for trail maintenance purposes.

(10) Soliciting alms or contributions.

(11) Use of motorized vehicles, except for:

(A) maintenance purposes;

(B) snowmobiles, subject to applicable State rules, when the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. has declared the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System officially open;

(C) Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) utilized by an individual with a disability as permitted by the Agency's Rail Trail Accessibility Policy;

(D) electric bicycles as permitted pursuant to applicable State rules;
and

(E) other circumstances that the trail sponsor determines are appropriate.

(12) Overnight camping, except at areas designated for that purpose by the trail sponsor.

(c) Penalty. Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to subdivision 3408(c)(3) of this chapter.

* * * Transportation Board * * *

Sec. 11. 19 V.S.A. § 3 is amended to read:

§ 3. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; CREATION; MEMBERS

~~A transportation board~~ The Transportation Board is formed to be attached to the Agency of Transportation. There shall be seven members of the Board, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor shall so far as is possible appoint Board members whose interests and expertise lie in various areas of the transportation field. The Governor shall appoint the ~~chair~~ Chair, and the Board may vote to appoint other officers. The members of the Board shall be appointed for terms of three years. Board members may be appointed for two additional three-year terms but shall not be eligible for further reappointment. ~~No~~ Not more than four members of the Board shall belong to the same political party. No member of the Board shall:

* * *

Sec. 12. 19 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; POWERS AND DUTIES

* * *

(d) Specific duties and responsibilities. The Board shall:

* * *

(4) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, regarding legal disputes in the execution of contracts awarded by the Agency or by municipalities cooperating with the Agency to advance projects in the State's Transportation Program, except that the Agency shall provide appellate review relating to bids and the competitive negotiation process under 19 V.S.A. § 10a;

(5) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, of decisions of the Secretary in administering the provisions of Title 24, relating to junkyards salvage yards;

* * *

* * * Green Mountain Transit Authority * * *

Sec. 13. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 801 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 801. GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

* * *

§ 2. AREA OF OPERATION

(a) The area of operation shall be the urbanized area of Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Washington Counties and the Towns of Orange, Washington, and Williamstown. The area of operation shall include Addison and Caledonia Counties and the Towns of Orange County other than Orange, Washington, and Williamstown, but only for the provision of commuter services. The area of operation shall include Lamoille County, but only for the provision of published scheduled services County as established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Green Mountain Transit Authority may operate service outside the urbanized area of Chittenden County with approval from the Agency of Transportation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent other transit providers from offering transit connecting to the urbanized area of Chittenden County, or providing on demand services in that area, with the approval of the Agency of Transportation.

* * *

§ 10. IMPLEMENTATION

* * *

(e) ~~Immediately upon joining the Authority, the municipality shall appoint two commissioners as provided herein. The initial terms of the commissioners of the initial members shall be arranged by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission so that the terms of approximately one-third of the commissioners shall expire in each year. The initial terms of commissioners~~

~~from municipalities joining after March 7, 1973, shall be set by the Board of Commissioners.~~

* * *

* * * Town Highways * * *

Sec. 14. 19 V.S.A. § 306 is amended to read:

§ 306. APPROPRIATION; STATE AID FOR TOWN HIGHWAYS

(a) General State aid to town highways.

(1) An annual appropriation to class 1, 2, and 3 town highways shall be made. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

(A) the percentage change of the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations ~~for town highways~~ under this subsection (a) and subsections (e) and (h) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

* * *

(e) State aid for town highway structures.

(1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities for maintenance (including actions to extend life expectancy) and for construction of bridges and culverts; for maintenance and construction of other structures, including causeways and retaining walls, intended to preserve the integrity of the traveled portion of class 1, 2, and 3 town highways; and for alternatives that eliminate the need for a bridge, culvert, or other structure, such as the construction or reconstruction of a highway, the purchase of parcels of land that would be landlocked by closure of a bridge, the payment of damages for loss of highway access, and the substitution of other means of access. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

(A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this subsection (e) and subsections (a) and (h) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

(B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

(2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

(3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$7,200,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. The Agency's proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account the estimated amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with respect to project grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well as with respect to new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for State aid for town highway structures is increased pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Town Highway Structures Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall advise the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from the General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the Agency has previously committed to completing those projects.

(3)(5) Funds received as grants for State aid for town highway structures may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

* * *

(h) Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program.

(1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities for resurfacing, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of paved or unpaved class 2 town highways. However, municipalities Municipalities that have no State highways or class 1 town highways within their borders may use the grants for such activities with respect to both class 2 and class 3 town highways. Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. The Agency's proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account the estimated amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with respect to project

grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well as with respect to new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

(A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this subsection (h) and subsections (a) and (e) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

(B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

(2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

(3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program is increased pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall advise the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from the General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the Agency has previously committed to completing those projects. Funds received as grants for State aid under the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

* * *

Sec. 15. CANCELLATION OF LOCALLY MANAGED PROJECTS; PROCESS; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT

The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Transportation Board, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont Association

of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to examine the requirements of 19 V.S.A. § 309c, cancellation of locally managed projects, to evaluate the obligations, risks, and benefits imposed by the provisions of that section on the State and the local sponsor of a locally managed project and to identify potential changes to the provisions of that section to ensure that State and federal transportation funding resources are appropriately administered. The Agency shall, on or before January 15, 2026, submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 16. MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION ASSETS; ASSESSMENT;
FUNDING NEEDS; REPORT

(a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to:

(1) review current municipal practices relating to planning for ongoing maintenance, upgrades, and replacement of municipal transportation assets, including roads, pavement, bridges, culverts, signals, signage, highway equipment, and highway facilities;

(2) develop a framework for a system to assess the current condition of municipal highway networks and the potential impacts of improvements to or degradation of those networks on the State's transportation system;

(3) develop a prioritization process to direct State funding to the repair, upgrade, or replacement of specific municipal transportation assets based on the need for such work in the context of the asset's role in the State and regional highway networks; and

(4) identify and recommend potential statutory changes to implement the assessment framework developed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection and the prioritization process developed pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection.

(b) The Agency of Transportation shall, not later than January 15, 2027, submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 17. STATE TOWN HIGHWAY AID; MUNICIPAL GRANT
PROGRAMS; EFFICIENCIES; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT

(a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to evaluate the State's Town

Highway Aid and municipal grant programs administered by the Agency to identify potential efficiencies and improvements related to the administration of Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs. The consultant shall evaluate the various funding streams authorized pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 306 as well as programs administered through the Agency's Municipal Assistance Bureau, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Municipal Mitigation Program, Municipal Park and Ride Program, Better Roads Program, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Program, and Grants in Aid.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative or administrative actions to improve or increase the efficiency of the Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs.

* * * Mileage-Based User Fee * * *

Sec. 18. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29 are amended to read:

Sec. 27. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly for the State:

(1) to start collecting a mileage-based user fee from all battery-electric vehicles registered in Vermont starting on ~~July 1, 2025, which is expected to be the first day of the first fiscal year when more than 15 percent of new~~ pleasure car registrations in the State are plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) or before January 1, 2027 subject to sufficient funding being available for implementation;

(2) to ~~start subjecting~~ subject plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) that are a pleasure car to an ~~increased annual or a biennial registration electric vehicle infrastructure~~ fee starting on ~~July~~ January 1, 2025, and that PHEVs shall not be subject to a mileage-based user fee;

(3) to ~~work towards~~ examine collecting a fee on ~~kWhs~~ electricity that ~~are~~ is dispensed through certain electric vehicle supply equipment available to the public so as to supplant lost gas fuel tax revenue from out-of-state PEVs traveling in Vermont; and

(4) to not commence collecting a mileage-based user fee until ~~such~~ the General Assembly has enacted legislation that establishes the amount of the fee and codifies any necessary authorizing language is codified in statute and that legislation becomes effective.

Sec. 28. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE AUTHORIZATION

(a) Within the Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation Program for Environmental Policy and Sustainability, the Agency of Transportation, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, is authorized to apply for and accept a competitive federal Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection grant established pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (IIJA), Sec. 13001, with up to \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund monies authorized for the nonfederal match in fiscal year 2024 and ~~a to-be-determined amount for the nonfederal match in subsequent fiscal years~~ up to \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund monies authorized for the nonfederal match in fiscal year 2025.

(b) ~~As permitted under federal regulations and grant terms, the~~ The Agency shall utilize ~~grant monies to design~~ State or federal funding, or both, ~~authorized to be used for the purpose of designing~~ a mileage-based user fee that is consistent with Secs. 27 and 29 of this act.

(c) Subject to State procurement requirements and the availability of sufficient funding, the Agency may retain one or more contractors or consultants, or both, to assist with the design of a process to commence collecting a mileage-based user fee on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

Sec. 29. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE DESIGN

(a) Definitions. As used in Secs. 27–30 of this act:

(1) “Account manager” means a person under contract with the Agency of Transportation or Department of Motor Vehicles to administer and manage the mileage-based user fee.

(2) “Annual vehicle miles traveled” means the total number of miles that a BEV is driven between annual inspections as reported ~~by an inspection mechanic~~ to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

(3) “Mileage-based user fee” means the total amount that an owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont owes the State and is calculated by:

(A) multiplying the mileage-based user fee rate by the annual vehicle miles traveled ~~or;~~

(B) in the case of a terminating event, by multiplying the mileage-based user fee rate by the vehicle miles traveled between the last Vermont annual inspection and the terminating event; or

(C) in the absence of a recorded odometer reading during the mileage reporting period, by multiplying the mileage-based user fee by the 98th percentile of estimated annual vehicle miles traveled for a pleasure car in Vermont.

(4) “Mileage-based user fee rate” means the per-mile usage fee charged to the owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont.

(5) “Mileage reporting period” means the time between annual inspections or the time between ~~an~~ the most recent annual inspection and a terminating event.

(6) “Pleasure car” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(28).

(7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV)” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85) and includes battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), which have the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85)(A) and (B).

(8) “Terminating event” means either the registering of a BEV that had been registered in Vermont in a different state or a change in ownership or lesseeship of the BEV, or both.

(b) Commencement date. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee for miles driven by a BEV registered in Vermont to commence collecting revenue on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

(c) Covered vehicles. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee based on the annual vehicle miles traveled by BEVs registered in the State.

(d) Imposition of a mileage-based user fee. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee from the owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont for each mileage reporting period ~~within 60 days after the Vermont annual inspection~~ on an annual, quarterly, or monthly basis selected by the owner or lessee and reconciled upon renewal of the vehicle registration or within 60 days after a terminating event that closes the mileage reporting period.

Sec. 19. INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) the mileage-based user fee for a BEV pleasure car be approximately equivalent to the average amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue from the use of a non-PEV pleasure car registered in Vermont and the average amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue and Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fee from the use of a PHEV pleasure car; and

(2) that the mileage-based user fee for BEV pleasure cars will be an interim step towards gradually expanding the mileage-based user fee to all motor vehicles.

Sec. 20. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE; FUNDING; DESIGN; UPDATES

The Agency of Transportation shall report to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee on or before September 30, 2025 and December 15, 2025 regarding the status of federal grants and other funding for the design of the mileage-based user fee pursuant to the provisions of 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29, as amended by Sec. 12 of this act, and the Agency’s progress in designing the mileage-based user fee.

* * * Authority to Transfer Monies in State Fiscal Year 2026 * * *

Sec. 21. AUTHORIZATION TO USE MONIES TO CONTINUE
PARTNERSHIP WITH DRIVE ELECTRIC VERMONT IN STATE
FISCAL YEAR 2026

In State fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Transportation is authorized to spend up to \$325,000.00 in remaining monies appropriated to the Electrify Your Fleet Program in State Fiscal Year 2024 to continue the Agency of Transportation’s partnership with Drive Electric Vermont. The monies shall be used for programs and activities that support increased ownership and use of PEVs in the State through:

(1) stakeholder coordination;

(2) consumer education and outreach;

(3) infrastructure development; and

(4) the provision of technical assistance and support to Vermont municipalities and Vermont businesses desiring to electrify their vehicle fleets.

* * * Consideration of Vehicle Miles Traveled in Project Planning * * *

Sec. 22. 19 V.S.A. § 1 is amended to read:

§ 1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this title:

* * *

(26) “Vehicle miles traveled” means the estimated sum of the miles traveled by all motor vehicle trips within a specific area during a calendar year.

Sec. 23. 19 V.S.A. § 10b is amended to read:

§ 10b. STATEMENT OF POLICY; GENERAL

(a) The Agency shall be the responsible agency of the State for the development of transportation policy. It shall develop a mission statement to reflect:

(1) that State transportation policy shall be to encompass, coordinate, and integrate all modes of transportation and to consider complete streets, as defined in section 2401 of this title, principles; and

(2) the need for transportation projects that will improve the State's economic infrastructure; ~~as well as the use of resources in efficient, coordinated, integrated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound ways;~~ reduce vehicle miles traveled within the State when feasible; and that will be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) issued under 30 V.S.A. § 202b.

* * *

Sec. 24. 19 V.S.A. § 10c is amended to read:

§ 10c. STATEMENT OF POLICY; HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

* * *

(c) In choosing between the improvement of an existing highway and complete reconstruction, the Agency shall weigh the following factors:

* * *

(9) the impact on the historic, scenic, and aesthetic values of the municipality, as interpreted by the municipality, in which the highway is located; ~~and~~

(10) if it is a forest highway under federal jurisdiction; and

(11) opportunities to reduce vehicle miles traveled or otherwise reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to the highway.

* * *

Sec. 25. 19 V.S.A. § 10i is amended to read:

§ 10i. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

* * *

(c) Transportation Program. The Transportation Program shall be developed in a fiscally responsible manner to accomplish the following objectives:

* * *

- (3) strengthening the economy, protecting the quality of the natural environment, and improving Vermonters' quality of life; ~~and~~
- (4) achieving the recommendations of the CEP; and
- (5) striving to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

* * *

* * * Medical Transports * * *

Sec. 26. PUBLIC TRANSIT DEMAND RESPONSE VOLUNTEER
COORDINATORS; GRANTS; APPROPRIATION

(a) The Agency of Transportation is authorized to utilize up to \$600,000.00 in one-time funds appropriated from the Transportation Fund to the Agency of Transportation in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of providing grants to public transit agencies to hire volunteer coordinators. Volunteer coordinators hired with grants provided pursuant to this section shall be responsible for the identification, recruitment, and retention of volunteers to provide transportation services to individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs.

(b) The Agency shall, to the extent possible, seek to provide grants to public transit providers in a manner that is geographically balanced and ensures the distribution of volunteer coordinators throughout the State.

(c) Not later than December 15, 2026, the Agency, in consultation with public transit agencies that receive grants pursuant to this section, shall submit a written report the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the extent to which grants issued pursuant to this section resulted in an increase in volunteer capacity in the State.

Sec. 27. MEDICAID NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

In fiscal year 2026, prior to executing a contract to provide Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation services, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall provide to the Joint Fiscal Committee for review and approval a detailed analysis demonstrating that by executing such a contract:

- (1) there will be no degradation of service to eligible individuals; and
- (2) the financial stability of the State's public transportation systems will be maintained.

Sec. 28. VOLUNTEERS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES;
BACKGROUND CHECKS; EXPANSION OF VOLUNTEER
POOL; REPORT

(a) On or before July 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall commence meeting with the Vermont Public Transit Association, the Agency of Transportation, and, in the discretion of the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, other stakeholders to identify potential, federally permissible opportunities to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers. As part of this work, the Department and Association shall collaborate to determine if there are specific classes of offenses that currently prevent volunteer drivers from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program.

(1) The Vermont Public Transit Association shall, to the extent possible, gather and provide to the Department anonymized information from its members regarding:

(A) the number of potential volunteers who were barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program due to a background check during the past year;

(B) which of the background checks currently required by the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program resulted in potential volunteers being barred from providing transportation services, broken out by percentage; and

(C) a summary of the offenses that resulted in potential volunteers being barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program, broken out by:

(i) the type of offense;

(ii) whether the offense was a felony or misdemeanor;

(iii) whether the offense was under State or federal law;

(iv) the percentage of potential volunteers who were barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program for each type of offense; and

(v) to the extent that it is possible to determine, the number of rides that could have been provided by the individuals barred under each type of offense.

(2) The Department shall utilize the information provided by the Association pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to determine, to the extent possible, whether the identified offenses are:

(A) fraud-based or otherwise implicate potential Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse;

(B) an offense that otherwise bars an individual from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program; or

(C) an offense that caused harm to an individual other than the offender, or otherwise negatively impacted the safety of the general public.

(b) The Department of Vermont Health Access and the Vermont Public Transit Association shall, on or before January 30, 2026, make themselves available to provide an update to the House Committees on Transportation and on Health Care and to the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health and Welfare regarding the work performed pursuant to this section and opportunities that were identified to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers.

Sec. 29. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS; PUBLICITY; OUTREACH

(a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Vermont Public Transit Association, shall identify and pursue opportunities to communicate with the Vermont driving public regarding volunteer and community driver participation in the State's demand response transportation programs, including the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities program and the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program. Outreach conducted pursuant to this section may include:

(1) invitations for individuals to voluntarily indicate their interest through the operator licensing and vehicle registration processes, subject to any data privacy requirements under State or federal law;

(2) notices or other public outreach placed on the Department's website or other internet-based platforms; and

(3) messaging by the Agency of Transportation on social media platforms, including providing links to informational resources provided by the Vermont Public Transit Association.

(b) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall develop informational materials related to eligibility for the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program. The Department shall, in consultation with the Agency of Transportation and other relevant stakeholders, make the materials available to the public on the Department's website and other internet-based platforms.

Sec. 30. COORDINATION OF HEALTH CARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES; WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, shall convene a working group to improve the coordination of health care and transportation services in relation to individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs. The working group shall be composed of stakeholders identified by the Secretary in consultation with the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, including representatives of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, independent dialysis and methadone facilities, and the Vermont Public Transportation Association.

(b) The working group shall examine various options for improving the coordination of health care and transportation services, including:

(1) opportunities to coordinate the scheduling of health care appointments and treatments to maximize the use of shared rides; and

(2) opportunities to improve communication between the public transit agencies and health care providers to facilitate coordination of health care and transportation services for individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs.

(c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary and Commissioner shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Transportation and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health and Welfare with the working group's findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

* * * Vehicle Identification Numbers for Certain Vehicles * * *

Sec. 31. ULTRA-LOW VOLUME VEHICLE MANUFACTURING; KIT-CARS; HOMEBUILT MOTOR VEHICLES; VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER; REPORT

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources and representatives of the ultra-low volume vehicle manufacturing industry in Vermont, shall examine processes for issuing vehicle identification numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles and opportunities to facilitate the registration of such vehicles.

(2) As used in this section:

(A) "Homebuilt motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle that is constructed or assembled by an individual from new or used parts, or both, and is not a kit-car.

(B) “Kit-car” means a motor vehicle that is constructed by an individual from a manufactured kit that includes some or all parts and components necessary to construct the motor vehicle.

(C) “Ultra-low volume motor vehicle” means a vehicle that is manufactured for sale by a manufacturer whose annual worldwide production is not more than 325 motor vehicles.

(b) In preparing the report, the Commissioner shall:

(1) examine the potential to waive some or all Vermont motor vehicle emissions requirements for ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles;

(2) identify a cost-effective process for certifying the safety of ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles; and

(3) develop a streamlined process to provide State Vehicle Identification Numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles.

(c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the Commissioner’s findings and identifying any legislative action necessary to enable the issuance of vehicle identification numbers to and registration of ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles.

* * * Railroad Lease Extensions * * *

Sec. 32. 5 V.S.A. § 3405 is amended to read:

§ 3405. LEASE FOR CONTINUED OPERATION

(a) The Secretary, as agent for the State, with the approval of the General Assembly, or if the General Assembly is not in session, approval of the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee, is authorized to lease or otherwise arrange for the continued operation of all or any State-owned railroad property to any responsible person, provided that approval for the operation, if necessary, is granted by the federal Surface Transportation Board under 49 C.F.R. Part 1150 (certificate to construct, acquire, or operate railroad lines). The transaction shall be subject to any further terms and conditions as in the opinion of the Secretary are necessary and appropriate to accomplish the purpose of this chapter.

(b) To preserve continuity of service on State-owned railroads, the Secretary may enter into a short-term lease or operating agreement, for a term not to exceed six months, with a responsible railroad operator. The Secretary

shall notify the House and Senate Committees on Transportation within 10 calendar days after entering into any lease or agreement pursuant to this subsection.

(c) The Secretary shall notify the House and Senate Committees on Transportation or, if the General Assembly is not in session, the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee when there are 12 months remaining on the operating lease for any State-owned railroad, and when there are 12 months remaining on a lease extension for the operating lease for any State-owned railroad.

* * * Dig Safe * * *

Sec. 33. 30 V.S.A. § 7006 is amended to read:

§ 7006. MARKING OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITIES

A company notified in accordance with section 7005 of this title shall, within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, ~~of~~ after the receipt of the notice, mark the approximate location of its underground utility facilities in the area of the proposed excavation activities; provided, however, if the company advises the person that the proposed excavation area is of such length or size that the company cannot reasonably mark all of the underground utility facilities within 48 72 hours, the person shall notify the company of the specific locations in which the excavation activities will first occur and the company shall mark facilities in those locations within 48 72 hours and the remaining facilities within a reasonable time thereafter. A company and an excavator may by agreement fix a later time for the company's marking of the facilities, provided the marking is made prior to excavation activities. For the purposes of this chapter, the approximate location of underground facilities shall be marked with stakes, paint, or other physical means as designated by the Commission.

Sec. 34. 30 V.S.A. § 7006a is amended to read:

§ 7006a. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITY
MARKINGS

After a company has marked its underground facilities in accordance with section 7006 of this title, the excavator shall be responsible for maintenance of the designated markings. In the event said markings are obliterated, destroyed, or removed, the person engaged in excavation activities shall notify the System referred to in section 7002 of this title that remarking is needed. The System shall then notify all member companies whose facilities may be affected. ~~The~~ Each applicable company shall within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, following receipt of the notice, remark the location of its underground utility facilities.

* * * Legal Trails * * *

Sec. 35. 19 V.S.A. chapter 3 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 3. TOWN HIGHWAYS

§ 301. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(2) ~~“Legislative body” includes boards of selectmen, aldermen, and village trustees~~ means a “legislative body” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

(3) ~~“Selectmen” includes village trustees and aldermen~~ “Selectboard” means a “selectboard” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

* * *

(8) “Trail” means a public right-of-way that is not a highway and that:

(A) municipalities have the authority to exclusively or cooperatively maintain;

(B) ~~previously~~ was a designated town highway having the same width as the designated town highway, or a lesser width if so designated; or

~~(B)(C)~~ a new public right-of-way laid out as a trail by the ~~selectmen~~ legislative body for the purpose of providing access to abutting properties or for recreational use. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to independently authorize the condemnation of land for recreational purposes or to affect the authority of ~~selectmen~~ legislative bodies to reasonably regulate the uses of recreational trails.

§ 302. CLASSIFICATION OF TOWN HIGHWAYS

(a) For the purposes of this section and receiving State aid, all town highways shall be categorized into one or another of the following classes:

* * *

(2) Class 2 town highways are those town highways selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable, they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to town and to places that by their nature have more than normal amount of traffic. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, with the approval of the Agency, shall determine which highways are to be class 2 highways.

(3) Class 3 town highways:

(A) Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 or 2 highways. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, after conference with a representative of the Agency, shall determine which highways are class 3 town highways.

* * *

(5) Trails shall not be considered highways ~~and the town.~~ A municipality shall have the authority to maintain trails but shall not be responsible for any maintenance, including culverts and bridges.

* * *

§ 303. TOWN HIGHWAY CONTROL

Town highways shall be under the general supervision and control of the ~~selectmen~~ legislative body of the town where the roads are located. ~~Selectmen~~ The legislative body of a town shall supervise all expenditures.

§ 304. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD

(a) It shall be the duty and responsibility of the selectboard of the town to, or acting as a board, it shall have the authority to:

* * *

(16) Unless the town electorate votes otherwise, under the provisions of 17 V.S.A. § 2646, appoint a road commissioner, or remove ~~him or her~~ the road commissioner from office, pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2651. Road commissioners, elected or appointed, shall have only the powers and authority regarding highways granted to them by the selectboard.

* * *

(24) Maintain trails, but shall not be required to maintain trails.

* * *

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 36. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 32 (railroad leases) and 33 and 34 (dig safe) shall take effect on passage.

(b) Sec. 5 (Agency of Transportation dashboard) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

(c) Sec. 6 (repeal of 19 V.S.A. § 10g reports) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(d) The remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Walker of Swanton** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

Rep. Walker of Swanton
Rep. Corcoran of Bennington
Rep. Burke of Brattleboro

On motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the rules were suspended and House action on the bill was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Message from the Senate No. 51

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

Pursuant to the request of the House for a Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on House bill entitled:

H. 488. An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation.

The President announced the appointment as members of such Committee on the part of the Senate:

Senator Westman
Senator Perchlik
Senator White

Pursuant to the request of the House for a Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on House bill entitled:

H. 493. An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government.

The President announced the appointment as members of such Committee on the part of the Senate:

Senator Perchlik
Senator Westman
Senator Lyons

The Governor has informed the Senate that on the 1st day of May, he approved and signed bills originating in the Senate of the following titles:

S. 9. An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault.

S. 30. An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107.

The Senate has on its part adopted Senate concurrent resolution of the following title:

S.C.R. 5. Senate concurrent resolution commemorating the centennial of Porter Medical Center in Middlebury.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 119. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Oak Meadow homeschool curriculum developer and distance learning school on its 50th anniversary and extending best wishes for the future.

H.C.R. 120. House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as National Tennis Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 121. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rutland High School cheerleading program on winning a record 11th consecutive Division I championship.

H.C.R. 122. House concurrent resolution recognizing the week of May 6–12 as National Nurses Week in Vermont.

H.C.R. 123. House concurrent resolution honoring Shaun Murphy of Guilford for his nearly quarter century of exemplary educational governance public service.

H.C.R. 124. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Bennington Free Library on its 160th anniversary.

H.C.R. 125. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 30th anniversary of Garlic Town U.S.A., a celebration of "flavor, community, and tradition".

H.C.R. 126. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Spirit of the ADA Award winners.

H.C.R. 127. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of Act 91 of 2000, establishing Vermont as the first state to legalize civil unions.

H.C.R. 128. House concurrent resolution designating May 6, 2025 as Homelessness Awareness Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 129. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and eleven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Toof of St. Albans Town**, the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 24.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 119

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Oak Meadow homeschool curriculum developer and distance learning school on its 50th anniversary and extending best wishes for the future

H.C.R. 120

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as National Tennis Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 121

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rutland High School cheerleading program on winning a record 11th consecutive Division I championship

H.C.R. 122

House concurrent resolution recognizing the week of May 6–12 as National Nurses Week in Vermont

H.C.R. 123

House concurrent resolution honoring Shaun Murphy of Guilford for his nearly quarter century of exemplary educational governance public service

H.C.R. 124

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Bennington Free Library on its 160th anniversary

H.C.R. 125

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 30th anniversary of Garlic Town U.S.A., a celebration of "flavor, community, and tradition"

H.C.R. 126

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Spirit of the ADA Award winners

H.C.R. 127

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of Act 91 of 2000, establishing Vermont as the first state to legalize civil unions

H.C.R. 128

House concurrent resolution designating May 6, 2025 as Homelessness Awareness Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 129

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Vermont Covered Bridge Society

S.C.R. 5

Senate concurrent resolution commemorating the centennial of Porter Medical Center in Middlebury

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Isaiah Gonzales, student leader at Vermont Law and Graduate School, South Royalton.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Braeden Schuren Burns of Montpelier led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 5th day of May, 2025, he signed bills originating in the House of the following titles:

H. 17 An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown

H. 21 An act relating to service of writs of possession

Bills Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

Senate bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, affecting the revenue of the State, pursuant to House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Ways and Means:

S. 63

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to modifying the regulatory duties of the Green Mountain Care Board

S. 109

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

S. 127

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to housing and housing development

Bills Referred to Committee on Appropriations

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Notice Calendar, carrying appropriations, under House Rule 35(a), were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 46

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Rare Disease Advisory Council

H. 230

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

Message from the Senate No. 52

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered bills originating in the House of the following titles:

H. 41. An act relating to abuse of the dead body of a person.

H. 137. An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services.

H. 494. An act relating to capital construction and State bonding.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposals of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 219. An act relating to establishing the Department of Corrections' Family Support Program.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 25. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on May 9, 2025.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 81**

Offered by Representatives Krowinski of Burlington, Arsenault of Williston, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Boyden of Cambridge, Burke of Brattleboro, Burrows of West Windsor, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Casey of Montpelier, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Coffin of Cavendish, Cole of Hartford, Corcoran of Bennington, Cordes of Bristol, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Garofano of Essex, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Gregoire of Fairfield, Harrison of Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Holcombe of Norwich, Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, Hunter of Manchester, Kleppner of Burlington, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Krasnow of South Burlington, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne,

LaLonde of South Burlington, Lipsky of Stowe, Logan of Burlington, Long of Newfane, Luneau of St. Albans City, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McCoy of Poultney, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Morris of Springfield, Nugent of South Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Page of Newport City, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, Scheu of Middlebury, Sibia of Dover, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, Surprenant of Barnard, Sweeney of Shelburne, Tomlinson of Winooski, Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, Wells of Brownington, White of Waitsfield, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Bakersfield Select Board member Brenda Churchill

Whereas, to many, Brenda Churchill was best known as a leading advocate for transgender rights within the LGBTQIA+ community, but this was not her sole civic or political engagement, and

Whereas, for over two decades, she was employed in the telecommunications industry and later brought this professional expertise to her service on the board of Northwest Fiberworx, the Communications Union District serving Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, and

Whereas, Brenda Churchill served as a key aide in Christine Hallquist's 2018 gubernatorial campaign, and she completed the Emerge Vermont candidate training program, and also served on the organization's board, and

Whereas, as the legislative liaison for the LGBTQIA Alliance of Vermont, her efforts were critical in legislative enactments related to ethnic and social equity studies in public schools; the provision of gender-neutral bathrooms; adding a non-binary designation option for Vermont drivers' licenses; and establishing a birth certificate authentication process, and

Whereas, Brenda Churchill's interests also focused on municipal government in the Town of Bakersfield, where she served as a zoning official and the local American Rescue Plan manager, and she won election as both a justice of the peace and select board member, and

Whereas, during the 2020 U.S. Census, she served as one of the Vermonters performing the vital role of data collector for the decennial headcount, and

Whereas, when not engaged in one of her many public or nonprofit sector roles, Brenda Churchill loved riding her bright orange Jeep off-trail on interesting journeys, and

Whereas, Brenda Churchill's participation in local and State government culminated in being selected as a member of the Vermont Commission on Women, and

Whereas, on January 13, 2025, Brenda Churchill died at 67 years of age, and her survivors include her partner, Sarah Chapman; her children; and her grandchildren, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends its sincere condolences to the family of Brenda Churchill, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to her family, the Bakersfield Town Clerk, and the Vermont Commission on Women.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 104

Offered by Committee on Human Services

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2025 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont

Whereas, according to the U.S. Child Welfare Information Gateway, there are over 365,000 children and youth in foster care, and "77 percent of eligible youth in foster care, ages 14–21 years old, left care without receiving the federally funded services necessary to prepare them for adulthood and independent living," and

Whereas, the Department for Children and Families reports that as of April 1, 2025, 868 Vermont children were in foster care, there were 820 licensed foster caregivers and 174 caregiver licenses were pending, and approximately 35 percent of foster caregivers were family members or close friends who voluntarily secured foster care licensure, and

Whereas, on May 10, 1988, at the initiative of the U.S. Children's Bureau, President Ronald Reagan signed Proclamation 5820 establishing Foster Care Month, which continues to be observed annually to direct the public's attention to the nation's system of foster care, and

Whereas, Proclamation 5820 acknowledged that "the family has the prime responsibility for nurturing children...[but] some parents are unable to provide a minimally acceptable level of care for their children, and temporary or permanent alternative placement is necessary...[and that] foster care must...[focus] on the well-being of the child," and

Whereas, the 2025 theme for National Foster Care Month is “Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities.” — a theme that “highlights the need to create a child welfare system that authentically engages and supports young people who are preparing to leave foster care,” a current topic of great concern in the foster care community, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes May 2025 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the System of Care Unit Director at the Department for Children and Families’ Family Services Division.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 123

Offered by Representatives Eastes of Guilford, Burke of Brattleboro, Goodnow of Brattleboro, Kornheiser of Brattleboro, and Mrowicki of Putney

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution honoring Shaun Murphy of Guilford for his nearly quarter century of exemplary educational governance public service

Whereas, as a school board member, Shaun Murphy has strived to preserve the best of Vermont’s system of public education while thinking forward towards the future, and

Whereas, his involvement with public education started in 2001 as a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee established to develop the renovation plan for Brattleboro Union High School and to prepare a bond issue, and

Whereas, this milestone odyssey in educational planning and strategizing proved successful, as the largest then-to-date bond issue in Vermont was passed, the construction work completed, and the school was able to maintain its accreditation, and

Whereas, as a result of his membership on this unusual panel, Shaun Murphy developed a strong desire to continue his participation as a citizen public education overseer, and

Whereas, not surprisingly, the BUHS District 6 Board, then responsible for the oversight of Brattleboro Union High School, was his destination, and

Whereas, in 2019, the Windham Southeast School District was created, replacing the BUHS District 6 Board, and Shaun Murphy joined this new school committee and served diligently until March 2025, and

Whereas, for the period 2024–2025, Shaun Murphy also served on the separate Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board, and for many years, he was a member of the Guilford School Board, and

Whereas, throughout his over two decades of school board service, Shaun Murphy was committed to supporting the highest quality educational experience, and he advocated for the rights of all students, especially those of color, those who were LGBTQIA+, and individuals with disabilities, and

Whereas, complex topics, such as school financing, never intimidated him; he always worked with dignity and courtesy, observing the highest ethical standards and acting with courage and conviction, even during times of stress; and his public school board service constituted the highest strata of excellence, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Shaun Murphy of Guilford for his nearly quarter century of exemplary educational governance public service, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Shaun Murphy.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 2, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 128

Offered by Representatives McGill of Bridport, Arsenault of Williston, Bartley of Fairfax, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Bluemle of Burlington, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Burrows of West Windsor, Cina of Burlington, Cole of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Goldman of Rockingham, Harple of Glover, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Krasnow of South Burlington, LaMont of Morristown, Logan of Burlington, Maguire of Rutland City, Mrowicki of Putney, Nugent of South Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Scheu of Middlebury, Stevens of Waterbury, Stone of Burlington, Tomlinson of Winooski, White of Waitsfield, White of Bethel, Wood of Waterbury, and Yacovone of Morristown

House concurrent resolution designating May 6, 2025 as Homelessness Awareness Day in Vermont

Whereas, the unhoused are our neighbors, community members, parents, children, seniors, and people with disabilities, and

Whereas, the 2024 Point-in-Time Count report found that 3,458 Vermonters, including 737 children, were without secure housing, and

Whereas, according to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's most recent Vermont Housing Needs Assessment, by 2029, Vermont will need 3,295 homes to address homelessness and 3,957 homes to normalize vacancy rates, and

Whereas, on an evening in April 2025, Vermont's statewide shelter capacity was 655 households, and all were full, and in addition, there were 1,424 homeless adults and 467 children housed through the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program, and

Whereas, Black Vermonters are significantly less likely to own their home and are unhoused at a staggering rate compared with White Vermonters, and

Whereas, since 2020, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has invested in affordable housing initiatives that have created 1,964 new rental units and 170 new homes for sale, and supported 1,077 lots across 11 manufactured home communities, and

Whereas, today, May 6, 2025, individuals concerned with the issues associated with unhoused Vermonters are visiting the State House to inform legislators on the impact of homelessness on life in the State of Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates May 6, 2025 as Homelessness Awareness Day in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 2, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Bill Committed**H. 86**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Chloride Contamination Reduction Program at the Agency of Natural Resources

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Chapin of East Montpelier**, the bill was committed to the Committee on Environment.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 504**

Rep. Pinsonault of Dorset, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Rutland

Reported in favor of its passage.

Rep. Higley of Lowell, for the Committee on Ways and Means, reported that the bill ought to pass when amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 2, 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 9, in section 8.5, in subdivision (7), following the words “replacement of public works” by striking out “, police,” and inserting in lieu thereof “, police;”

Second: In Sec. 2, 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 9, in section 8.5, in subdivision (10), following the words “shall not exceed” by striking out “\$0.0180” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$0.018”

Third: By adding a Sec. 2a to read as follows:

Sec. 2a. REDESIGNATION

24 App. V.S.A. chapter 155E (Town of West Rutland) is redesignated as 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 162.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Ways and Means agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 51

Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock, for the Committee on Ways and Means, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 32 V.S.A. § 5830f is amended to read:

§ 5830f. VERMONT CHILD TAX CREDIT

(a) A resident individual or part-year resident individual who is entitled to a child tax credit under the laws of the United States or who would have been entitled to a child tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual or the individual's spouse does not have a taxpayer identification number shall be entitled to a refundable credit against the tax imposed by section 5822 of this title for the taxable year. The total credit per taxable year shall be in the amount of \$1,000.00 per qualifying child, as defined under 26 U.S.C. § 152(c) but notwithstanding the taxpayer identification number requirements under 26 U.S.C. § 24(e) and (h)(7), who is five ~~six~~ years of age or younger as of the close of the calendar year in which the taxable year of the taxpayer begins. For a part-year resident individual, the amount of the credit shall be multiplied by the percentage that the individual's income that is earned or received during the period of the individual's residency in this State bears to the individual's total income. An otherwise eligible individual shall be entitled to the credit under this section without regard for the laws of the United States pertaining to the amount of federal child tax credit that may be refunded.

* * *

Sec. 2. 32 V.S.A. § 5828b is amended to read:

§ 5828b. EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

(a) A resident individual or part-year resident individual who is entitled to an earned income tax credit granted under the laws of the United States ~~or who would have been entitled to an earned income tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number~~ shall be entitled to a credit against the tax imposed for

each year by section 5822 of this title. The credit shall be for an individual who claims one or more qualifying children 38 percent or for an individual who does not claim one or more qualifying children 100 percent of the earned income tax credit granted to the individual under the laws of the United States ~~or that would have been granted to the individual under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number~~, multiplied by the percentage that the individual's income that is earned or received during the period of the individual's residency in this State bears to the individual's total income. A resident individual or part-year resident individual who would have been entitled to or granted an earned income tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number shall be entitled to a credit under this section.

* * *

Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 5830e is amended to read:

§ 5830e. RETIREMENT INCOME; SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

(a) Social Security income. The portion of federally taxable Social Security benefits excluded from taxable income under subdivision 5811(21)(B)(iv) of this chapter shall be as follows:

(1) For taxpayers whose filing status is single, married filing separately, head of household, or surviving spouse:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, all federally taxable benefits received under the federal Social Security Act shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00 but less than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, the percentage of federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, no amount of the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded under this section.

(2) For taxpayers whose filing status is married filing jointly:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, all federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00 but less than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, the percentage of federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, no amount of the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded under this section.

(b) Civil Service Retirement System income. The portion of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System excluded from taxable income under subdivision 5811(21)(B)(iv) of this title shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section and shall be determined as follows:

(1) For taxpayers whose filing status is single, married filing separately, head of household, or surviving spouse:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00 but less than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, the percentage of the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement

System to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, no amount of the income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded under this section.

(2) For taxpayers whose filing status is married filing jointly:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00 but less than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, the percentage of the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, no amount of the income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded under this section.

(c) Other contributory retirement systems; earnings not covered by Social Security. Other retirement income, except U.S. military retirement income pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, received by a taxpayer of this State shall be excluded pursuant to subsection (b) of this section as though the income were received from the Civil Service Retirement System and shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section, provided that:

* * *

(d) U.S. military retirement income and U.S. military survivor benefit income. For taxpayers of any filing status, U.S. military retirement income, and U.S. military survivor benefit income received by an eligible beneficiary, received by a taxpayer of this State shall be excluded from taxable income under subdivision 5811(21)(B)(iv) of this chapter as follows:

(1) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to \$125,000.00, all federally taxable U.S. military retirement income and survivor benefit income shall be excluded.

(2) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than \$125,000.00 but less than \$175,000.00, the percentage of federally taxable U.S. military retirement income and survivor benefit income to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over \$125,000.00, determined by:

(A) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from \$175,000.00;

(B) dividing the value under subdivision (A) of this subdivision (2) by \$50,000.00; and

(C) multiplying the value under subdivision (B) of this subdivision (2) by the federally taxable U.S. military retirement income and survivor benefit income received.

(3) pursuant to subsection (b) of this section as though the income were received from the Civil Service Retirement System and shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section. If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than \$175,000.00, no amount of the federally taxable U.S. military retirement income and survivor benefit income received shall be excluded under this section.

(e)(1) Requirement to elect one exclusion. A taxpayer of this State who is eligible during the taxable year for more than one of the exclusions under subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section the Social Security income exclusion under subsection (a) of this section and any of the exclusions under subsections (b) (d) of this section shall elect either only one of the exclusions for which the taxpayer is eligible under subsections (b) (d) of this section or the Social Security income exclusion under subsection (a) of this section, but not both, for the taxable year. A taxpayer of this State who is eligible during the taxable year for more than one of the exclusions under subsections (b) (d) of this section shall elect only one of the exclusions for which the taxpayer is eligible for the taxable year.

(2) A taxpayer of this State who is eligible during the taxable year for the military retirement and survivor benefit exclusion under subsection (d) of this section may elect that exclusion regardless of whether the taxpayer also elects an exclusion under subsections (a)–(c) of this section.

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 5813 is amended to read:

§ 5813. STATUTORY PURPOSES

* * *

(aa) The statutory purpose of the Vermont veteran tax credit in section 5830g of this title is to provide financial support to Vermonters who served in the U.S. uniformed services.

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. § 5830g is added to read:

§ 5830g. VERMONT VETERAN TAX CREDIT

(a) A resident individual or part-year resident individual who served in the uniformed services shall be entitled to a refundable credit against the tax imposed by section 5822 of this title for the taxable year.

(b) A taxpayer shall be eligible for the credit under this section provided the taxpayer has a discharge record, or other record of separation from active duty, verifying service in the uniformed services.

(c)(1) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to \$25,000.00, the amount of tax credit provided under this section shall be \$250.00.

(2) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than \$25,000.00 but less than \$30,000.00, the amount of credit shall be \$250.00 less \$5.00 per \$100.00 of federal adjusted gross income exceeding \$25,000.00 of federal adjusted gross income.

(3) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is \$30,000.00 or greater, no amount of credit shall be provided under this section.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, this act shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2025 and apply to taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to Vermont income tax exclusions and tax credits”

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, **Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 142. Nays, 2.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Garofano of Essex	Morgan, M. of Milton *
Austin of Colchester	Goldman of Rockingham	Morris of Springfield
Bailey of Hyde Park	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Morrissey of Bennington
Bartley of Fairfax	Goslant of Northfield	Morrow of Weston
Berbeco of Winooski	Graning of Jericho	Mrowicki of Putney
Birong of Vergennes	Greer of Bennington	Nelson of Derby
Bishop of Colchester	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nielsen of Brandon
Bluemle of Burlington	Hango of Berkshire	Nigro of Bennington
Bosch of Clarendon	Harple of Glover	North of Ferrisburgh
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harrison of Chittenden	Noyes of Wolcott
Boutin of Barre City	Harvey of Castleton	Nugent of South Burlington
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Brady of Williston	Higley of Lowell	Ode of Burlington
Branagan of Georgia	Holcombe of Norwich	Oliver of Sheldon
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Randolph	Olson of Starksboro
Burditt of West Rutland	Hooper of Burlington	Page of Newport City
Burke of Brattleboro	Houghton of Essex Junction	Parsons of Newbury
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Howard of Rutland City	Pezzo of Colchester
Burrows of West Windsor	Howland of Rutland Town	Pinsonault of Dorset
Burt of Cabot	Hunter of Manchester	Pouech of Hinesburg
Canfield of Fair Haven	James of Manchester	Powers of Waterford
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Kascenska of Burke	Priestley of Bradford
Casey of Hubbardton	Keyser of Rutland City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kimbell of Woodstock	Quimby of Lyndon
Charlton of Chester	Kleppner of Burlington	Rachelson of Burlington
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Satcowitz of Randolph
Coffin of Cavendish	Krasnow of South Burlington	Scheu of Middlebury
Cole of Hartford	Labor of Morgan	Sibilia of Dover
Conlon of Cornwall	Lalley of Shelburne	Southworth of Walden
Cooper of Pownal	LaLonde of South Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown	Steady of Milton *
Cordes of Bristol	Laroche of Franklin	Stevens of Waterbury
Critchlow of Colchester	Lipsky of Stowe	Stone of Burlington
Demar of Enosburgh	Logan of Burlington	Surprenant of Barnard
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Long of Newfane	Sweeney of Shelburne
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Luneau of St. Albans City	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dodge of Essex	Maguire of Rutland City	Taylor of Milton
	Malay of Pittsford	Tomlinson of Winooski
		Toof of St. Albans Town
		Torre of Moretown

Dolan of Essex Junction	Marcotte of Coventry	Walker of Swanton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Masland of Thetford	Waszazak of Barre City *
Donahue of Northfield	McCoy of Poultney	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Duke of Burlington	McFaun of Barre Town	Wells of Brownington
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McGill of Bridport	White of Waitsfield
Eastes of Guilford	Micklus of Milton	White of Bethel
Emmons of Springfield	Mihaly of Calais	Winter of Ludlow
Feltus of Lyndon	Minier of South Burlington	Wood of Waterbury
Galfetti of Barre Town	Morgan, L. of Milton	Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Black of Essex *	Sheldon of Middlebury

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Bartholomew of Hartland	Casey of Montpelier	McCann of Montpelier
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Christie of Hartford	

Rep. Black of Essex provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Knowing that we are facing catastrophic Federal Medicaid cuts, I cannot in good conscience vote to forgo revenue from pensioners that I know goes to support all the suicide prevention programs we have worked so hard to expand in Vermont. I’m voting no for all the veterans who will die by suicide without those supports and programs.”

Rep. M. Morgan of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes today on S.51. I did so, however, with great trepidation. Numerous fellow Vermonters have reached out to me on the military tax relief component of this bill. Their viewpoint is the same as mine. They are perplexed why we did not fully exempt all military retiree pensions.”

Rep. Steady of Milton provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes with a great deal of hesitation, due to the 13.5 million dollar loss in revenues. I am remaining optimistic that, as presented, monies will be recouped by military families moving back to Vermont and staying after their service.”

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am proud to support this bill which honors not only military retirees, but also our most vulnerable and low-income veterans, far too many of whom live in poverty, or are experiencing homelessness. This vote is dedicated to Navy veteran Edward Charles Waszazak Senior.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

**Favorable Reports; Second Reading;
Proposal of Amendment Agreed to; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 56

Rep. Stone of Burlington, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence.

Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans Town, for the Committee on Appropriations, reported in favor of its passage in concurrence.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans Town** moved that the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill in Sec. 1, Office of New Americans Study Committee; report, subsection (b), by striking out subdivision (4) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (4) to read as follows:

(4) six members, appointed by the Governor, one who must be a New American with lived experience, who shall include:

(A) one member, nominated by the Association of Africans Living in Vermont;

(B) one member, nominated by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants;

(C) one member, nominated by the Vermont Afghan Alliance;

(D) one member, nominated by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation;

(E) one member, nominated by Migrant Justice; and

(F) one member, nominated by the Vermont State College System.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

**Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration; Senate Proposal of
Amendment Not Concurred in; Committee of Conference Requested and
Appointed; Rules Suspended, Messaged to Senate Forthwith**

H. 494

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of
Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to capital construction and State bonding

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, legislative intent, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that of the \$111,965,288.44 authorized in this act, not more than \$62,314,761.44 shall be appropriated in the first year of the biennium, and the remainder shall be appropriated in the second year.

Second: By striking out Sec. 2, State buildings, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. STATE BUILDINGS

(a) The following sums are appropriated to the Department of Buildings and General Services, and the Commissioner is authorized to direct funds appropriated in this section to the projects contained in this section; however, no project shall be canceled unless the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions are notified before that action is taken.

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026:

<u>(1) Statewide, major maintenance:</u>	<u>\$7,138,401.00</u>
<u>(2) Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
<u>(3) Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program:</u>	<u>\$75,000.00</u>
<u>(4) Rutland, Asa Bloomer Building roof repair and sewage system upgrades:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
<u>(5) Rutland, multimodal garage renovation:</u>	<u>\$600,000.00</u>
<u>(6) Middlesex, Print and Postal uninterruptable power supply upgrade:</u>	<u>\$58,279.44</u>

(7) <u>Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(8) <u>Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
(c) <u>The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027:</u>	
(1) <u>Statewide, major maintenance:</u>	<u>\$8,500,000.00</u>
(2) <u>Statewide, planning, reuse, and contingency:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
(3) <u>Statewide, physical security enhancements:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
(4) <u>Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance:</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>
(5) <u>Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program:</u>	<u>\$75,000.00</u>
(6) <u>Montpelier, State House replacement of historic interior finishes:</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
(7) <u>Montpelier, 120 State Street HVAC – steam lines interior renovation:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(8) <u>Middlesex, Vermont State Archives roof replacement, main building:</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>
(9) <u>Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(10) <u>Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$14,371,680.44</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$15,225,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 2</u>	<u>\$29,596,680.44</u>

Third: By striking out Sec. 4, commerce and community development, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 4 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

(1) <u>Major maintenance at statewide historic sites:</u>	<u>\$550,000.00</u>
(2) <u>Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves:</u>	<u>\$46,000.00</u>
(3) <u>Roadside historic site markers:</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
(4) <u>Bennington, Battle Monument, maintenance of safety fencing, restoration, planning, and design:</u>	<u>\$425,000.00</u>

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

<u>(1) Major maintenance at statewide historic sites:</u>	<u>\$550,000.00</u>
<u>(2) Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves:</u>	<u>\$46,000.00</u>
<u>(3) Roadside historic site markers:</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$1,046,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$621,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 4</u>	<u>\$1,667,000.00</u>

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 5, grant programs, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 5. GRANT PROGRAMS

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

<u>(1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$300,000.00</u>

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

(1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program:
\$300,000.00

(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the sums appropriated in subdivisions (a)(5) and (b)(5) of this section be equally allocated between grants for human services and grants for educational facilities.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$1,800,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$2,100,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 5 \$3,900,000.00

Fifth: By striking out Sec. 14, judiciary, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 14 to read as follows:

Sec. 14. JUDICIARY

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Judiciary for the following projects:

(1) Woodstock Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system: \$100,000.00

(2) Essex County Courthouse, connector and security upgrades:
\$3,685,910.00

(3) Lamoille County Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system:
\$190,000.00

(b) The sum of \$1,100,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction.

Appropriation – FY 2026
\$5,075,910.00

Total Appropriation – Section 14
\$5,075,910.00

Sixth: In Sec. 19, FY 2026 and 2027; capital projects; FY 2026 appropriations act; intent; authorizations, by striking out subsection (c) and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (c) to read as follows:

(c) Authorizations; Capital Infrastructure subaccount. In FY 2026, spending authority for the following capital projects from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments are authorized as follows:

(1) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide major maintenance:
\$861,599.00

(2) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide planning, reuse, and contingency:
\$250,000.00

(3) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide physical security enhancements:
\$250,000.00

(4) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for State House repointing:
\$219,500.00

(5) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for an uninterruptable power supply system for the Middlesex print and postal facility:
\$250,000.00

(6) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction:
\$6,900,000.00

(7) to the Vermont Veterans' Home for the design and construction of the American unit:
\$1,500,000.00

(8) to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm at the Vermont Veterans' Home:
\$45,000.00

(9) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Bennington, high school redevelopment housing infrastructure:
\$1,100,000.00

(10) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Barre, Prospect Heights housing infrastructure: \$1,000,000.00

(11) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Brattleboro, Winston Prouty Center housing infrastructure: \$1,000,000.00

(12) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to support a site study focused on economic development, parking, housing, and flood mitigation for the 1.6-acre parcel at 87 State Street and parcels at 89 State Street and 42 Court Street: \$100,000.00

(13) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Hope Grove Recovery to establish a new recovery residence in St. Albans: \$250,000.00

(14) to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the purchase of a fire apparatus: \$275,000.00

(15) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Lake Champlain Walleye Association, Inc. to upgrade and repair the Walleye rearing, restoration, and stocking infrastructure: \$25,000.00

(16) to the Department of Public Safety for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the dry hydrant program: \$35,000.00

Seventh: By adding a new section to be Sec. 22a to read as follows:

Sec. 22a. CASH FUND; JOINT FISCAL OFFICE; REPORT

On or before December 15, 2025, the Joint Fiscal Office shall submit a report to the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions on considerations for use of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments under 32 V.S.A. § 1001b that:

(1) provides the historical context, including the economic rationale, for the Cash Fund;

(2) compares financial management practices for expenditures made through cash and through bonded dollars, including long-term financial impacts;

(3) distinguishes between the intended uses of the Capital Infrastructure subaccount and the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves subaccount;

(4) describes, for each year since the Cash Fund's inception:

(A) the sources of funds; and

(B) the annual expenditures from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount; and

(5) outlines the current legislative process by which appropriations are made from the Cash Fund.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Emmons of Springfield** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

Rep. Emmons of Springfield

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield

Rep. Headrick of Burlington

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House action on the bill was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and forty-seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by former Rep. Peter Anthony of Barre City.

House Bill Introduced

H. 515

By Rep. White of Bethel,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to in-state tuition for non-Vermont residents who do not have access to DEI programming in their home state public postsecondary institutions

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Education.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 25**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 25. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on May 9, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, May 9, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, May 13, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 504**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Rutland

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

Third Reading;**Bills Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment**

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment:

S. 51

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit

S. 56

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans

Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;**Third Reading Ordered****S. 87**

Rep. Goslant of Northfield, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to extradition procedures

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 4955 is amended to read:

§ 4955. COMMITMENT TO AWAIT EXTRADITION; BAIL

If upon examination it appears that the person held is the person charged with having committed the crime alleged and that the person probably committed the crime, and, except in cases arising under section 4946 of this title, that the person has fled from justice, the judge or magistrate shall commit the person to jail by a warrant, reciting the accusation, for such a time, not exceeding ~~30~~ 90 days, to be specified in the warrant as will enable the arrest of the accused to be made under a warrant of the Governor on a requisition of the executive authority of the state having jurisdiction of the offense, unless the accused give bail as provided in section 4956 of this title, or until the person shall be legally discharged. On request of the state, the hearing may be continued for up to three ~~working~~ business days, only for the purpose of determining whether the person probably committed the crime. Findings under this section may be based upon hearsay evidence or upon copies of affidavits, whether certified or not, made outside this State. It shall be sufficient for a finding that a person probably committed the crime that there is a current grand jury indictment from another state.

Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 4957 is amended to read:

§ 4957. EXTENDING TIME OF COMMITMENT

If the accused is not arrested under warrant of the Governor by the expiration of the time specified in the warrant, bond, or undertaking, such judge may discharge ~~him or her~~ or may recommit ~~him or her~~ the accused for a further period not to exceed ~~60~~ 30 days, or may again take bail for ~~his or her~~ the accused's appearance and surrender as provided in section 4956 of this title, but within a period not to exceed ~~60~~ 30 days after the date of such new bond.

Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A. § 4967 is amended to read:

§ 4967. WRITTEN WAIVER OF EXTRADITION PROCEEDINGS

(a)(1) Any person arrested in this State charged with having committed any crime in another state or alleged to have escaped from confinement, or broken the terms of ~~his or her~~ bail, probation, or parole may waive the issuance and service of the warrant provided for in sections 4947 and 4948 of this title and all other procedure incidental to extradition proceedings, by executing or subscribing in the presence of a judge of any court of record within this State a

writing that states that ~~he or she~~ the person consents to return to the demanding state; provided, however, before ~~such~~ the waiver ~~shall be~~ is executed or subscribed by ~~such~~ the person it ~~shall be the duty of such,~~ the judge to ~~shall~~ inform ~~such~~ the person of ~~his or her~~ the rights ~~right~~ to the issuance and service of a warrant of extradition and the right to obtain a writ of habeas corpus as provided for in section 4950 of this title.

(2) If the person previously signed an authenticated waiver of extradition to the demanding state, the waiver shall be presumed valid. If the person contests the validity of the previously signed waiver, the person bears the burden of proving that the waiver is not valid. If the court finds that the waiver is valid, it may proceed as if the person had consented to return to the demanding state in accordance with subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b) If and when such consent has been duly executed, it shall forthwith be forwarded to the office of the Governor of this State and filed therein. The judge shall direct the officer having such person in custody to deliver forthwith such person to the duly accredited agent or agents of the demanding state; and shall deliver or cause to be delivered to such agent or agents a copy of such consent; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the rights of the accused person to return voluntarily and without formality to the demanding state, nor shall this waiver procedure be deemed to be an exclusive procedure or to limit the powers, rights, or duties of the officers of the demanding state or of this State.

Sec. 4. 13 V.S.A. § 5043 is amended to read:

§ 5043. HEARING, COMMITMENT, DISCHARGE

(a) If an arrest is made in this State by an officer of another state in accordance with the provisions of section 5042 of this title, ~~he or she shall~~ the officer, without unnecessary delay, shall take the person arrested before a Superior judge of the unit in which the arrest was made, who shall conduct a hearing for the purpose of determining the lawfulness of the arrest.

(b) If the judge determines that the arrest was lawful, ~~he or she~~ the judge shall commit the person arrested to await for ~~a reasonable time~~ the issuance of an extradition warrant by the Governor of this State within 90 days or admit such person to bail pending the issuance of such warrant. The judge shall consider the issuance of a judicial warrant for the arrest of the person who has fled justice to Vermont from another state when determining the risk of flight from prosecution.

(c) If the judge determines that the arrest was unlawful, ~~he or she~~ the judge shall discharge the person arrested.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage and shall apply prospectively and not affect extraditions in process at the time of enactment.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**S. 44**

Rep. Arsenault of Williston, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to authorization to enter into certain immigration agreements

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 126**

Offered by Representatives Marcotte of Coventry, Bishop of Colchester, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cole of Hartford, Cooper of Pownal, Donahue of Northfield, Duke of Burlington, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Graning of Jericho, Maguire of Rutland City, McGill of Bridport, Micklus of Milton, Nielsen of Brandon, Noyes of Wolcott, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, White of Bethel, and Wood of Waterbury

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Spirit of the ADA Award winners

Whereas, the State of Vermont is strongly committed to providing equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of disability, age, color, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation, and

Whereas, when Vermonters of all abilities are afforded the opportunity to contribute their personal gifts, skills, and talents to the workforce, there is an enduring benefit for all from individual, collective, and economic perspectives, and

Whereas, annually, the Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities honors selected businesses and nonprofit organizations that epitomize the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act as recipients of the Spirit of the ADA Award, and

Whereas, the criteria for a Vermont business or nonprofit organization to be selected for this special award are creating an accessibility recruitment and hiring process, incorporating on-the-job accommodations for employees, offering accessible physical structures to ensure success for all employees, and implementing an overall employment strategy that includes the hiring of individuals with disabilities, and

Whereas, the 2024 Spirit of the ADA Award winners and their home communities are Worth Repeating (Saint Albans), Butterfly Bakery (Barre), Onion River Animal Hospital (Berlin), VINE Sanctuary (Springfield), Bradford Hannaford (Bradford), Club Demonstration Services (Colchester), Lamoille Valley Veterinary Services (Hyde Park), Shaw's Supermarket (Manchester Center), WheelPad L3C (Wilmington), Windsor County Youth Services (Proctorsville), and Rhino Foods (Burlington), and

Whereas, Rhino Foods was especially honored as the 2024 recipient of the David Sagi Memorial Spirit of the ADA Award, and

Whereas, each of these award recipients deserves special recognition for their active participation in the employment of Vermonters with disabilities, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Spirit of the ADA Award winners, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each Spirit of the ADA Award recipient and to the Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 2, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Joint Public Pension Oversight Committee Appointments

Pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 1001, the Speaker appointed of the following members to the Joint Public Pension Oversight Committee:

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro

Rep. Birong of Vergennes

Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans Town

Petroleum Cleanup Fund Advisory Committee Appointment

Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1941(f), the Speaker appointed the following member to the Petroleum Cleanup Fund Advisory Committee:

Rep. Marcotte of Coventry

Message from the Senate No. 53

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 36. An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 98. An act relating to confirmatory adoptions.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate proposal of amendment to House bill of the following title:

H. 398. An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority.

And has concurred therein with an amendment in the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Pursuant to the request of the House for a Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on House bill entitled:

H. 494. An act relating to capital construction and State bonding.

The President announced the appointment as members of such Committee on the part of the Senate:

Senator Harrison
Senator Plunkett
Senator Ingalls

Adjournment

At one o'clock and thirty-seven minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Thursday, May 8, 2025

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Emilie Kornheiser of Brattleboro.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**S. 126**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to health care payment and delivery system reform

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar**Bill Referred to the Committee on Appropriations****S. 109**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Readings**H.C.R. 107**

Offered by Representatives Krasnow of South Burlington, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Minier of South Burlington, and Nugent of South Burlington

Offered by Senators Chittenden, Lyons, and Ram Hinsdale

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rice Memorial High School Green Knights boys' ice hockey team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship

Whereas, endless superlatives are the only way to describe the Green Knights' 2024–2025 season on the ice as they surpassed their 2023–2024 Division I season in innumerable ways, and

Whereas, Rice was an offensive powerhouse this season, overwhelming their opponents on the scoreboard 136–17, and they remained undefeated, sporting an overall record of 23–0, and

Whereas, retaining that perfect win-loss record was briefly in doubt during the Division I championship game at the University of Vermont's Gutterson Fieldhouse, where the top-seeded Green Knights faced off against the No. 3 South Burlington Wolves, and

Whereas, the Wolves scored first at 2:35 into the first period, but Rice returned the favor merely 31 seconds later, and despite the Wolves tying the score at 2–all early in the third period, Rice focused intensely, securing a 4–2 victory and the 2025 Division I crown, and

Whereas, Green Knights Griffin Seitz, Wesley Casavant, Oliver Quong, Brendan Patterson, Ryder Donati, Joe Alexander, Walter Morris, Jack Lemon, Tyler Russo, Chais Lyford, John Fernandez, Vincent Lanzetta, Peyton Albertson, Pierre Heroux, Tucker Martin, Evan Welcome, Luke Sensac, Jack Webb, Baylor Lamos, Gunnar Mink, Mason Bilodeau, Tyler Ritchie, Carlo Pizzagalli, Garrett Pilon, Connor Williams, Henry Monaghan, and John Novak commanded the ice with confidence, and

Whereas, Head Coach Justin Martin; assistant coaches Jerry Tarrant, Aaron Miller, Brady Leisenring, and Shea Spanier; as well as team managers Jordan Hutchins, Owen Cook, and Patrick Raleigh were delighted with the team's success, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Rice Memorial High School Green Knights boys' ice hockey team on winning a second consecutive Division I championship, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Rice Memorial High School.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 112

Offered by Representatives Casey of Montpelier and McCann of Montpelier

Offered by Senators Cummings, Perchlik, and Watson

House concurrent resolution congratulating Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra for a quarter century of delightful and informative classical music performances and related cultural endeavors in central Vermont

Whereas, in 2000, the Grammy Award nominee and talented classical flutist Karen Kevra established the Capital City Concerts classical music series, and

Whereas, through the presentation of world-renowned classical musicians in community-accessible live chamber ensemble performances, Capital City Concerts continues the legacy of Karen Kevra's mentor, the late Louis Moyse of Marlboro Music Festival fame, and

Whereas, under her leadership, Capital City Concerts has evolved into an admired central Vermont cultural institution that has presented more than 200 concerts, outreach programs, and masterclasses, and

Whereas, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Capital City Concerts produced the Muse Mentors podcast, in which Karen Kevra interviewed Vermont artists and performers, resulting in inspiring episodes that wove together conversation, music, and sound effects, and

Whereas, Capital City Concerts' programming enhances the Vermont economy, attracting participating musicians and attendees who patronize local businesses, and

Whereas, over 200 musicians from Canada, Europe, and, most significantly, throughout the United States have enjoyed playing as compensated performers under the Capital City Concerts' banner, and this local artistic organization's mentorship has helped cultivate the careers of young professional classical musicians, and

Whereas, in response to central Vermont's devastating July 2023 floods, Capital City Concerts staged a benefit concert raising \$10,000.00 for flood relief support, and

Whereas, Capital City Concerts has staged memorable performances and organized worthy community programs, both small and large, and it has garnered laudatory media coverage while elevating the area's cultural reputation, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra for a quarter century of delightful and informative classical music performances and related cultural endeavors in central Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Second Reading; Amendment Offered; Bill Amended;
Third Reading Ordered**

H. 248

Rep. Cole of Hartford, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 3505 is amended to read:

§ 3505. SUPPLEMENTAL CHILD CARE GRANTS

(a)(1)(A) The Commissioner for Children and Families may reserve up to one-half of one percent of the ~~child care family assistance program~~ Child Care Financial Assistance Program funds for extraordinary financial relief to assist child care programs that are at risk of closing due to experiencing financial hardship. The Commissioner may provide extraordinary financial relief under this subdivision (A) to both licensed and registered child care programs and to child care programs that are in the process of becoming licensed or registered. The Commissioner shall develop guidelines for providing assistance and shall prioritize extraordinary financial relief to child care programs in areas of the State with high poverty and low access to high quality child care.

(B) ~~If the Commissioner determines a child care program is at risk of closure because its operations are not fiscally sustainable, he or she may provide assistance to~~ In order to transition children who are currently served by the a child care operator program that is closing to a new child care program in an orderly fashion and to help secure other child care opportunities for children served by the program in an effort to minimize the disruption of

services, the Commissioner may provide assistance to the existing or new program to minimize the disruption of services to the effected children.

(C) The As needed to implement this subdivision (1), the Commissioner has the authority to request tax returns and other financial documents to verify the a child care program's financial hardship and its ability to sustain or increase operations.

(2) Annually on or before January 15, the Commissioner shall report to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and to the House Committee on Human Services regarding any funds distributed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. Specifically, the report shall address how funds were distributed and used. It shall also address results related to any distribution of funds.

* * *

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 3512 is amended to read:

§ 3512. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;

ELIGIBILITY

(a)(1) The Child Care Financial Assistance Program is established to subsidize the costs of child care for families that need child care services in order to obtain employment, to retain employment, or to obtain training leading to employment. Families seeking employment shall be entitled to participate in the Program for up to three months and the Commissioner may further extend that period. The Program shall support eligible families by either:

(A) establishing services with a child care provider with whom the Division has contracted or issued a grant for child care services; or

(B) providing a subsidy issued pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection (a).

(2) The subsidy authorized by this subsection and the corresponding family contribution shall be established by the Commissioner, by rule, and shall bear a reasonable relationship to income and family size. The Commissioner may adjust the subsidy and family contribution by rule to account for increasing child care costs not to exceed 1.5 times the most recent annual increase in the NAICS code 611, Educational Services. Families shall be found eligible using an income eligibility scale based on the current federal poverty level and adjusted for the size of the family. Co-payments shall be assigned to the whole family and shall not increase if more than one eligible child is enrolled in child care. Families with an annual gross income of less than or equal to 175 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines shall not

have a family co-payment. Families with an annual gross income up to and including 575 percent of current federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size, shall be eligible for a subsidy authorized by this subsection. The scale shall be structured so that it encourages employment. If the federal poverty guidelines decrease in a given year, the Division shall maintain the previous year's federal poverty guidelines for the purpose of determining eligibility and benefit amount under this subsection.

* * *

Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. § 3514 is amended to read:

§ 3514. PAYMENT TO PROVIDERS

(a)(1) The Commissioner shall establish a payment schedule for purposes of ~~reimbursing~~ paying providers for full- or part-time child care services rendered to families who participate in the programs established under section 3512 or 3513 of this title. The payment schedule shall ensure timely payment to child care providers by requiring payment in advance of or at the beginning of the delivery of child care services. The payment schedule shall account for the age of the children served, and all providers in the same child care setting category shall receive a reimbursement payment in accordance with a rate payment established by the Commissioner, which shall be dependent upon whether the provider operates a child care center and preschool program, family child care home, or afterschool or summer care program. The ~~reimbursement~~ payment rate shall then be adjusted to reduce the differential between family child care homes and center-based child care and preschool programs by 50 percent.

(2) Payments shall be based on a child's authorized enrollment. The Department, in consultation with the Office of Racial Equity and stakeholders, shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 that define "enrollment" and the total number of allowable absences to continue participating in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. The Department shall minimize itemization of absence categories.

* * *

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended in Sec. 1, 33 V.S.A. § 3505, in subdivision (a)(1)(A), in the first sentence, after "at risk of closing" by inserting the phrase "or not opening"

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Human Services was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Human Services, as amended?, **Rep. Holcombe of Norwich** moved to further amend the report of the Committee on Human Services by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Education Generally * * *

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 829 is amended to read:

§ 829. PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Prekindergarten child” means a child who, as of the date established by the district of residence for kindergarten eligibility, is three or four years of age or is five years of age but is not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

(2) “Prekindergarten education” means services designed to provide to prekindergarten children developmentally appropriate early development and learning experiences based on Vermont’s early learning standards.

(3) “Prequalified private provider” means a private provider of prekindergarten education that is qualified pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

(4) “Prequalified public provider” means a school district that provides prekindergarten education and is qualified pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

(b) Access to publicly funded prekindergarten education.

(1) ~~No fewer~~ Not less than ten 10 hours per week of publicly funded prekindergarten education shall be available for 35 weeks annually to each prekindergarten child whom a parent or guardian wishes to enroll in an available, prequalified program operated by a public school or a private provider.

(2)(A) If a parent or guardian chooses to enroll a prekindergarten child in an available, prequalified public program, then, pursuant to the parent or guardian’s choice, the school district of residence shall:

(A)(i) pay tuition pursuant to ~~subsections~~ subsection (d) ~~and (h)~~ of this section upon the request of the parent or guardian to:

(i) ~~a prequalified private provider; or~~

(ii) a public school located outside the district that operates a prekindergarten program that has been prequalified pursuant to subsection (c) of this section; or

~~(B)(ii)~~ enroll the child in the prekindergarten education program that it operates.

(B) If a parent or guardian chooses to enroll a prekindergarten child in an available, prequalified private program, then, pursuant to the parent or guardian's choice, the Department for Children and Families shall pay tuition to the prequalified private provider pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 3551.

~~(3) If requested by the parent or guardian of a prekindergarten child, the school district of residence shall pay tuition to a prequalified program operated by a private provider or a public school in another district even if the district of residence operates a prekindergarten education program. [Repealed.]~~

(4) If the supply of prequalified private and public providers is insufficient to meet the demand for publicly funded prekindergarten education in any region of the State, nothing in this section shall be construed to require a district to begin or expand a program to satisfy that demand; but rather, in collaboration with the Agencies of Education and of Human Services, the local Building Bright Futures Council shall meet with school districts and private providers in the region to develop a regional plan to expand capacity.

(c) Prequalification. Pursuant to rules jointly developed and overseen by the Secretaries of Education and of Human Services and adopted by the State Board pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, the Agencies jointly may determine that a private or public provider of prekindergarten education is qualified for purposes of this section and include the provider in a publicly accessible database of prequalified providers. At a minimum, the rules shall define the process by which a provider applies for and maintains prequalification status, shall identify the minimum quality standards for prequalification, and shall include the following requirements:

(1) A program of prekindergarten education, whether provided by a school district or a private provider, shall have received:

(A) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation;

(B) at least four stars in the Department for Children and Families' STARS system; or

(C) three stars in the STARS system if the provider has developed a plan, approved by the Commissioner for Children and Families and the Secretary of Education, to achieve four or more stars.

(2) A licensed provider shall employ or contract for the services of at least one teacher who is licensed and endorsed in early childhood education or in early childhood special education under chapter 51 of this title.

(3) A registered home provider that is not licensed and endorsed in early childhood education or early childhood special education shall receive regular, active supervision and training from a teacher who is licensed and endorsed in early childhood education or in early childhood special education under chapter 51 of this title.

(d) Tuition, budgets, and average daily membership.

(1) On behalf of a resident prekindergarten child, a district shall pay tuition for prekindergarten education for ~~ten~~ 10 hours per week for 35 weeks annually to a prequalified private provider or to a public school outside the district that is prequalified pursuant to subsection (c) of this section; provided, however, that the district shall pay tuition for weeks that are within the district's academic year. Tuition paid under this section shall be at a statewide rate, which may be adjusted regionally, that is established annually through a process jointly developed and implemented by the Agencies of Education and of Human Services. A district shall pay tuition to a prequalified public prekindergarten provider located outside the district upon:

(A) receiving notice from the child's parent or guardian that the child is or will be admitted to the prekindergarten education program operated by the ~~prequalified private provider or the other district~~; and

(B) concurrent enrollment of the prekindergarten child in the district of residence for purposes of budgeting and determining average daily membership.

(2) In addition to any direct costs of operating a prekindergarten education program, a district of residence shall include anticipated tuition payments and any administrative, quality assurance, quality improvement, transition planning, or other prekindergarten-related costs in its annual budget presented to the voters.

(3) Pursuant to subdivision 4001(1)(C) of this title, the district of residence may include within its average daily membership any prekindergarten child for whom it has provided prekindergarten education or on whose behalf it has paid tuition to a prequalified public provider located outside the district, pursuant to this section.

(4) ~~A prequalified private provider may receive additional payment directly from the parent or guardian only for prekindergarten education in excess of the hours paid for by the district pursuant to this section or for child care services, or both. The provider is not bound by the statewide rate~~

~~established in this subsection when determining the rates it will charge the parent or guardian. [Repealed.]~~

(e) Rules. The Secretary of Education and the Commissioner for Children and Families shall jointly develop and agree to rules and present them to the State Board for adoption under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 as follows:

(1) To permit private providers that are not prequalified pursuant to subsection (c) of this section to create new or continue existing partnerships with school districts through which the school district provides supports that enable the provider to fulfill the requirements of subdivision (c)(2) or (3) of this section, and through which the district may or may not make in-kind payments as a component of the statewide tuition established under this section.

(2) To authorize a district to begin or expand a school-based prekindergarten education program only upon prior approval obtained through a process jointly overseen by the Secretaries of Education and of Human Services, which shall be based upon analysis of the number of prekindergarten children residing in the district and the availability of enrollment opportunities with prequalified private providers in the region. Where the data are not clear or there are other complex considerations, the Secretaries may choose to conduct a community needs assessment.

(3) To require that the school district provides opportunities for effective parental participation in the prekindergarten education program.

(4) To establish a process by which:

(A) a parent or guardian notifies the district that the prekindergarten child is or will be admitted to a prequalified public prekindergarten education program not operated by the district and concurrently enrolls the child in the district pursuant to subdivision (d)(1) of this section; and

(B) ~~a district:~~

~~(i) pays tuition pursuant to a schedule that does not inhibit the ability of a parent or guardian to enroll a prekindergarten child in a prekindergarten education program or the ability of a prequalified private provider to maintain financial stability; and~~

~~(ii) enters into an agreement with any provider to which it will pay tuition regarding quality assurance, transition, and any other matters; and~~

(C) a provider that has received tuition payments under this section on behalf of a prekindergarten child notifies a district that the child is no longer enrolled.

(5) To establish a process to calculate an annual statewide tuition rate that is based upon the actual cost of delivering ~~ten~~ 10 hours per week of prekindergarten education that meets all established quality standards and to allow for regional adjustments to the rate.

(6) [Repealed.]

(7) To require a district to include identifiable costs for prekindergarten programs and essential early education services in its annual budgets and reports to the community.

(8) To require a district to report to the Agency of Education annual expenditures made in support of prekindergarten education, with distinct figures provided for expenditures made from the General Fund, from the Education Fund, and from all other sources, which shall be specified.

(9) To provide an administrative process for:

(A) a parent, ~~or guardian, or provider~~ to challenge an action of a school district or the State when the complainant believes that the district or State is in violation of State statute or rules regarding prekindergarten education; ~~and~~

(B) a school district to challenge an action of ~~a provider or~~ the State when the district believes that ~~the provider or~~ the State is in violation of State statute or rules regarding prekindergarten education;

(C) a parent or guardian to challenge the action of a prequalified private provider or prequalified private provider, respectively, when the complainant believes that the provider is in violation of State statute or rules regarding prekindergarten education; and

(D) a prequalified private provider to challenge an action of the State when the complainant believes the State is in violation of State statute or rules regarding prekindergarten education.

(10) To establish a system by which the Agency of Education and Department for Children and Families shall jointly monitor and evaluate prekindergarten education programs to promote optimal results for children that support the relevant population-level outcomes set forth in 3 V.S.A. § 2311 and to collect data that will inform future decisions. The Agency and Department shall be required to report annually to the General Assembly in January. At a minimum, the system shall monitor and evaluate:

(A) programmatic details, including the number of children served, the number of private and public prekindergarten programs operated, and the public financial investment made to ensure access to quality prekindergarten education;

(B) the quality of public and private prekindergarten education programs and efforts to ensure continuous quality improvements through mentoring, training, technical assistance, and otherwise; and

(C) the results for children, including school readiness and proficiency in numeracy and literacy.

(11) To establish a process for documenting the progress of children enrolled in prekindergarten education programs and to require public and private providers to use the process to:

(A) help individualize instruction and improve program practice; and

(B) collect and report child progress data to the Secretary of Education on an annual basis.

~~(f) Other provisions of law. Section 836 of this title shall not apply to this section. [Repealed.]~~

~~(g) Limitations. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit or require payment of public funds to a private provider of prekindergarten education in violation of Chapter I, Article 3 of the Vermont Constitution or in violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. [Repealed.]~~

~~(h) Geographic limitations.~~

~~(1) Notwithstanding the requirement that a district pay tuition to any prequalified public or private provider in the State, a school board may choose to limit the geographic boundaries within which the district shall pay tuition by paying tuition solely to those prequalified providers in which parents and guardians choose to enroll resident prekindergarten children that are located within the district's "prekindergarten region" as determined in subdivision (2) of this subsection.~~

~~(2) For purposes of this subsection, upon application from the school board, a district's prekindergarten region shall be determined jointly by the Agencies of Education and of Human Services in consultation with the school board, private providers of prekindergarten education, parents and guardians of prekindergarten children, and other interested parties pursuant to a process adopted by rule under subsection (e) of this section. A prekindergarten region:~~

~~(A) shall not be smaller than the geographic boundaries of the school district;~~

~~(B) shall be based in part upon the estimated number of prekindergarten children residing in the district and in surrounding districts, the availability of prequalified private and public providers of prekindergarten education, commuting patterns, and other region-specific criteria; and~~

~~(C) shall be designed to support existing partnerships between the school district and private providers of prekindergarten education.~~

~~(3) If a school board chooses to pay tuition to providers solely within its prekindergarten region, and if a resident prekindergarten child is unable to access publicly funded prekindergarten education within that region, then the child's parent or guardian may request and in its discretion the district may pay tuition at the statewide rate for a prekindergarten education program operated by a prequalified provider located outside the prekindergarten region.~~

~~(4) Except for the narrow exception permitting a school board to limit geographic boundaries under subdivision (1) of this subsection, all other provisions of this section and related rules shall continue to apply. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 4001 is amended to read:

§ 4001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Average daily membership" of a school district or, if needed in order to calculate the appropriate homestead tax rate, of the municipality as defined in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(9), in any year means:

* * *

(C) The full-time equivalent enrollment for each prekindergarten child as follows: If a child is enrolled in 10 or more hours of prekindergarten education per week in a public school or receives 10 or more hours of essential early education services per week, the child shall be counted as one full-time equivalent pupil. If a child is enrolled in six or more but ~~fewer~~ less than 10 hours of prekindergarten education per week in a public school or if a child receives ~~fewer~~ less than 10 hours of essential early education services per week, the child shall be counted as a percentage of one full-time equivalent pupil, calculated as one multiplied by the number of hours per week divided by ~~ten~~ 10. A child enrolled in prekindergarten education for ~~fewer~~ less than six hours per week in a public school or for any number of hours in a prequalified private provider shall not be included in the district's average daily membership. There is no limit on the total number of children who may be enrolled in public school prekindergarten education program or who receive essential early education services.

* * *

(15) "Prekindergarten child" means a ~~three or four-year-old~~ three or four years of age child ~~three or four years of age~~ who is enrolled in a prekindergarten program offered by ~~or through~~ a school district pursuant to rules adopted under section 829 of this title or who is receiving essential early education services offered pursuant to

section 2956 of this title. Prekindergarten child also means a ~~five-year-old~~ child five years of age who otherwise meets the terms of this definition if that child is not yet eligible for or enrolled in kindergarten.

* * * Child Care Financial Assistance Program, Supplemental Child Care Grants, and Prequalified Private Prekindergarten Education * * *

Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. § 3505 is amended to read:

§ 3505. SUPPLEMENTAL CHILD CARE GRANTS

(a)(1)(A) The Commissioner for Children and Families may reserve up to one-half of one percent of the ~~child care family assistance program~~ Child Care Financial Assistance Program funds for extraordinary financial relief to assist child care programs that are at risk of closing due to experiencing financial hardship. The Commissioner may provide extraordinary financial relief under this subdivision (A) to both licensed and registered child care programs and to child care programs that are in the process of becoming licensed or registered. The Commissioner shall develop guidelines for providing assistance and shall prioritize extraordinary financial relief to child care programs in areas of the State with high poverty and low access to high quality child care.

~~(B) If the Commissioner determines a child care program is at risk of closure because its operations are not fiscally sustainable, he or she may provide assistance to~~ In order to transition children who are currently served by the a child care operator program that is closing to a new child care program in an orderly fashion and to help secure other child care opportunities for children served by the program in an effort to minimize the disruption of services, the Commissioner may provide assistance to the existing or new program to minimize the disruption of services to the effected children.

~~(C) The~~ As needed to implement this subdivision (1), the Commissioner has the authority to request tax returns and other financial documents to verify ~~the a child care program's~~ a child care program's financial hardship and ~~its~~ its ability to sustain or increase operations.

(2) Annually on or before January 15, the Commissioner shall report to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and to the House Committee on Human Services regarding any funds distributed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. Specifically, the report shall address how funds were distributed and used. It shall also address results related to any distribution of funds.

* * *

Sec. 4. 33 V.S.A. § 3512 is amended to read:

§ 3512. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;

ELIGIBILITY

(a)(1) The Child Care Financial Assistance Program is established to subsidize the costs of child care for families that need child care services in order to obtain employment, to retain employment, or to obtain training leading to employment. Families seeking employment shall be entitled to participate in the Program for up to three months and the Commissioner may further extend that period. The Program shall support eligible families by either:

(A) establishing services with a child care provider with whom the Division has contracted or issued a grant for child care services; or

(B) providing a subsidy issued pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection (a).

(2) The subsidy authorized by this subsection and the corresponding family contribution shall be established by the Commissioner, by rule, and shall bear a reasonable relationship to income and family size. The Commissioner may adjust the subsidy and family contribution by rule to account for increasing child care costs not to exceed 1.5 times the most recent annual increase in the NAICS code 611, Educational Services. Families shall be found eligible using an income eligibility scale based on the current federal poverty level and adjusted for the size of the family. Co-payments shall be assigned to the whole family and shall not increase if more than one eligible child is enrolled in child care. Families with an annual gross income of less than or equal to 175 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines shall not have a family co-payment. Families with an annual gross income up to and including 575 percent of current federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size, shall be eligible for a subsidy authorized by this subsection. The scale shall be structured so that it encourages employment. If the federal poverty guidelines decrease in a given year, the Division shall maintain the previous year's federal poverty guidelines for the purpose of determining eligibility and benefit amount under this subsection.

* * *

Sec. 5. 33 V.S.A. § 3514 is amended to read:

§ 3514. PAYMENT TO PROVIDERS

(a)(1) The Commissioner shall establish a payment schedule for purposes of reimbursing paying providers for full- or part-time child care services rendered to families who participate in the programs established under section

3512 or 3513 of this title. The payment schedule shall ensure timely payment to child care providers by requiring payment in advance or at the beginning of the delivery of child care services. The payment schedule shall account for the age of the children served, and all providers in the same child care setting category shall receive a reimbursement payment in accordance with a rate payment established by the Commissioner, which shall be dependent upon whether the provider operates a child care center and preschool program, family child care home, or afterschool or summer care program. The reimbursement payment rate shall then be adjusted to reduce the differential between family child care homes and center-based child care and preschool programs by 50 percent.

(2) Payments shall be based on a child's authorized enrollment. The Department, in consultation with the Office of Racial Equity and stakeholders, shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 that define "enrollment" and the total number of allowable absences to continue participating in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. The Department shall minimize itemization of absence categories.

* * *

Sec. 6. 33 V.S.A. chapter 35 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 35. CHILD CARE

* * *

Subchapter 6. Prekindergarten Education

§ 3551. PREQUALIFIED PRIVATE PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

(a) A parent or guardian may choose to enroll a prekindergarten child in a publicly funded prekindergarten education program operated by an available, prequalified private provider of the parent or guardian's choice pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 829 by providing written notice to the Department for Children and Families, on a form created by the Department for this purpose, that the child is or will be admitted to the prekindergarten education program operated by a prequalified private provider.

(b)(1) Upon receiving written notice, the Department shall pay tuition to the prequalified private provider for not more than 10 hours per week of publicly funded prekindergarten education for 35 weeks annually from the State portion of funding appropriated for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

(2) The Department shall pay tuition on a schedule that does not inhibit the ability of a parent or guardian to enroll a prekindergarten child in a private prekindergarten education program or the ability of a prequalified private provider to maintain financial stability.

(3) Prior to making an initial tuition payment, the Department shall enter into an agreement with a prequalified private provider to which it will pay tuition on behalf of a child regarding quality assurance, compliance with 16 V.S.A. § 829, and any other matters. The agreement shall require a prequalified private provider to notify the Department if a prekindergarten child for which it previously received a prekindergarten tuition payment is no longer enrolled.

(c) A prequalified private provider may receive additional payment directly from the parent or guardian only for prekindergarten education in excess of the hours paid for by the Department pursuant to this section or for child care services, or both.

(d) As used in this section, “prekindergarten child,” “prekindergarten education,” and “prequalified private provider” have the same meaning as in 16 V.S.A. § 829.

* * * Reporting Requirement * * *

Sec. 7. REPORT; STREAMLINING APPLICATION PROCESSES

On or before December 15, 2026, the Department for Children and Families’ Child Development Division shall submit a proposal to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare for streamlining the application process for families seeking receive both a benefit for prekindergarten education provided at a prequalified private provider pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 829 and a Child Care Financial Assistance Program subsidy pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 3512. The proposal shall include any necessary legislative language.

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATES

This section and Secs. 3 (supplemental child care grants), 4 (Child Care Financial Assistance Program; eligibility), and 5 (payment to providers) shall take effect on passage. All other sections shall take effect on September 1, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to Child Care Financial Assistance Program, supplemental child care grants, and prequalified private prekindergarten education”

Pending the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, be further amended as offered by Rep. Holcombe of Norwich?, **Rep. Sibia of Dover** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, be further amended as offered by Rep. Holcombe of Norwich?, was decided in the negative. Yeas, 20. Nays, 124.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston	Harple of Glover	Pouech of Hinesburg
Brady of Williston	Headrick of Burlington	Priestley of Bradford
Burrows of West Windsor	Holcombe of Norwich	Sibia of Dover
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Long of Newfane	Stone of Burlington
Christie of Hartford	McCann of Montpelier	Surprenant of Barnard
Graning of Jericho	Nelson of Derby	White of Waitsfield
	Parsons of Newbury	White of Bethel

Those who voted in the negative are:

Austin of Colchester *	Feltus of Lyndon	Morgan, L. of Milton
Bailey of Hyde Park	Galfetti of Barre Town	Morgan, M. of Milton
Bartholomew of Hartland	Garofano of Essex	Morris of Springfield
Bartley of Fairfax	Goldman of Rockingham	Morrissey of Bennington
Berbeco of Winooski	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Morrow of Weston
Birong of Vergennes	Goslant of Northfield	Mrowicki of Putney
Bishop of Colchester	Greer of Bennington	Nielsen of Brandon
Black of Essex	Gregoire of Fairfield	Nigro of Bennington
Bluemle of Burlington	Hango of Berkshire	North of Ferrisburgh
Bosch of Clarendon	Harrison of Chittenden	Noyes of Wolcott
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Harvey of Castleton	Nugent of South Burlington
Boutin of Barre City	Higley of Lowell	O'Brien of Tunbridge
Boyden of Cambridge	Hooper of Burlington	Ode of Burlington
Branagan of Georgia	Houghton of Essex Junction	Oliver of Sheldon
Brown of Richmond	Howard of Rutland City	Olson of Starksboro *
Burke of Brattleboro	Howland of Rutland Town	Page of Newport City
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hunter of Manchester	Pezzo of Colchester
Burt of Cabot	James of Manchester	Pinsonault of Dorset
Canfield of Fair Haven	Kascenska of Burke	Powers of Waterford
Casey of Montpelier	Keyser of Rutland City	Pritchard of Pawlet
Casey of Hubbardton	Kimball of Woodstock	Quimby of Lyndon
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kleppner of Burlington	Rachelson of Burlington
Charlton of Chester	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Satcowitz of Randolph
Cina of Burlington	Krasnow of South Burlington	Scheu of Middlebury
Coffin of Cavendish	Labor of Morgan	Sheldon of Middlebury
Cole of Hartford	Lalley of Shelburne	Southworth of Walden
Conlon of Cornwall	LaLonde of South Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Cooper of Pownal		Steady of Milton
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown	Stevens of Waterbury
		Sweeney of Shelburne

Cordes of Bristol	Laroche of Franklin	Tagliavia of Corinth
Critchlow of Colchester	Lipsky of Stowe	Taylor of Milton
Demar of Enosburgh	Logan of Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Luneau of St. Albans City	Toof of St. Albans Town
Dodge of Essex	Maguire of Rutland City	Torre of Moretown
Dolan of Essex Junction	Marcotte of Coventry	Walker of Swanton
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Masland of Thetford	Waszazak of Barre City
Donahue of Northfield	McCoy of Poultney	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Duke of Burlington	McFaun of Barre Town	Wells of Brownington
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McGill of Bridport	Winter of Ludlow
Eastes of Guilford	Micklus of Milton	Wood of Waterbury
Emmons of Springfield	Mihaly of Calais	Yacovone of Morristown
	Minier of South Burlington	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Burditt of West Rutland	Dobrovich of Williamstown	Malay of Pittsford
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hooper of Randolph	

Rep. Austin of Colchester provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I am glad to learn that ongoing discussions will continue to improve our delivery of the pre-K education system across the State. However – I want to be assured that, if public funds are used, Vermont students will have equal access to all educational opportunities, whether they are three or eighteen.”

Rep Olson of Starksboro provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support the premise of this amendment. The Ed Fund is asked to support too much, which impacts property taxes. But I vote no because I believe the Legislature needs to take a holistic approach to the problem, rather than singling out specific programs one-by-one. I also believe we need more time to understand the financial needs of the childcare subsidy program, as it rolls out over the next few years.”

Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, was agreed to and third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bill Passed in Concurrence**S. 44**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to authorization to enter into certain immigration agreements

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence.

**Third Reading;
Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment****S. 87**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to extradition procedures

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 230**

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph, for the Committee on Environment, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 4251 is amended to read:

§ 4251. TAKING WILD ANIMALS AND FISH; LICENSE

(a) Except as provided in sections 4253 and 4254b of this title, a person shall not take wild animals or fish without first having procured a license therefor; provided, however, that a person under 15 years of age may take fish in accordance with this part and regulations of the Board, without first having procured a license therefor.

(b) The Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife may designate two days each calendar year as “free fishing days” for which no license shall be required. One day shall occur in the open water fishing season and one day shall occur during the ice fishing season.

(c) The Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife may designate Labor Day weekend each year as “free mentored fishing weekend,” during which one unlicensed angler can fish with one licensed angler throughout this three-day period.

Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 4613 is amended to read:

§ 4613. FISHING TOURNAMENTS

(a) No person or organization shall hold a fishing tournament on the waters of the State without first obtaining a permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Tournaments held on the Connecticut River, excluding Moore and Comerford Reservoirs, that do not utilize an access area in Vermont are not required to obtain a permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(b) A fishing tournament means a contest in which anglers pay a fee to enter and in which the entrants compete for a prize based on the quality or size of the fish they catch. A contest may run multiple days, but the days must be consecutive for that contest to be considered a single event. A tournament that limits the entrants to people below 15 years of age or a tournament held as part of a Special Olympics program shall be exempt from paying the fee required under subsection (d) of this section.

(c) The Commissioner shall adopt rules that establish the procedure for implementation of this section. The rules shall include a provision that an angler may not enter a fish that was caught and confined to an enclosed area prior to the beginning of the tournament.

(d) The Commissioner shall charge a fee ~~of \$50.00 based on the number of participants~~ for each permit issued under this section and shall deposit the fee collected into the Fish and Wildlife Fund. Tournaments with up to 25 participants shall pay a fee of \$10.00; tournaments with 26 to 50 participants shall pay a fee of \$30.00; and tournaments with more than 50 participants shall pay a fee of \$100.00.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 4518 is amended to read:

§ 4518. BIG GAME VIOLATIONS; THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES; SUSPENSION; VIOLATIONS

(a) ~~Whoever violates a provision of this part or orders or rules of the Board relating to taking, possessing, transporting, buying, or selling of big game; relating to threatened or endangered species; or relating to the trade in covered animal parts or products that constitutes a big game violation shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 \$2,000.00 nor less than \$400.00 \$500.00 or imprisoned for not more than 60 days, or both. Upon a second and all subsequent convictions or any conviction while under license suspension related to the~~

requirements of part 4 of this title, the violator shall be fined not more than ~~\$4,000.00~~ \$5,000.00 nor less than \$2,000.00 or imprisoned for not more than ~~60~~ 180 days, or both.

(b) As used in this section, “big game violation” means:

(1) violations relating to taking, possessing, transporting, buying, or selling of big game;

(2) violations of chapter 123 of this title and the rules related to threatened and endangered species;

(3) violation of section 4280 of this title relating to criminal suspensions;

(4) violations of chapter 124 of this title relating to the trade in covered animal parts or products;

(5) interference with hunting, fishing, or trapping in violation of section 4708 of this title; or

(6) illegal commercial importation or possession of wild animals in violation of section 4709 of this title.

Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 4552 is amended to read:

§ 4552. JURISDICTION; VENUE

The Vermont Criminal Division of the Superior Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over fish and wildlife violations with the exception of violations related to section 4572 and chapters 123 and 124 of this title. Venue for adjudicating fish and wildlife violations shall be the unit of the Criminal Division of the Superior Court having jurisdiction over the geographical area where the offense is stated to have occurred.

Sec. 5. 10 V.S.A. § 4572 is amended to read:

§ 4572. DEFINITIONS

(a) As used in this subchapter, a minor fish and wildlife violation means:

(1) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4145 (violation of access and landing area rules);

(2) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4251 (taking wild animals and fish without a license);

(3) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4266 (failure to carry a license on person or failure to exhibit license);

(4) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4267 (false statements in license application; altering license; transferring license to another person; using another person's license; or guiding an unlicensed person);

(5) a violation of 10 V.S.A. § 4713 (tree or ground stands or blinds); or

(6) [Repealed.]

(7) a violation of a biological collection rule adopted by the Board under part 4 of this title; or

(8) except for big game offenses and under revocation offenses, any fish and wildlife violation as defined by 10 V.S.A. § 4551 and not otherwise listed in this section shall be charged as a minor violation, provided that:

(A) the offender has no prior history of fish and wildlife violations;

(B) no evidence was seized in relation to the violation;

(C) a criminal warrant was not used in relation to the violation; and

(D) there is no possibility of forfeiture.

(b) "Bureau" means the Judicial Bureau as created in 4 V.S.A. § 1102.

Sec. 6. 10 V.S.A. § 4085 is added to read:

§ 4085. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS; TAKING; POSSESSION

(a) A person shall not intentionally take a reptile or amphibian in the State unless authorized by rules adopted under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The Commissioner may establish requirements for the following by rule:

(1) the collection or possession for commercial use, export, or sale of reptiles and amphibians specified by the Commissioner;

(2) the taking of reptiles or amphibians that have been classified as common, widespread, and abundant, known as S5 ranked species, with stable or increasing populations indicated by data collected or compiled by the Department of Fish and Wildlife;

(3) the taking of a reptile or amphibian that due to population, risk to other native species, or risk to ecosystems has been identified as requiring a reduction in population; or

(4) under specified criteria, the taking, collection, or possession of a specified reptile or amphibian for scientific, educational, or noncommercial cultural or ceremonial purposes.

(c) Rules adopted by the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under this section shall be designed to maintain the best health, population, and utilization levels of the regulated reptile or amphibian.

Sec. 7. IMPORT, POSSESSION, AND SALE OF REPTILES AND
AMPHIBIANS; ENDORSEMENTS

(a)(1) A person shall not import, possess, or sell in the State a pond slider turtle (Trachemys scripta), unless the turtle was legally acquired as a pet prior to July 1, 2025.

(2) A person is prohibited from releasing to the wild a pond slider retained as a pet under this subsection. A violation of the prohibition under this section shall be subject to enforcement as a fish and wildlife violation under Title 10 part 4.

(b) Subsection (a) of this section shall be repealed on the effective date of a rule adopted by the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under 10 V.S.A. § 4085 regulating the import, possession, or sale of the pond slider turtle (Trachemys scripta).

(c) When the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife under 10 V.S.A. § 4085(b) authorizes the taking of a reptile or amphibian by hunting, a hunting license issued under 10 V.S.A. part 4 that authorizes the taking of reptiles and amphibians under the license shall include an endorsement indicating the authorized taking.

Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 4709 is amended to read:

§ 4709. TRANSPORT, IMPORTATION, POSSESSION, AND STOCKING
OF WILD ANIMALS; POSSESSION OF WILD BOAR OR FERAL
SWINE

(a) A person shall not bring into, transport into, transport within, transport through, or possess in the State any live wild bird or animal of any kind, including reptiles, amphibians, or any manner of feral swine, without authorization from the Commissioner or ~~his or her~~ the Commissioner's designee. The importation permit may be granted under ~~such regulations therefor as~~ rules, requirements, or conditions that the Commissioner shall prescribe and only after the Commissioner has made such investigation and inspection of the birds or animals as ~~she or he~~ the Commissioner may deem necessary. The Department may dispose of unlawfully possessed or imported wildlife as it may judge best, and the State may collect treble damages from the violator of this subsection for all expenses incurred.

(b) No person shall bring into the State from another country, state, or province wildlife illegally taken, transported, or possessed contrary to the laws governing the country, state, or province from which the wildlife originated.

(c) No person shall place a Vermont-issued tag on wildlife taken outside the State. No person shall report big game in Vermont when the wildlife is taken outside the State.

(d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Commissioner or duly authorized agents of the Department of Fish and Wildlife from bringing into the State for the purpose of planting, introducing, or stocking or from planting, introducing, or stocking in the State any wild bird or animal.

(e) A person shall not take, collect, possess, sell, import, or export any wild bird or animal, or parts thereof, dead or alive, for commercial purposes unless authorized by statute, the rules of the Board, rules of the Commissioner, or a permit from the Commissioner.

(f) Any person who violates this section may be subject to the penalties set forth in section 4518 of this title and also may be required to pay additional penalties based on reasonable mitigation and potential economic benefit associated with commercial trade.

(g) The Commissioner may bring an action in the unit of the Criminal Division of the Superior Court having jurisdiction over the geographical area where the offense is stated to have occurred, or the Environmental Division of the Superior Court, to compel reasonable mitigation and recover economic benefits for commercial collection and trade violations under this subsection.

(h) Applicants shall pay a permit fee of \$100.00.

~~(f)~~(i)(1) The Commissioner shall not issue a permit under this section for the importation or possession of the following live species, a hybrid or genetic variant of the following species, offspring of the following species, or offspring or a hybrid of a genetically engineered variant of the following species: feral swine, including wild boar, wild hog, wild swine, feral pig, feral hog, old world swine, razorback, Eurasian wild boar, or Russian wild boar (*Sus scrofa* Linnaeus). A feral swine is:

* * *

Sec. 9. 10 V.S.A. § 5403(a) is amended to read:

(a) Except as authorized under this chapter, a person shall not:

(1) take, possess, or transport wildlife or wild plants that are members of a threatened or endangered species; or

(2) destroy or adversely impact critical habitat;

(3) sell or offer for sale in intrastate commerce a threatened or endangered species;

(4) deliver, receive, carry, transport, or ship a threatened or endangered species in intrastate commerce; or

(5) import a threatened or endangered species into or export a threatened or endangered species from Vermont.

Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 5408 is amended to read:

§ 5408. AUTHORIZED TAKINGS; INCIDENTAL TAKINGS;

DESTRUCTION OF CRITICAL HABITAT

(a) Authorized taking. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, after obtaining the advice of the Endangered Species Committee, the Secretary may permit, under such terms and conditions as the Secretary may require as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the taking of a threatened or endangered species, the destruction of or adverse impact on critical habitat, or any act otherwise prohibited by this chapter if done for any of the following purposes:

(1) scientific purposes;

(2) to enhance the propagation or survival of a threatened or endangered species;

(3) zoological exhibition;

(4) educational purposes;

(5) noncommercial cultural or ceremonial purposes; or

(6) special purposes consistent with the purposes of the federal Endangered Species Act.

(b) Incidental taking. After obtaining the advice of the Endangered Species Committee, the Secretary may permit, under such terms and conditions as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter, the incidental taking of a threatened or endangered species or the destruction of or adverse impact on critical habitat if:

(1) the taking is necessary to conduct an otherwise lawful activity;

(2) the taking is attendant or secondary to, and not the purpose of, the lawful activity;

(3) the impact of the permitted incidental take is minimized; and

(4) the incidental taking will not impair the conservation or recovery of any endangered species or threatened species.

* * *

(k) Public notice. ~~Prior~~ Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, prior to issuing a permit for an incidental taking and prior to the initial issuance or amendment of a general permit under this section, the Secretary shall provide for public notice of ~~no~~ not fewer than 30 days; opportunity for written comment; and opportunity to request a public informational hearing. The ~~Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, the~~ Secretary shall post permit applications, permit decisions, and the initial or amended general permits on the website of the Agency of Natural Resources. ~~The~~ Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, the Secretary also shall provide notice to interested persons who request notice of permit applications, permit decisions, and proposed general permits or proposed amendments to general permits.

(l) General permits.

(1) The Secretary may issue general permits for activities that will not affect the continued survival or recovery of a threatened or endangered species.

* * *

(6) ~~Prior~~ Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, prior to issuing an initial or amended general permit under this subsection, the Secretary shall:

- (A) post a draft of the general permit on the Agency website;
- (B) provide public notice of at least 30 days; and
- (C) provide for written comments or a public hearing, or both.

(7) For applications for coverage under the terms of an issued general permit, the applicant shall provide notice on a form provided by the Secretary. ~~The~~ Except for threatened and endangered species listed by the Secretary in accordance with subsection 5410(b) of this title, the Secretary shall post notice of the application on the Agency website and shall provide an opportunity for written comment, regarding whether the application complies with the terms and conditions of the general permit, for ~~ten~~ 10 days following receipt of the application.

* * *

Sec. 11. 10 V.S.A. § 5410 is amended to read:

§ 5410. LOCATION CONFIDENTIAL

(a) The Secretary shall not disclose information regarding the specific location of threatened or endangered species sites or habitats except ~~that the Secretary shall disclose information regarding the location of the threatened or endangered species to:~~

(1) to the owner of land upon which the species is located;

(2) to a potential buyer of land upon which the species is located who has a bona fide contract to buy the land and applies to the Secretary for disclosure of threatened or endangered species information; ~~or~~

(3) to qualified individuals or organizations, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations for scientific research or for preservation and planning purposes when the Secretary determines that the preservation of the species is not further endangered by the disclosure; or

(4) during regulatory processes with the exception of threatened or endangered species listed under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The Secretary shall maintain a subset list of threatened and endangered species whose specific names shall not be included in regulatory planning. The subset list shall include threatened or endangered species for which the species names and locations shall not be disclosed because of the risk that the species will be significantly harmed by unauthorized take, such as illegal collection, commercial trade, human-caused mortality, or destruction of habitat. The list shall be based on the rarity of the species, known collection and commercial trade activities in Vermont and other states or countries, incidents of human-caused mortality or destruction of habitat, and other factors that present a threat to the continued existence of the species.

(c) When the Secretary issues a permit under this chapter to take a threatened or endangered species or destroy or adversely impact critical habitat and when the Secretary designates critical habitat by rule under section 5402a of this title, the Secretary shall disclose only the municipality and general location where the threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat is located. When the Secretary designates critical habitat under section 5402a of this title, the Secretary shall notify the municipality in which the critical habitat is located and shall disclose the general location of the designated critical habitat.

Sec. 12. 10 V.S.A. § 4829 is amended to read:

~~§ 4829. PERSON SUFFERING DAMAGE BY DEER OR BLACK BEAR~~

~~(a) A person engaged in the business of farming who suffers damage by deer to the person's crops, fruit trees, or crop-bearing plants on land not posted against the hunting of deer, or a person engaged in the business of farming who suffers damage by black bear to the person's cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, or bees or bee hives on land not posted against hunting or trapping of black bear is entitled to reimbursement for the damage up to an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 per year, and may apply to the Department of Fish and Wildlife within 72 hours of the occurrence of the damage for reimbursement for the damage. As used in this section, "post" means any signage that would lead a reasonable person to believe that hunting is prohibited on the land.~~

~~(b) As used in this section, a person is "engaged in the business of farming" if he or she earns at least one-half of the farmer's annual gross income from the business of farming, as that term is defined in the Internal Revenue Code, 26 C.F.R. § 1.175-3. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 13. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that in Sec. 6, 10 V.S.A. § 4085(a) (related to the taking of reptiles and amphibians) shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

Rep. Masland of Thetford, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Environment.

Rep. Squirrell of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Environment.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Environment agreed to, and third reading was ordered.

Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction presiding.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 41**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to abuse of the dead body of a person

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until May 9, 2025.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**H. 137**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 22, virtual currency kiosk moratorium, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof four new sections to be Secs. 22–25 to read as follows:

Sec. 22. 8 V.S.A. § 2571 is amended to read:

§ 2571. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Blockchain” has the same meaning as in 12 V.S.A. § 1913(a)(1).

(2) “Blockchain analytics” means a software service that uses data from various virtual currencies and their applicable blockchains to provide a risk rating specific to digital wallet addresses from users of virtual-currency kiosks.

(3) “Digital wallet” means hardware or software that enables individuals to store and use virtual currency.

(4) “Digital wallet address” means an alphanumeric identifier representing a destination on a blockchain for a virtual currency transfer that is associated with a digital wallet.

(5) “Exchange,” used as a verb, means to assume or exercise control of virtual currency from or on behalf of a person, including momentarily, to buy, sell, trade, or convert:

(A) virtual currency for money, monetary value, bank credit, or one or more forms of virtual currency, or other consideration; or

(B) money, monetary value, bank credit, or other consideration for one or more forms of virtual currency.

(6) “Existing customer” means a consumer who:

(A) is engaging in a transaction at a virtual-currency kiosk in Vermont; and

(B) whose first transaction with the virtual-currency kiosk operator occurred more than 30 days prior.

(7) “New customer” means a consumer who:

(A) is engaging in a transaction at a virtual-currency kiosk in Vermont; and

(B) whose first transaction with the virtual-currency kiosk operator occurred not more than 30 days prior.

~~(2)~~(8) “Transfer” means to assume or exercise control of virtual currency from or on behalf of a person and to:

(A) credit the virtual currency to the account or digital wallet of another person;

(B) move the virtual currency from one account or digital wallet of a person to another account or digital wallet of the same person; or

(C) relinquish or transfer control or ownership of virtual currency to another person, digital wallet, distributed ledger address, or smart contract.

Sec. 23. 8 V.S.A. § 2574 is amended to read:

§ 2574. REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

(a) Licensee disclosures, generally. A person licensed under subchapter 2 of this chapter to engage in virtual-currency business activity shall provide the disclosures required by this section and any additional disclosure the Commissioner determines reasonably necessary for the protection of the public.

(1) A disclosure required by this section must be made separately from any other information provided by the licensee and in a clear and conspicuous manner in a record the person may keep.

(2) The Commissioner may waive one or more requirements in subsections (b)–(d) of this section and approve alternative disclosures proposed by a licensee if the Commissioner determines that the alternative disclosure is more appropriate for the virtual-currency business activity and provides the same or equivalent information and protection to the public.

(b) Licensee disclosures prior to business activity. Before engaging in virtual-currency business activity with a person, a licensee shall disclose, to the extent applicable to the virtual-currency business activity the licensee will undertake with the person:

(1) a schedule of fees and charges the licensee may assess, the manner by which fees and charges will be calculated if they are not set in advance and disclosed, and the timing of the fees and charges, including general disclosure regarding mark-ups and mark-downs on purchases, sales, or exchanges of virtual currency in which the licensee or any affiliate thereof is acting in a principal capacity;

(2) whether the product or service provided by the licensee is covered by:

(A) a form of insurance or is otherwise guaranteed against loss by an agency of the United States:

(i) up to the full U.S. dollar equivalent of virtual currency purchased from the licensee or for control of virtual currency by the licensee as of the date of the placement or purchase, including the maximum amount provided by insurance under the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or otherwise available from the Securities Investor Protection Corporation; or

(ii) if not provided at the full U.S. dollar equivalent of virtual currency purchased from the licensee or for control of virtual currency by the licensee, the maximum amount of coverage for each person expressed in the U.S. dollar equivalent of the virtual currency; or

(B) private insurance against theft or loss, including cyber theft or theft by other means;

(3) the irrevocability of a transfer or exchange and any exception to irrevocability;

(4) a description of:

(A) liability for an unauthorized, mistaken, or accidental transfer or exchange;

(B) the person's responsibility to provide notice to the licensee of the transfer or exchange;

(C) the basis for any recovery by the person from the licensee;

(D) general error-resolution rights applicable to the transfer or exchange; and

(E) the method for the person to update the person's contact information with the licensee;

(5) that the date or time when the transfer or exchange is made and the person's account is debited may differ from the date or time when the person initiates the instruction to make the transfer or exchange;

(6) whether the person has a right to stop a preauthorized payment or revoke authorization for a transfer and the procedure to initiate a stop-payment order or revoke authorization for a subsequent transfer;

(7) the person's right to receive a receipt, trade ticket, or other evidence of the transfer or exchange;

(8) the person's right to at least 30 days' prior notice of a change in the licensee's fee schedule, other terms and conditions of operating its virtual-currency business activity with the person, and the policies applicable to the person's account; and

(9) that virtual currency is not money.

(c) Disclosures.

(1) Disclosures prior to each virtual-currency transaction. In connection with any virtual-currency transaction effected through a ~~money transmission~~ virtual-currency kiosk in this State, or in any transaction where the licensee or any affiliate thereof is acting in a principal capacity in a sale of virtual currency to, or purchase of virtual currency from, a customer, then immediately prior to effecting such a purchase or sale transaction with or on behalf of a customer, a licensee shall prominently disclose and shall require the customer to acknowledge and confirm the terms and conditions of the virtual-currency transaction, which shall include the following:

~~(1)(A)~~ the type, value, date, precise time, and amount of the transaction; ~~and~~

~~(2)(B)~~ the consideration charged for the transaction, including:

~~(A)(i)~~ any charge, fee, commission, or other consideration for any trade, exchange, conversion, or transfer involving virtual currency; and

~~(B)(ii)~~ any difference between the price paid by the customer for any virtual currency and the prevailing market price of such virtual currency, if any;

(C) for a customer of a virtual-currency kiosk, a description of the virtual-currency kiosk operator's refund policy, which shall be consistent with the requirements specified in subsections 2577(k) and (l) of this subchapter;

(D) for a customer of a virtual-currency kiosk, the customer warning described in subdivision (g)(1) of this section; and

(E) the daily transaction limit, if applicable.

(2) Disclosures for new kiosk accounts. When opening an account for a new customer, and prior to entering into an initial transaction for, on behalf of, or with such customer, each virtual-currency kiosk operator shall disclose relevant terms and conditions associated with its products, services, and activities and with virtual currency, generally, including disclosures substantially similar to the following:

(A) the customer's liability for unauthorized virtual-currency transactions;

(B) under what circumstances the virtual-currency kiosk operator will, absent a court or government order, disclose information concerning the customer's account to third parties;

(C) the customer's right to receive periodic account statements and valuations from the virtual-currency kiosk operator;

(D) the customer's right to receive a receipt, trade ticket, or other evidence of a transaction;

(E) the customer's right to prior notice of a change in the virtual-currency kiosk operator's rules or policies;

(F) a statement of the material risks associated with virtual-currency transactions, generally, as described in subsection (h) of this section;

(G) the name and telephone number of the Department of Financial Regulation and a statement disclosing that a customer may contact the Department with questions or complaints about a licensee; and

(H) such other disclosures as are customarily given in connection with the opening of customer accounts.

(d) Licensee receipt requirements. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (e) of this section, at the conclusion of a virtual-currency transaction with or on behalf of a person, a licensee shall provide the person with a receipt that contains:

(1) the name and contact information of the licensee, including information the person may need to ask a question or file a complaint;

(2) the type, value, date, precise time, and amount of the transaction expressed in U.S. currency;

(3) the consideration charged for the transaction, including:

(A) any charge, fee, commission, or other consideration for any trade, exchange, conversion, or transfer involving virtual currency; or

(B) the amount of any difference between the price paid by the customer for any virtual currency and the prevailing market price of such virtual currency, if any; and

(4) any other information required pursuant to section 2562 of this title.

(e) Licensee daily confirmation. If a licensee discloses that it will provide a daily confirmation in the initial disclosure under subsection (e)(b) of this section, the licensee may elect to provide a single, daily confirmation for all transactions with or on behalf of a person on that day instead of a per-transaction confirmation.

(f) Kiosk transaction receipt. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a virtual-currency kiosk operator shall provide a customer with both a paper and an electronic receipt in a retainable form for each virtual-currency transaction completed at a virtual-currency kiosk. In addition to the information required to be included in a receipt under subsection (d) of this section or under section 2562 of this title, each receipt for virtual-currency transaction completed at a virtual-currency kiosk shall include:

(1) the identification of any applicable digital wallet address to which virtual currency is transmitted;

(2) the full name of the account owner;

(3) any unique transaction identifiers;

(4) a prominent statement of the virtual-currency kiosk operator's refund obligations under this section, in a form approved by the Commissioner;

(5) a statement of the operator's liability for nondelivery or delayed delivery of virtual currency; and

(6) the name and telephone number of the Department of Financial Regulation and a statement disclosing that a customer may contact the Department with questions or complaints about an operator.

(g) Customer warning.

(1) Prior to entering into a virtual-currency transaction with a customer at a virtual-currency kiosk, and as required by subdivision (c)(1)(D) of this section, each virtual-currency kiosk operator shall ensure a warning is disclosed to the customer substantially similar to the following:

Customer Notice. Please Read Carefully.

Did you receive a phone call from your bank, software provider, the police, or were you directed to make a payment for Social Security, a utility bill, an investment, warrants, or bail money at this kiosk? STOP

Is anyone on the phone pressuring you to make a payment of any kind? STOP

I understand that the purchase and sale of cryptocurrency may be a final, irreversible, and nonrefundable transaction.

I confirm I am sending funds to a digital wallet I own or directly have control over. I confirm that I am using funds gained from my own initiative to make my transaction.

(2) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall ensure a customer has a readily accessible opportunity to end a transaction for any reason prior to its completion.

(h) Statement of material risks. As used in subdivision (c)(2)(F) of this section, a statement of material risks associated with virtual-currency transactions, generally, shall include disclosures substantially similar to the following:

(1) Virtual currency is not legal tender, is not backed by the government, and accounts and value balances are not subject to Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or Securities Investor Protection Corporation protections.

(2) Legislative and regulatory changes or actions at the State, federal, or international level may adversely affect the use, transfer, exchange, and value of virtual currency.

(3) Transactions in virtual currency may be irreversible and, accordingly, losses due to fraudulent or accidental transactions may not be recoverable.

(4) Some virtual-currency transactions shall be deemed to be made when recorded on a public ledger, which is not necessarily the date or time that the customer initiates the transaction.

(5) The value of virtual currency may be derived from the continued willingness of market participants to exchange fiat currency for virtual currency, which may result in the potential for permanent and total loss of value of a particular virtual currency should the market for that virtual currency disappear.

(6) There is no assurance that a person who accepts a virtual currency as payment today will continue to do so in the future.

(7) The volatility and unpredictability of the price of virtual currency relative to fiat currency may result in significant loss over a short period of time.

(8) The nature of virtual currency may lead to an increased risk of fraud or cyber attack.

(9) The nature of virtual currency means that any technological difficulties experienced by the virtual-currency kiosk operator may prevent the access or use of a customer's virtual currency.

(10) Any bond or trust account maintained by the virtual-currency kiosk operator for the benefit of its customers may not be sufficient to cover all losses incurred by customers.

Sec. 24. 8 V.S.A. § 2577 is amended to read:

§ 2577. VIRTUAL-CURRENCY KIOSK OPERATORS

(a) Daily transaction limit.

(1) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall not accept or dispense more than ~~\$1,000.00~~ \$2,000.00 of cash in a day in connection with virtual-currency transactions with a single, new customer in this State via one or more money transmission virtual-currency kiosks.

(2) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall not accept or dispense more than \$5,000.00 of cash in a day in connection with virtual-currency transactions with a single, existing customer in this State via one or more virtual-currency kiosks.

(b) Fee cap. The aggregate fees and charges, directly or indirectly, charged to a customer related to a single transaction or series of related transactions involving virtual currency effected through a money transmission kiosk in this State, including any difference between the price charged to a customer to buy, sell, exchange, swap, or convert virtual currency and the prevailing market value of such virtual currency at the time of such transaction, shall not exceed the greater of the following:

(1) \$5.00; or

(2) ~~three~~ 15 percent of the U.S. dollar equivalent of virtual currency involved in the transaction or transactions.

(c) Single transaction. The purchase, sale, exchange, swap, or conversion of virtual currency, or the subsequent transfer of virtual currency, in a series of transactions shall be deemed to be a single transaction for purposes of ~~subsection (b)~~ subsections (a) and (b) of this section.

(d) Licensing requirement. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall comply with the licensing requirements of this subchapter to the extent that the virtual-currency kiosk operator engages in virtual-currency business activity.

(e) Operator accountability. If a virtual-currency kiosk operator allows or facilitates another person to engage in virtual-currency business activity via a ~~money transmission~~ virtual-currency kiosk in this State that is owned, operated, or managed by the virtual-currency kiosk operator, the virtual-currency kiosk operator shall do all of the following:

(1) ensure that the person engaging in virtual-currency business activity is licensed under subchapter 2 of this chapter to engage in virtual-currency business activity and complies with all other applicable provisions of this chapter;

(2) ensure that any charges collected from a customer via the ~~money transmission~~ virtual-currency kiosk comply with the ~~limits provided by~~ fee cap established in subsection (b) of this section; and

(3) comply with all other applicable provisions of this chapter.

(f) Moratorium. To protect the public safety and welfare and safeguard the rights of consumers, virtual-currency kiosks shall not be permitted to operate in Vermont prior to July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026. This moratorium shall not apply to a virtual-currency kiosk that was duly licensed and operational in Vermont on or before June 30, 2024.

~~(g) Report. On or before January 15, 2025, the Commissioner of Financial Regulation shall report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance on whether the requirements of this section coupled with relevant federal requirements are sufficient to protect customers in Vermont from fraudulent activity. If deemed necessary and appropriate by the Commissioner, the Commissioner may make recommendations for additional statutory or regulatory safeguards. In addition, the Commissioner shall make recommendations for enhanced oversight and monitoring of virtual-currency kiosks for the purpose of minimizing their use for illicit activities as described in the U.S. Government Accountability Office report on virtual currencies, GAO-22-105462, dated December 2021.~~ Customer identification. For each virtual-currency transaction occurring at a virtual-currency kiosk in this State, the virtual-currency kiosk operator shall verify the identity of the customer prior to

accepting payment from the customer. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall not allow a customer to engage in any transaction at a virtual-currency kiosk under any name, account, or identity other than the customer's own true name and identity. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall obtain a copy of a government-issued identification card that identifies the customer and shall collect additional customer information, including the customer's name, date of birth, telephone number, address, and email address prior to accepting any payment from a customer at a virtual-currency kiosk in this State. In addition, a virtual-currency kiosk operator shall take a photograph of the customer in a retainable format at the virtual-currency kiosk for each transaction. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall be strictly liable for any violation of this subsection.

(h) Customer support. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall offer live, toll-free, telephone customer support during the hours of operation of a virtual-currency kiosk. The customer support telephone number shall be displayed on the virtual-currency kiosk or on the virtual-currency kiosk screen.

(i) Mandatory live screening.

(1) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall identify and speak by telephone with:

(A) a new customer over 60 years of age prior to such customer's first virtual-currency transaction with the virtual-currency kiosk operator; or

(B) a customer attempting to conduct more than \$5,000.00 in virtual-currency transactions during any consecutive 10-day period.

(2) The virtual-currency kiosk operator's approval of a transaction subject to a mandatory live screening under this subsection shall be dependent upon its assessment of its communication with the customer during the screening.

(3) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall record and retain a copy of each mandatory live screening.

(4) During the mandatory live screening, the virtual-currency kiosk operator shall:

(A) positively identify the customer;

(B) reconfirm any attestations made by the customer at the virtual-currency kiosk;

(C) discuss the purpose of the transaction; and

(D) discuss types of fraudulent schemes relating to virtual currency.

(j) Blockchain analytics. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall use blockchain analytics software and retain an established third party that specializes in performing blockchain analytics to assist in the prevention of sending purchased virtual currency from a virtual-currency kiosk operator to a digital wallet known to be affiliated with fraudulent activity at the time of a transaction. The Commissioner may request evidence from any virtual-currency kiosk operator of its current use of blockchain analytics.

(k) Full refund for new customers. The virtual-currency kiosk operator shall provide a full refund to a customer who was fraudulently induced to engage in a virtual-currency kiosk transaction, provided the fraudulently induced transaction occurred while the customer was a new customer and further provided the customer contacts the virtual-currency kiosk operator and a law enforcement or government agency to inform the operator and the agency of the fraudulent nature of the transaction within 90 days after the customer's last virtual-currency transaction with the virtual-currency kiosk operator. The refund shall include any fees charged in association with the fraudulently induced transaction.

(l) Fee refund for existing customers. The virtual-currency kiosk operator shall provide a fee refund to an existing customer who has been fraudulently induced to engage in a virtual-currency kiosk transaction, provided the customer contacts the virtual-currency kiosk operator and a law enforcement or government agency to inform the operator and the agency of the fraudulent nature of the transaction within 90 days after the last fraudulently induced transaction. The refund shall include all fees charged in association with the fraudulently induced transaction.

(m) Fraud prevention. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall take reasonable steps to detect and prevent fraud, including establishing and maintaining a written antifraud policy. The antifraud policy shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- (1) the identification and assessment of fraud-related risk areas;
- (2) procedures and controls to protect against identified risks;
- (3) allocation of responsibility for monitoring risks;
- (4) procedures for the periodic evaluation and revision of the antifraud procedures, controls, and monitoring mechanisms;
- (5) procedures and controls that prevent more than one customer from using the same digital wallet;

(6) procedures and controls that enable the virtual-currency kiosk operator to prevent a digital wallet from being used at a virtual-currency kiosk it operates if the operator knows or reasonably should know the digital wallet is affiliated with fraudulent activities; and

(7) policies and procedures for using a risk-based method for monitoring customers on a post transaction basis.

(n) Due diligence policy. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall maintain, implement, and enforce a written Enhanced Due Diligence Policy. The Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the virtual-currency kiosk operator's board of directors or an equivalent governing body of the virtual-currency kiosk operator. The Policy shall identify, at a minimum, individuals who are at risk of fraud based on age or mental capacity.

(o) Compliance policies. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall maintain, implement, and enforce written compliance policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures shall be reviewed and approved by the virtual-currency kiosk operator's board of directors or an equivalent governing body of the virtual-currency kiosk operator.

(p) Compliance officer.

(1) A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall designate and employ a compliance officer who meets the following requirements:

(A) is qualified to coordinate and monitor compliance with this section and all other applicable federal and State laws and regulations;

(B) is employed full-time by the virtual-currency kiosk operator; and

(C) is not an individual who owns more than 20 percent of the virtual-currency kiosk operator by whom the individual is employed.

(2) Compliance responsibilities required under federal and State law and regulation shall be completed by one or more full-time employees of the virtual-currency kiosk operator.

(q) Consumer protection officer. A virtual-currency kiosk operator shall designate and employ a consumer protection officer who meets the following requirements:

(1) is qualified to coordinate and monitor compliance with this section and all other applicable federal and State laws and regulations;

(2) is employed full-time by the virtual-currency kiosk operator; and

(3) is not an individual who owns more than 20 percent of the virtual-currency kiosk operator by whom the individual is employed.

(r) The Commissioner may adopt rules the Commissioner deems necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of this section, including with respect to what constitutes fraudulent activity or a fraudulently induced transaction in the context of customer transactions at a virtual-currency kiosk.

Sec. 25. 8 V.S.A. § 13301 is amended to read:

§ 13301. CORPORATORS OF MUTUAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

(a) Persons named in the organizational documents constitute the original board of corporators of a mutual financial institution. Membership on this board continues until terminated by death, resignation, or disqualification as provided in this section.

(b) All corporators shall be residents of the geographic area that the financial institution serves or an area proximate to this geographic area. A person ~~may~~ shall not continue as a corporator after ceasing to be a resident of the financial institution's geographic area or an area proximate to this geographic area.

(c) Any corporator failing to attend the annual meeting of the board of corporators for two successive years ceases to be a member of the board unless reelected by a vote of the remaining corporators.

(d) The number of corporators may be fixed or altered by the internal governance documents of the financial institution, and vacancies may be filled by election at any annual meeting.

(e) More than 50 percent of all corporators shall be depositors of the financial institution.

(f) At least two-thirds of all corporators shall be independent. As used in this subsection, an "independent corporator" means an individual who is not an employee, director, or officer of the financial institution, its subsidiaries, or its affiliates.

(g) Corporators shall be fiduciaries of the depositor base and shall exercise their authority in the best interests of the depositors with a duty of loyalty and care. In exercising their duties as corporators, corporators shall consider the interests of the depositors, the borrowers, and other customers of the financial institution; the general benefit and economic well-being of the communities served by the financial institution; and the safety, soundness, and general business needs of the financial institution.

and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Access Board Appointment

Pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2901, the following member will serve *ex officio* on the Access Board:

Rep. Emmons of Springfield

Art in State Buildings Advisory Committee Appointment

Pursuant to 29 V.S.A. § 44, the Speaker announced that the Chair of the Committee on Corrections and Institutions had designated the following member to serve on the Art in State Buildings Advisory Committee:

Rep. Headrick of Burlington

Message from the Senate No. 54

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 491. An act relating to setting the homestead property tax yields and the nonhomestead property tax rate.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 50. An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration.

And has concurred therein with an amendment in the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At three o'clock and thirty-three minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.

Friday, May 9, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Richard Nelson of Derby.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**S. 53**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas and Medicaid coverage for doula services

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 93**

Offered by Representatives Branagan of Georgia, Hooper of Burlington, and Ode of Burlington

House concurrent resolution congratulating Kathleen Lynch of Burlington on being named as the 2025 Vermont Mother of the Year

Whereas, Kathleen Lynch was born to Fred and Kathleen Connor in Worcester, Massachusetts, and faith and family were central in the Connor family, and

Whereas, after graduating from the Saint Vincent Hospital School of Nursing, she devoted an astounding 47 years to surgical nursing, primarily at the hospital now known as the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMC), and

Whereas, she married now-retired UVMC anesthesiologist Dr. Terrance Lynch, and they are the proud parents of seven children and have two grandchildren, and

Whereas, in 2010, her family assisted in the early Champlain Valley Down Syndrome Group's activities, and the Lynch family continues to support the Buddy Walk in Burlington, and

Whereas, since 1935, American Mothers, Inc. has annually, with the participation of local members, designated a Mother of the Year for every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and from the 2025 selections, a National Mother of the Year will be chosen at a convention to be held this year in Puerto Rico, and

Whereas, a Mother of the Year has demonstrated a strong commitment to the role of motherhood and serving her community, and

Whereas, Kathleen Lynch has been deservedly honored as the 2025 Vermont Mother of the Year, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Kathleen Lynch of Burlington on being named as the 2025 Vermont Mother of the Year, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Kathleen Lynch.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Rules Suspended, Bill Committed

S. 124

On motion of **Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury**, the rules were suspended and Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, was taken up for immediate consideration and committed to the Committee on Environment.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Bos-Lun of Westminster**, the following remarks by **Rep. Lipsky of Stowe** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I am standing to acknowledge that Rep. Nelson has added to the Body generally, but to the Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry Committee specifically. He brings such a depth of knowledge, passion, experience, and commitment to the working lands, particularly to the farming and food producing community. As the former member from Williamstown, who delivered the shortest floor speech in history—four words—‘no farms, no food.’ Would you all join me in welcoming the dynamic member from Derby. Thank you, Madam Speaker.”

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 41**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to abuse of the dead body of a person

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. Burditt of West Rutland**, action on the bill was postponed until May 13, 2025.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 230

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife

H. 248

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered****S. 117**

Rep. Bosch of Clarendon, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Safety and Health Rulemaking * * *

Sec. 1. [Deleted.]

Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

Sec. 4. [Deleted.]

* * * Wage and Hour * * *

Sec. 5. 21 V.S.A. § 342a is amended to read:

§ 342a. INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS OF UNPAID WAGES

* * *

(d) If the Commissioner determines that the unpaid wages were willfully withheld by the employer, the order for collection ~~may~~ shall provide that the employer is liable to pay an additional amount not to exceed twice the amount of unpaid wages, ~~one-half~~. One-half of which will the additional amount recovered above the employee's unpaid wages shall be remitted to the employee and one-half of which shall be retained by the Commissioner to offset administrative and collection costs.

* * *

Sec. 6. 21 V.S.A. § 384 is amended to read:

§ 384. EMPLOYMENT; WAGES

(a)(1) Beginning on January 1, 2022, an employer shall not employ any employee at a rate of less than \$12.55, and on each subsequent January 1, the minimum wage rate shall be increased by five percent or the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index, CPI-U, U.S. city average, not seasonally adjusted, or successor index, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor or successor agency, rounded to one decimal point, for the 12 months preceding the previous September 1, whichever is smaller, but in no event shall the minimum wage be decreased. The minimum wage shall be rounded off to the nearest \$0.01.

* * *

Sec. 7. 21 V.S.A. § 385 is amended to read:

§ 385. ADMINISTRATION

The Commissioner and the Commissioner's authorized representatives have full power and authority for all the following:

* * *

~~(5) To recommend a suitable scale of rates for learners, apprentices, and persons with disabilities, which may be less than the regular minimum wage rate for experienced workers without disabilities.~~

* * * Notice of Potential Layoffs * * *

Sec. 8. [Deleted.]

* * * Unemployment Compensation * * *

Sec. 9. 21 V.S.A. § 1308 is amended to read:

§ 1308. ORGANIZATION

The Commissioner shall determine ~~his or her~~ the method of procedure in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. Notwithstanding any requirement in this chapter that the Commissioner mail notices and determinations, the Commissioner may provide claimants and employers with the option to authorize communications from the Commissioner to be delivered electronically.

Sec. 10. 21 V.S.A. § 1314 is amended to read:

§ 1314. REPORTS AND RECORDS; SEPARATION INFORMATION;
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY; FAILURE TO REPORT
EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION; DISCLOSURE OF
INFORMATION TO OTHER STATE AGENCIES TO
INVESTIGATE MISCLASSIFICATION OR MISCODING

* * *

(c) If an employing unit fails to comply adequately with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section and section 1314a of this subchapter, the Commissioner shall determine the benefit rights of a claimant upon the available information. Prompt notice in writing of the determination shall be given to the employing unit. The employing unit may request or authorize the Commissioner to provide notice of the determination electronically. The determination shall be final with respect to a noncomplying employer as to any charges against its experience-rating record for benefits paid to the claimant before the week following the receipt of the employing unit's reply. The employing unit's experience rating record shall not be relieved of these charges, notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, unless the Commissioner determines that failure to comply was due to unavoidable accident or mistake.

* * *

Sec. 11. 21 V.S.A. § 1314a is amended to read:

§ 1314a. QUARTERLY WAGE REPORTING; MISCLASSIFICATION;
PENALTIES

* * *

(d) Reports required by subsection (c) of this section shall be submitted to the Commissioner not later than 10 calendar days after the date the Commissioner's request was sent electronically or mailed to the employing unit.

(e) On request of the Commissioner, any employing unit or employer shall report, within 10 days after the mailing, electronic delivery, or personal delivery of the request, separation information for a claimant, any disqualifying income the claimant may have received, and any other information that the Commissioner may require to determine the claimant's eligibility for unemployment compensation. The Commissioner shall make a request when:

* * *

Sec. 12. 21 V.S.A. § 1330 is amended to read:

§ 1330. ASSESSMENT PROVIDED

When any employer fails to pay any contributions or payments required under this chapter, the Commissioner shall make an assessment of contributions against the employer together with applicable interest and penalty. After making the assessment, the Commissioner shall give notice to the employer electronically or by ordinary or certified mail, and the assessment shall be final unless the employer petitions for a hearing on the assessment pursuant to section 1331 of this subchapter.

Sec. 13. 21 V.S.A. § 1331 is amended to read:

§ 1331. NOTICE; HEARING

(a) Any employer against whom an assessment is made may, within 30 days after the date of the assessment, file with the Commissioner a petition for a hearing before a referee appointed for that purpose. The petition shall set forth specifically and in detail the grounds upon which it is claimed the assessment is erroneous.

(b) Hearing or hearings on the assessment shall be held by the referee at times and places provided by the rules of the Board and due notice of the time and place of the hearing or hearings shall be given electronically or by ordinary or certified mail to the petitioner.

(c) After the hearing the petitioner shall be promptly notified electronically or by ordinary or certified mail of the findings of fact, conclusions, and decision of the referee.

* * *

Sec. 14. 21 V.S.A. § 1332 is amended to read:

§ 1332. REVIEW BY BOARD; SUPREME COURT APPEAL

* * *

(d) The parties shall be promptly notified electronically or by ordinary or certified mail of the findings of fact, conclusions, and decision of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final unless it is appealed to the Supreme Court.

Sec. 15. 21 V.S.A. § 1337a is amended to read:

§ 1337a. ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATION; HEARING ON

(a) Any employing unit aggrieved by an administrative determination affecting its rate of contributions, its rights to adjustment or refund on contributions paid, its coverage as an employer, or its termination of coverage may, within 30 days after the date of the determination, file with the Commissioner a petition for a hearing on the determination. The petition shall set forth specifically and in detail the grounds upon which it is claimed the administrative determination is erroneous. Hearing or hearings on the petition shall be held by a referee appointed for that purpose, at times and places as provided by rules of the Board. Notice of the time and place of the hearing or hearings shall be given electronically or by ordinary or certified mail to the petitioner.

(b) After a hearing pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the petitioner shall be promptly notified electronically or by ordinary or certified mail of the findings of fact, conclusions, and decision of the referee. The decision of the referee shall be final unless the employing unit or Commissioner makes application for review of the decision by the Board within 30 days after the date of the decision or unless the Board, on its own motion within the same period, initiates a review of the decision.

Sec. 16. 21 V.S.A. § 1357 is amended to read:

§ 1357. NOTICES; FORM AND SERVICE

Notices required under the provisions of this chapter, unless otherwise provided by the provisions of this chapter or by rules adopted by the Supreme Court, shall be deemed sufficient if given in writing and delivered to the person entitled to it by an agent of the Commissioner, or sent electronically or by ordinary or certified mail to the last known address of the person appearing in the records of the Commissioner. The manner of service shall be certified by the agent of the Commissioner making the service. Regardless of the manner of service and unless otherwise provided, appeal periods shall commence to run from the date of the determination or decision rendered. If a

person to whom a notice has been sent files with the Commissioner within 60 days after the date of the notice a sworn statement to the effect that the notice was not received, or if the Commissioner is satisfied that the addressee did not receive the notice, a new notice shall be sent to that person and the appeal period shall commence to run from the date on which the new notice is sent.

Sec. 17. 21 V.S.A. § 1325 is amended to read:

§ 1325. EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCE-RATING RECORDS;

DISCLOSURE TO SUCCESSOR ENTITY

* * *

(b)(1) Disclosure of contribution rate to successor entity. Any individual or employing unit who in any manner succeeds to or acquires the organization, trade, or business or substantially all of the assets of any employer who has been operating the business within two weeks prior to the acquisition, except any assets retained by the employer incident to the liquidation of the employer's obligations, and who thereafter continues the acquired business shall be considered to be a successor to the predecessor from whom the business was acquired and, if not already an employer before the acquisition, shall become an employer on the date of the acquisition. The Commissioner shall transfer the experience-rating record of the predecessor employer to the successor employer. If the successor was not an employer before the date of acquisition, the successor's rate of contribution for the remainder of the rate year shall be the rate applicable to the predecessor employers with respect to the period immediately preceding the date of acquisition if there was only one predecessor or there were only predecessors with identical rates. If the predecessors' rates were not identical, the Commissioner shall determine a rate based on the combined experience of all the predecessor employers. If the successor was an employer before the date of acquisition, the contribution rate that was assigned to the successor for the rate year in which the acquisition occurred will remain assigned to the successor for the remainder of the rate year, after which the experience-rating record of the predecessor shall be combined with the experience rating of the successor to form the single employer experience-rating record of the successor. At any time prior to the issuance of the certificate required by subsection 1322(b) of this chapter, an employing unit shall, upon request of a potential successor, disclose to the potential successor its current experience-rating record.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, an individual or employing unit who in any manner succeeds to or acquires the organization, trade, or business or substantially all of the assets of any employing unit who was an employer before the date of acquisition and whose

currently assigned contribution rate is higher than that currently assigned to the acquiring individual or employing unit shall not be treated as a successor.

(3) If a successor, upon acquisition of an employer under subdivision (1) of this subsection, divides operation of the successor business between two or more corporate entities, the successor shall designate one of the corporate entities involved in successor's business operations as the filing successor for purposes of quarterly wage reporting and benefit rate assignment. The designated filing successor shall include all employees involved in carrying on the successor business in the designated filing successor's quarterly wage reporting and shall pay the full successor benefit tax on all business employees.

* * *

Sec. 18. 21 V.S.A. § 1326 is amended to read:

§ 1326. RATE BASED ON BENEFIT EXPERIENCE

* * *

(d) The Commissioner shall compute a current fund ratio, and a highest benefit cost rate, as follows:

(1) The current fund ratio shall be determined by dividing the available balance of the Unemployment Compensation Fund on December 31 of the preceding calendar year by the total wages paid for employment during that calendar year as reported by employers by the following March 31.

~~(2)(A) The highest benefit cost rate shall be determined by dividing the highest amount of benefit payments made during a consecutive 12-month period that ended within the 10-year period ending on the preceding December 31, by the total wages paid during the four calendar quarter periods that ended within that 12-month period is the highest annual ratio within the 10-year period ending on the preceding December 31 of benefits paid, including the State's share of extended benefits, for taxpaying employers divided by total wages paid in covered employment for taxpaying employers for the same period.~~

(B) Notwithstanding any provision of subdivision (A) of this subdivision (d)(2) to the contrary, when computing the tax rate schedule to become effective on July 1, 2021 and on each subsequent July 1, the Commissioner shall calculate the highest benefit cost rate without consideration of benefit payments made in calendar year 2020.

* * *

Sec. 19. 21 V.S.A. § 1338a is amended to read:

§ 1338a. DISREGARDED EARNINGS

(a) An individual shall be deemed “partially unemployed” in any week of less than full-time work if the wages earned by the individual with respect to such week are less than the weekly benefit amount the individual would be entitled to receive if totally unemployed and eligible. As used in this section, “wages” in any one week includes only that amount of remuneration rounded down to the nearest dollar that is in excess of 50 percent of the individual’s weekly wage.

* * *

Sec. 20. 21 V.S.A. § 1462 is amended to read:

§ 1462. PERIOD OF DORMANCY

On July 1, 2020, the Short-Time Compensation Program established pursuant to sections 1451–1461 of this subchapter ~~shall cease~~ ceased operation and ~~shall not resume operation unless directed to do so by enactment of the General Assembly or, if the General Assembly is not in session, by order of the Joint Fiscal Committee. The Joint Fiscal Committee shall issue such order only upon finding that, due to a change in circumstances, resumption of the Short-Time Compensation Program would be the most effective way to assist employers in avoiding layoffs. Upon the effective date of such an enactment or order~~ Effective upon completion of the project to implement a modernized information technology system for the unemployment insurance program in 2026, the Short-Time Compensation Program shall resume operation pursuant to the provisions of sections 1451–1461 of this subchapter.

Sec. 21. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 52f is amended to read:

Sec. 52f. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE; INFORMATION

TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION; ANNUAL REPORT;

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

(a)(1) The Secretary of Digital Services and the Commissioner of Labor shall, to the greatest extent possible, plan and carry out the development and implementation of a modernized information technology system for the unemployment insurance program so that the modernized system is ready and able to implement on or before July 1, ~~2025~~ 2026 the changes to the unemployment insurance weekly benefit amount set forth in Secs. 52d and 52e of this act.

* * *

Sec. 21a. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 183, Sec. 59 is amended to read:

Sec. 59. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

(b)(1) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. 52a (repeal of prior unemployment insurance supplemental benefit) shall take effect retroactively on October 7, 2021.

* * *

(4)(A) Sec. 52d (amendment of temporary increase in unemployment insurance maximum weekly benefit) shall take effect on July 1, 2025 2026 or the date on which the Commissioner of Labor determines that the Department of Labor is able to implement the provisions of that section as set forth in Sec. 52f(b), whichever is earlier, and shall apply to benefit weeks beginning after that date.

(B) However, Sec. 52d shall not take effect at all if Sec. 52c takes effect before the conditions of subdivision (A) of this subdivision (b)(4) are satisfied.

(5)(A) Sec. 52e (increase in unemployment insurance weekly benefit amount) shall take effect on July 1, 2025 2026 and shall apply to benefit weeks beginning after that date.

(B) However, Sec. 52e shall not take effect at all if either

(i) Sec. 52d takes effect before July 1, 2025 2026; or

(ii) Sec. 52c has not taken effect before July 1, 2025 2026.

* * *

* * * Workers' Compensation * * *

Sec. 22. 21 V.S.A § 601 is amended to read:

§ 601. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(31) “Medical case management” means the planning and coordination of health care services appropriate to achieve the goal of medical rehabilitation.

(A) Medical case management may include medical case assessment, including a personal interview with the injured employee; assistance in developing, implementing, and coordinating a medical care plan with health

care providers in consultation with the injured employee and the employees' family; and an evaluation of treatment results. The goal of medical case management is to provide the injured employee with reasonable treatment options to ensure that the injured employee can make an informed choice.

(B) Medical case managers shall not provide medical care or adjust claims.

(C) An injured employee shall be entitled to medical case management services if reasonably supported. Reasonable support includes a recommendation made by a health care provider or evidence demonstrating the injured employee's medical recovery would benefit from the services, or both.

Sec. 23. 21 V.S.A. § 602 is amended to read:

§ 602. PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

* * *

(d) When an injured employee does not speak English fluently, the employer shall pay for translation services to ensure the injured employee fully understands the employee's rights and can effectively participate in the employee's medical recovery and the workers' compensation claims process.

Sec. 24. 21 V.S.A. § 640b is amended to read:

§ 640b. REQUEST FOR PREAUTHORIZATION TO DETERMINE IF
PROPOSED BENEFITS OR SERVICES ARE NECESSARY

(a) As used in this section;

(1) ~~"benefits"~~ "Benefits" means medical treatment and surgical, medical, and nursing services and supplies, including prescription drugs and durable medical equipment.

(2) "Services" means medical case management services.

* * *

(e) Within 14 days after receiving a request for preauthorization of proposed medical case management services, the insurer shall do one of the following, in writing:

(1) Authorize the services and notify the injured employee, the Department, and the treating provider recommending the services, if applicable.

(2) Deny the services because the entire claim is disputed, and the Commissioner has not issued an interim order to pay benefits. The insurer shall notify the injured employee, the Department, and the treating provider recommending the services, if applicable, of the decision to deny benefits.

(3) Deny the request if there is not reasonable support for the requested services. The insurer shall notify the injured employee, the Department, and the treating provider recommending the services, if applicable, of the decision to deny benefits.

(4) Notify the injured employee, the Department, and the treating provider recommending the services, if applicable, that the insurer has scheduled an examination of the injured employee pursuant to section 655 of this title or ordered a medical record review pursuant to section 655a of this title. Based on the examination or review, the insurer shall notify the injured employee and the Department of the decision within 45 days after a request for preauthorization. The Commissioner may, in the Commissioner's sole discretion, grant a 10-day extension to the insurer to authorize or deny the services, and such an extension shall not be subject to appeal.

(f) If the insurer fails to authorize or deny the services pursuant to subsection (e) of this section within 14 days after receiving a request, the injured employee or the injured employee's treating provider, if applicable, may request that the Department issue an order authorizing services. After receipt of the request, the Department shall issue an interim order within five days after notice to the insurer, and five days in which to respond, absent evidence that the entire claim is disputed. Upon request of a party, the Commissioner shall notify the parties that the services have been authorized by operation of law.

(g) If the insurer denies the preauthorization of the services pursuant to subdivision (e)(2), (3), or (4) of this section, the Commissioner may, on the Commissioner's own initiative or upon a request by the injured worker, issue an order authorizing the services if the Commissioner finds that the evidence shows that the services are reasonably supported.

Sec. 25. 21 V.S.A. § 650 is amended to read:

§ 650. PAYMENT; AVERAGE WAGE; COMPUTATION

* * *

(f)(1)(A) When benefits have been awarded or are not in dispute as provided in subsection (e) of this section, the employer shall establish a weekday on which payment shall be mailed or deposited and notify the claimant and the Department of that day. The employer shall ensure that each weekly payment is mailed or deposited on or before the day established.

(B) Payment shall be made by direct deposit to a claimant who elects that payment method. The employer shall notify the claimant of the claimant's right to payment by direct deposit.

(2) If the benefit payment is not mailed or deposited on the day established, the employer shall pay to the claimant a late fee equal to the greater of \$10.00 or:

(A) five percent of the benefit amount, ~~whichever is greater~~, for each weekly the first payment that is made after the established day;

(B) 10 percent of the benefit amount for the second payment that is made after the established day; and

(C) 15 percent of the benefit amount for the third and any subsequent payments that are made after the established day.

(3) As used in this subsection, "paid" means the payment is mailed to the claimant's mailing address or, in the case of direct deposit, transferred into the designated account. In the event of a dispute, proof of payment shall be established by affidavit.

Sec. 26. LATE PAYMENT OF AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES; PENALTY;
REPORT

(a) The payment of any late fee pursuant to 21 V.S.A. § 650(f)(2) shall be reported to the Commissioner on a quarterly basis for one year, commencing on October 1, 2025. The employer shall attest to the reasons for the late payment and the steps being taken to avoid future late payments of benefit amounts. The Commissioner shall compile the information in a format of the Commissioner's choosing.

(b) An employer who fails to submit the report required by subsection (a) of this section may be assessed an administrative penalty of not more than \$500.00.

(c) On or before January 15, 2027, the Commissioner shall submit a written report to the General Assembly with the Commissioner's findings on the frequency of late payments at each penalty level, the reasons given for the late payments, and the effectiveness of the late fee penalties in reducing the number of late payments. The report shall include the Commissioner's recommendation on whether to continue the reporting requirement and whether the penalties for late payments should be maintained, increased, or decreased based upon the reported data.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 27. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to wage and hour, unemployment compensation, and workers’ compensation”

Rep. Burkhardt of South Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

Rep. Nigro of Bennington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed**S. 125**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to workers’ compensation and collective bargaining rights

Was taken up and, pending second reading, on motion of **Rep. Mihaly of Calais**, action on the bill was postponed until May 13, 2025.

Action on Bill Postponed**H. 98**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until May 13, 2025.

**Senate Proposal of Amendment to House Proposal of Amendment to
Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in**

H. 398

The Senate concurred in House proposal of amendment to Senate proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto on House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment to the Senate proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto in Sec. 1, 10 V.S.A. chapter 12, in section 280gg, by striking out subsection (e) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (e) to read as follows:

(e) In determining whether to issue financial assistance from the Vermont Disaster Recovery Loan Fund established by this subchapter 15, the Authority shall consider whether a business has received disaster recovery financial assistance from the State for the same disaster event.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Message from the Senate No. 55

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 27. An act relating to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill entitled:

S. 51. An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit.

And has refused to concur therein and asks for a Committee of Conference upon the disagreeing votes of the two Houses;

The President announced the appointment as members of such Committee on the part of the Senate:

Senator Cummings
Senator Chittenden
Senator Brock

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 130. House concurrent resolution commemorating the bicentennial of the 1824–1825 Farewell American tour of the Marquis de Lafayette.

H.C.R. 131. House concurrent resolution congratulating Westgate Housing Inc. of Brattleboro on the nonprofit corporation's 25th anniversary.

H.C.R. 132. House concurrent resolution congratulating the West Rutland High School Golden Horde girls' basketball team on winning a fourth consecutive Division IV championship.

H.C.R. 133. House concurrent resolution congratulating West Rutland High School girls' basketball standout Peyton Guay and extending to her best wishes for every future success.

H.C.R. 134. House concurrent resolution honoring Cassandra Polhemus for her exemplary leadership of the Vermont Economic Development Authority.

H.C.R. 135. House concurrent resolution honoring esteemed Bennington Rural Firefighter Timothy Burgess.

H.C.R. 136. House concurrent resolution congratulating Mapenzi Selemani of Winooski on winning the 2025 Poetry Out Loud Vermont State championship and commemorating the 20th anniversary of Poetry Out Loud.

H.C.R. 137. House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of Robin's Nest Children's Center in Burlington's Old North End.

H.C.R. 138. House concurrent resolution honoring Christine J. Brock for her 52 years of dedicated public service on the staff of the Vermont Judiciary.

H.C.R. 139. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market on its 50th anniversary.

H.C.R. 140. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army and honoring the U.S. Army veterans in residence at the Vermont Veterans' Home.

Adjournment

At ten o'clock and twenty-five minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Monday, May 12, 2025, at three o'clock and thirty minutes in the afternoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 25.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 130

House concurrent resolution commemorating the bicentennial of the 1824–1825 Farewell American tour of the Marquis de Lafayette

H.C.R. 131

House concurrent resolution congratulating Westgate Housing Inc. of Brattleboro on the nonprofit corporation's 25th anniversary

H.C.R. 132

House concurrent resolution congratulating the West Rutland High School Golden Horde girls' basketball team on winning a fourth consecutive Division IV championship

H.C.R. 133

House concurrent resolution congratulating West Rutland High School girls' basketball standout Peyton Guay and extending to her best wishes for every future success

H.C.R. 134

House concurrent resolution honoring Cassandra Polhemus for her exemplary leadership of the Vermont Economic Development Authority

H.C.R. 135

House concurrent resolution honoring esteemed Bennington Rural Firefighter Timothy Burgess

H.C.R. 136

House concurrent resolution congratulating Mapenzi Selemani of Winooski on winning the 2025 Poetry Out Loud Vermont State championship and commemorating the 20th anniversary of Poetry Out Loud

H.C.R. 137

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of Robin's Nest Children's Center in Burlington's Old North End

H.C.R. 138

House concurrent resolution honoring Christine J. Brock for her 52 years of dedicated public service on the staff of the Vermont Judiciary

H.C.R. 139

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Brattleboro Area Farmers' Market on its 50th anniversary

H.C.R. 140

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army and honoring the U.S. Army veterans in residence at the Vermont Veterans' Home

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]

Monday, May 12, 2025

At three o'clock and thirty minutes in the afternoon, **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington** called the House to order. Noting a lack of quorum and pursuant to House Rule 9, the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Christie Leary, Leaders of Faith Foundation, Windsor.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Oscar Vulte of Brattleboro led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Committee of Conference Appointed

S. 51

Pursuant to the request of the Senate for a Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit

The Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro

Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock

Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven

Joint Resolution Referred to Committee

J.R.H. 4

Offered by Representatives Branagan of Georgia, Logan of Burlington, and Mrowicki of Putney

Joint resolution reaffirming support for the legislatively recognized Native American Indian tribes and bands of Vermont

Whereas, in 1 V.S.A. § 851(1), the General Assembly found that “[a]t least 1,700 Vermonters claim to be direct descendants of the several indigenous Native American peoples, now known as Western Abenaki tribes, who originally inhabited all of Vermont and New Hampshire, parts of western Maine, parts of southern Quebec, and parts of upstate New York for hundreds of years, beginning long before the arrival of Europeans,” and

Whereas, in 1 V.S.A. § 851(2), the General Assembly also found “ample archeological evidence that demonstrates that the Missisquoi and Cowasuck Abenaki were indigenous to and farmed the river floodplains of Vermont at least as far back as the 1100s A.D.,” and

Whereas, in 1 V.S.A. § 851(3), the General Assembly further found that the “Western Abenaki, including the Missisquoi, have a very definite and carefully maintained oral tradition that consistently references the Champlain [V]alley in western Vermont,” and

Whereas, 1 V.S.A. § 852(a) establishes the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs “to recognize the historic and cultural contributions of Native Americans to Vermont,” and in 1 V.S.A. § 853(c) created a set of criteria for future State recognition of Native American Indian tribes and bands, and

Whereas, to date, the General Assembly has extended State recognition to the Elnu Abenaki tribe (1 V.S.A. § 853a), the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation (1 V.S.A. § 854), the Koasek Abenaki of the Koas (1 V.S.A. § 855), and the Missisquoi, St. Francis-Sokoki band (1 V.S.A. § 856), *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly reaffirms its support for the legislatively recognized Native American Indian tribes and bands of Vermont, their geological legitimacy, and the system established in 1 V.S.A. chapter 23 for extending future State recognition of Native American Indian tribes and bands, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs.

Was read, treated as bill, and referred to the Committee on General and Housing pursuant to House Rule 52.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 110

Offered by Representatives LaMont of Morristown, Berbeco of Winooski, Arsenault of Williston, Burke of Brattleboro, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Christie of Hartford, Cordes of Bristol, Critchlow of Colchester, Dodge of Essex, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Headrick of Burlington, James of Manchester, McCoy of Poultney, Minier of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Waszazak of Barre City, Waters Evans of Charlotte, and Wells of Brownington

House concurrent resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont

Whereas, according to a Commonwealth Fund study released in June 2024, the United States has the highest maternal death rate among the world's high-income nations, and the maternal death rate for Black women in this country is significantly higher than for other racial groups, and

Whereas, provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that, in September 2024, the maternal death rate for non-Hispanic White women was 14.9 per 100,000 live births, an admittedly high rate, but the comparable rate for non-Hispanic Black women was far higher, at 50.5 per 100,000 live births, and

Whereas, the most recently published CDC infant mortality data by race and Hispanic origin from 2023 reported 4.48 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for non-Hispanic White women, while the non-Hispanic Black infant mortality rate was 10.93 per 1,000 live births, and

Whereas, research reported in *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* documented that rates of depression and anxiety during pregnancy overall in the United States ranged from 14–16 percent, but were a considerably higher maximum of 28 percent for Black women, and

Whereas, the higher prevalence of Black women lacking access to comprehensive prenatal care or health insurance coverage contributes to these statistics, and

Whereas, to bring attention to this situation, the Black Mamas Matter Alliance annually observes the Week of April 11–17 as Black Maternal Health Week to “raise awareness around racial inequities in maternal health outcomes in the United States” and to celebrate those individuals working to address these disparities, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Black Mamas Matter Alliance.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 137

Offered by Representatives Krowinski of Burlington, Cina of Burlington, Duke of Burlington, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Kleppner of Burlington, Logan of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, and Stone of Burlington

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 40th anniversary of Robin's Nest Children's Center in Burlington's Old North End

Whereas, the origin of Robin's Nest Children's Center (Robin's Nest), a special place for the youngest children to learn and play in a welcoming and supportive environment, dates from the spring of 1985 when a Burlington early childhood program announced its closure, and

Whereas, this decision impacted the parents of the enrolled youngsters, whose daily lives depended on the availability of a trusted child care facility, and the staff who would lose their jobs, and

Whereas, in response to this pending familial and employment dilemma, a group of parents coalesced to develop a replacement option, resulting in the creation of Robin's Nest, and

Whereas, their goal was to establish "a program where children received quality early education, families could find support through a diverse community with others who looked like their own, and a place where early educators would be respectfully compensated," and

Whereas, this collaborative planning process proved productive, and later in 1985, Robin's Nest opened its doors to "provide quality care and education in multi-age groups with high ratios of adults to children...[enabling] children to travel through developmental stages at their own rate and to learn from one another," and

Whereas, this core objective is reflected in Robin's Nest's mission to "provide a play-based environment for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; nurturing minds, friendships, and families," and

Whereas, in 2025, Robin's Nest marks 40 years of early childhood care and educational excellence and now serves 31 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, representing 23 families, with the caring support of nine dedicated teachers, and

Whereas, the diverse enrolled population includes 35 percent who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color) and 65 percent receive monetary support from the State's Child Care Financial Assistance Program, and

Whereas, the vision of 40 years ago remains a thriving reality, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly celebrates the 40th anniversary of Robin's Nest Children's Center in Burlington's Old North End, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Robin's Nest.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 9, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 134

Offered by Representatives Marcotte of Coventry, Durfee of Shaftsbury, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Boutin of Barre City, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Graning of Jericho, Lipsky of Stowe, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Olson of Starksboro, Priestley of Bradford, and White of Bethel

House concurrent resolution honoring Cassandra Polhemus for her exemplary leadership of the Vermont Economic Development Authority

Whereas, in 1974, the General Assembly established the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) "to contribute to Vermont's economic vitality by providing a broad array of financing programs to eligible businesses that create jobs," and

Whereas, since 2019, Cassie Polhemus, an economics graduate of Williams College, has served as VEDA's extraordinary chief executive officer, overseeing the organization's increase in lending commitments from \$2.5 to \$2.8 billion, and

Whereas, Cassie Polhemus's record of achievement at VEDA predates her current role, as she joined the staff in 2013 as a commercial lender, and this talented employee rose through the ranks, being named director of operations in 2014, selected as chief operating officer in 2017, and in 2019, appointed as chief executive officer, and

Whereas, when the pandemic struck in the late winter of 2020, Cassie Polhemus immediately and effectively oversaw VEDA's seamless transition to a paperless/hybrid work environment, and she responded to this unanticipated crisis in a manner that ensured entrepreneurial economic continuity and revitalization in as short a time frame as possible, and

Whereas, VEDA's notable pandemic-related accomplishments under her outstanding supervision were, in 2020, rolling out a \$2.3 million farm operating loan program; in 2020–2021, closing 1,040 Paycheck Protection Program loans worth \$45.4 million; in 2023, assisting over 200 small businesses and farmers to move closer to their pre-pandemic financial status with \$19 million from the Short Term Forgivable Loan Program and accessing \$58 million worth of American Rescue Plan funding to reauthorize the

State Small Business Credit Initiative; and post-pandemic, in 2024, Cassie Polhemus oversaw VEDA's creation of the new Forestry Loan Program, and

Whereas, in 2025, Cassie Polhemus, who is concluding her VEDA leadership role on June 30 and is highly respected among her professional colleagues, was the deserved recipient of the federal Small Business Administration's Financial Services Champion Award, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Cassandra Polhemus for her exemplary leadership of the Vermont Economic Development Authority, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Cassie Polhemus.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 9, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Carris-Duncan of Whitingham**, the following remarks by **Rep. LaMont of Morristown** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

We just heard a resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month for Vermont. This is a moment to acknowledge the persistent and deeply troubling disparities and maternal health outcomes faced by black women in our State and across the nation. We heard that in 2024 the United States witnessed the highest maternal death rate among high income countries. We heard the maternal death rate for non-Hispanic white women was 14.9 per 100,000 live births, but for non-Hispanic black women however, a staggering 50.5 per 100,000 live births. More than three times higher. These numbers are more than statistics. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends who are lost in an alarming and unacceptable rate.

I wanted to share my story and those of my sisters because they are not just ours—they are the stories of so many. I wanted us to acknowledge this resolution for my sister who went in for a scheduled C-section and bled out and required a blood transfusion to sustain life. At which point she went home to become a mom with no transition, no downtime, and no care. My other sister who also went in for a scheduled C-section, and while she was medicated, was coerced into a tubal ligation that she did not want and can no longer have children now. For myself, when I went to give birth and was accused of being on drugs because I was too calm, and I wasn't acting as if I was in labor or in pain. These stories are not just ours. There is a discrepancy in the world where black women get treated as less than, as if we don't

experience pain, as if we are not worthy of quality health care—dignified health care.

Black Maternal Care Awareness Month is a time to confront these disparities head on. It's a call to action for our health care systems, us, policymakers, and community members to commit to addressing the systemic inequities that drive these tragic outcomes. It is also a time to celebrate the resilience and strength of black mothers and the tireless advocates who work every day to make maternal health equity a reality. In solidarity with Black Mamas Matter Alliance, I thank you for allowing this resolution to amplify the voices of those who have been impacted by maternal health disparities and for those that are fighting for change. And this is inclusive of all Black Mamas regardless of their ability to birth.

Today, in the gallery, we are joined by some very special guests. My mama, Gloria LaMont, former member, Rep. Ruqaiyah “Kiah” Morris, and many other Black Mamas from around the State who are here today, and we are also joined by livestream by Black Mamas Matter Alliance down in Atlanta, Georgia. Will you please help me welcome them to the Peoples’ House.”

Message from the Senate No. 56

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered the report of the Committee of Conference upon the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon House bill of the following title:

H. 493. An act relating to making appropriations for the support of the government.

And has accepted and adopted the same on its part.

Third Reading; Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment

S. 117

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to rulemaking on safety and health standards and technical corrections on employment practices and unemployment compensation

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**H. 46**

Rep. Garofano of Essex, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Rare Disease Advisory Council

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) lack of awareness contributes to common and harmful obstacles that rare disease patients face, such as delays in diagnosis, misdiagnosis, lack of treatment options, high out-of-pocket costs, and limited access to medical specialists; and

(2) with the support of the National Organization for Rare Disorders, various patient organizations, and stakeholders in the rare disease community, rare disease advisory councils are enabling states to strategically identify and address barriers that prevent individuals living with rare disease from accessing adequate and effective treatment and care for their condition.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 19 is added to read:

CHAPTER 19. RARE DISEASES

§ 981. RARE DISEASE ADVISORY COUNCIL

(a) Creation. There is created the Rare Disease Advisory Council within the Department of Health to provide guidance and recommendations to the public, General Assembly, and other government agencies and departments, as necessary, regarding the needs of individuals living with rare diseases in Vermont.

(b) Membership.

(1) The Advisory Council shall be composed of the following members:

(A) two individuals living with a rare disease, at least one of whom is an older Vermonter, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees;

(B) a parent or guardian of a person living with a rare disease, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees;

(C) the Commissioner of Health or designee;

(D) the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living or designee;

(E) a representative of the Health Equity Advisory Commission established pursuant to section 252 of this title;

(F) an academic researcher who conducts rare disease research, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(G) a physician practicing in Vermont with experience treating a rare disease, appointed by the Vermont Medical Society;

(H) a nurse practicing in Vermont with experience treating a rare disease, appointed by the Vermont chapter of the American Nurses Association;

(I) a pharmacist practicing in Vermont, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees; and

(J) a geneticist or genetic counselor, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees.

(2) The Advisory Council shall collaborate with any other relevant stakeholders it deems appropriate, including the National Organization for Rare Disorders.

(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Council may conduct the following activities for the benefit of individuals impacted by rare diseases in Vermont:

(1) convene public hearings and solicit comments from individuals impacted by rare diseases to assist the Advisory Council with creating a needs assessment identifying gaps in services for individuals with a rare disease in Vermont and the needs of their caregivers and providers;

(2) provide testimony and comments on pending legislation and rules that impact Vermont's rare disease community before the General Assembly and other State agencies;

(3) consult with experts on rare diseases to develop policy recommendations that:

(A) identify conditions to recommend to the Newborn Screening Advisory Committee as part of the Vermont Newborn Screening Program; and

(B) support timely patient access to diagnostic services and treatment and enhance quality of services provided by rare disease specialists;

(4) maintain a web page on the Department of Health's website to serve as a resource for individuals with a rare disease that contains notices of upcoming meetings, meeting minutes, public comments, and previous annual reports; and

(5) any other activities identified by a majority of the Advisory Council.

(d) Assistance. The Advisory Council shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Health.

(e) Report. As needed, the Advisory Council may submit any recommendations for legislative action to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Health or designee shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Council.

(2) Annually, the Advisory Council shall elect a member to serve as the Chair.

(3) The Advisory Council shall meet quarterly. Meetings may be held in person or remotely on an electronic platform as determined by the Chair.

(4) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement. The members of the Advisory Council not otherwise compensated for their participation shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than four meetings annually.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Human Services.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Human Services agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 63

Rep. Critchlow of Colchester, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to modifying the regulatory duties of the Green Mountain Care Board

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 7, 18 V.S.A. § 9456, in its entirety and inserting a new Sec. 7 to read as follows:

Sec. 7. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

§ 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

(a) The Board shall conduct reviews of each hospital's proposed budget based on the information provided pursuant to this subchapter and in accordance with a schedule established by the Board. Notwithstanding any provision of 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to the contrary, the Board's review, establishment, and enforcement of hospital budgets under this section shall not be construed to be a contested case. Any person aggrieved by a final Board action, order, or determination under this section may appeal as set forth in section 9381 of this title.

* * *

(d)(1)(A) Annually, the Board shall establish a budget for each general hospital, as defined in section 1902 of this title, on or before September 15, followed by a written decision by on or before October 1.

(B) Annually, the Board shall establish a budget for each psychiatric hospital, as defined in section 1902 of this title but excluding those conducted, maintained, or operated by the State of Vermont, on or before December 15, followed by a written decision on or before December 31.

(C) Each hospital shall operate within the budget established under this section.

* * *

(h)(1) If a hospital violates a provision of this section, the Board may maintain an action in the Superior Court of the county in which the hospital is located to enjoin, restrain, or prevent such violation.

(2)(A) After notice and an opportunity for hearing, the Board may impose on a person who knowingly violates a provision of this subchapter, or a rule adopted pursuant to this subchapter, a civil administrative penalty of ~~no~~ not more than \$40,000.00, or in the case of a continuing violation, a civil administrative penalty of ~~no~~ not more than \$100,000.00 or one-tenth of one percent of the gross annual revenues of the hospital, whichever is greater. This subdivision shall not apply to violations of subsection (d) of this section caused by exceptional or unforeseen circumstances.

(B)(i) The Board may order a hospital to:

* * *

(ii) Orders issued under this subdivision (2)(B) shall be issued after notice and an opportunity to be heard, except where the Board finds that a hospital's financial or other emergency circumstances pose an immediate threat of harm to the public or to the financial condition of the hospital. Where there is an immediate threat, the Board may issue orders under this subdivision (2)(B) without written or oral notice to the hospital. Where an order is issued without notice, the hospital shall be notified of the right to a hearing at the time the order is issued. The hearing shall be held within 30 days after receipt of the hospital's request for a hearing, and a decision shall be issued within 30 days after conclusion of the hearing. The Board may increase the time to hold the hearing or to render the decision for good cause shown. ~~Hospitals may appeal any decision in this subsection to Superior Court. Appeal shall be on the record as developed by the Board in the administrative proceeding and the standard of review shall be as provided in 8 V.S.A. § 16.~~

Second: By striking out Sec. 10, effective dates, in its entirety and inserting a new Sec. 10 to read as follows:

Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) In Sec. 5, (18 V.S.A. § 9382), subsection (a) shall take effect on January 1, 2027 and subsections (b)–(g) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

(b) Secs. 6 (18 V.S.A. § 9454) and 7 (18 V.S.A. § 9456) and this section shall take effect on passage.

(c) The remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Senate Proposal of Amendment to House Proposal of Amendment
Concurred in**

S. 50

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto on Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment with further proposal of amendment thereto by adding a new section to be Sec. 1a to read as follows:

**Sec. 1a. NET METERING RENEWABLE ENERGY CREDITS
OWNERSHIP**

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) shall allow a customer who owns a net metering system that was commissioned between January 1, 2023 and July 1, 2025 to change the customer's decision to retain the attributes once. The customer shall be allowed to transfer the attributes to the utility by submitting a request to the PUC by September 2, 2025.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

**Second Reading; Amendment Offered and Withdrawn; Proposal of
Amendment Agreed to; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 125

Rep. Dodge of Essex, for the Committee on General and Housing, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to workers' compensation and collective bargaining rights

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. [Deleted.]

Sec. 2. [Deleted.]

Sec. 3. [Deleted.]

Sec. 4. [Deleted.]

* * * Labor Relations * * *

Sec. 5. 3 V.S.A. § 1011 is amended to read:

§ 1011. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(8) “Employee,” means any individual employed and compensated on a permanent or limited status basis by the Judiciary Department, including permanent part-time employees and any individual whose employment has ceased as a consequence of, or in connection with, any current labor dispute or because of an unfair labor practice. “Employee” does not include any of the following:

- (A) a Justice, judge, assistant judge, magistrate, or hearing officer;
- (B) the Court Administrator;
- (C) a managerial, ~~supervisory~~, or confidential employee;
- (D) a law clerk, attorney, or administrative assistant or private secretary to a judge, Justice, or Court Administrator;
- (E) an individual employed on a temporary, contractual, seasonal, or on-call basis, including an intern;
- (F) an employee during the initial or extended probationary period;
- (G) the head of a department or division;
- (H) [Repealed.]
- (I) an attorney for the Supreme Court, for the Court Administrator, or for any board or commission created by the Supreme Court;
- (J) an employee paid by the State who is appointed part-time as county clerk pursuant to 4 V.S.A. § 651 or 691;
- (K) an employee who, after hearing by the Board upon petition of any individual, the employer, or a collective bargaining unit, is determined to be in a position that is sufficiently inconsistent with the spirit and intent of this chapter to warrant exclusion.

* * *

Sec. 5a. 3 V.S.A. § 941 is amended to read:

§ 941. UNIT DETERMINATION, CERTIFICATION, AND
REPRESENTATION

* * *

(c)(1) A petition may be filed with the Board, in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Board by an employee or group of employees, or any individual or employee organization purporting to act on their behalf, alleging by filing a petition or petitions bearing signatures of not less than 30 percent of the employees that they wish to form a bargaining unit and be represented for collective bargaining, ~~or that the individual or employee organization currently certified as the bargaining agent is no longer supported by at least 51 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit, or that they are now included in an approved bargaining unit and wish to form a separate bargaining unit under Board criteria for purposes of collective bargaining.~~ The employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that files the petition, shall, at the same time that the petition is filed with the Board, provide a copy of the petition to the employer and, if appropriate, the current bargaining agent.

(2) A petition may be filed with the Board, in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Board, by an employee or group of employees, or any individual or employee organization purporting to act on their behalf, alleging by filing a petition or petitions bearing signatures of not less than 50 percent plus one of the employees that the individual or employee organization currently certified as the bargaining agent is no longer supported by a majority of the employees in the bargaining unit. The employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that files the petition shall, at the same time that the petition is filed with the Board, provide a copy of the petition to the employer and, if appropriate, the current bargaining agent.

(A)(i) An employer shall, not more than seven business days after receiving a copy of the petition, file any objections to the appropriateness of the proposed bargaining unit and raise any other unit determination issues with the Board and provide a copy of the filing to the employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that filed the petition.

* * *

(d) The Board, a Board member, or a person or persons designated by the Board shall investigate the petition and do one of the following:

(1) Determine that the petition has made a sufficient showing of interest pursuant to ~~subdivision~~ subdivisions (c)(1) and (2) of this section.

* * *

~~*** State Construction Projects ***~~

Sec. 5b. [Deleted.]

Sec. 5c. 3 V.S.A. § 1021 is amended to read:

§ 1021. UNIT DETERMINATION; CERTIFICATION

(a) The Board shall determine issues of unit determination, certification, decertification, and representation in accordance with this chapter and the provisions of section 941 of this title. The Board shall decide the appropriate unit for collective bargaining in each case and the employees to be included in that unit to assure the employees the fullest freedom in exercising the rights guaranteed by this chapter.

* * *

Sec. 5d. 16 V.S.A. § 1992 is amended to read:

§ 1992. REFERENDUM PROCEDURE FOR REPRESENTATION

* * *

(b) Certification of a negotiating unit as exclusive representative shall be valid and not subject to challenge by referendum petition or otherwise for the remainder of the fiscal year in which the certification occurs and for an additional period of 12 months after final adoption of the budget for the succeeding fiscal year and shall continue thereafter until a new referendum is called for. An organization or group of teachers or administrators, or any person purporting to act on their behalf, shall submit a petition bearing signatures of not less than 50 percent plus one of the individuals currently in the bargaining unit alleging that the current exclusive representative of the teachers or administrators is no longer supported by a majority of the teachers or administrators employed by that school board. A copy of the petition shall be provided to the current bargaining agent at the same time as the petition is submitted to the school board.

* * *

Sec. 5e. 21 V.S.A. §§ 1581 and 1584 are amended to read:

§ 1581. PETITIONS FOR ELECTION; FILING, INVESTIGATIONS,
HEARINGS, DETERMINATIONS

(a) A petition may be filed with the Board, in accordance with rules adopted by the Board:

(1) ~~By~~ by an employee or group of employees, or any individual or labor organization acting in their behalf, alleging that not less than 30 percent of the employees:

(A) wish to be represented for collective bargaining and that their employer declines to recognize their representative as the representative defined in section 1583 of this title; or

(2)(B) by an employee or group of employees, or any individual or labor organization acting on their behalf, alleging that not less than 50 percent plus one of the employees assert that the individual or labor organization that has been certified, or is being currently recognized by their employer as the bargaining representative, is no longer a representative as defined in section 1583 of this title; or

(2)(3) By by an employer, alleging that one or more individuals or labor organizations have presented to him or her a claim to be recognized as the representative defined in section 1583 of this title.

* * *

§ 1584. PETITIONS AND ELECTION TO RESCIND

REPRESENTATIVE'S AUTHORITY

(a) When ~~30~~ 50 percent plus one or more of the employees in a bargaining unit covered by an agreement between their employer and a labor organization requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment file a petition alleging that they desire that the authority of the labor organization to make such an agreement be rescinded, the Board shall take a secret ballot of the employees in such unit and certify the results thereof, in writing, to the labor organization and to the employer.

(b) No election shall be conducted under this section in a bargaining unit or a subdivision within which in the preceding 12 months a valid election or certification of a representative pursuant to this subchapter has occurred.

Sec. 5f. 21 V.S.A. § 1724 is amended to read:

§ 1724. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

(a)(1) A petition may be filed with the Board, in accordance with rules adopted by the Board:

(A) By an employee or group of employees, or any individual or employee organization purporting to act on their behalf, alleging that not less than 30 percent of the employees wish to form a bargaining unit and be represented for collective bargaining, ~~or assert that the individual or employee organization currently certified as bargaining agent is no longer supported by at least 51 percent of the employees in the bargaining unit, or that not less than 51 percent of the employees now included in an approved bargaining unit wish to form a separate bargaining unit under Board criteria for purposes of~~

collective bargaining. The employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that files the petition shall, at the same time that the petition is filed with the Board, provide a copy of the petition to the employer and, if appropriate, the current bargaining agent.

(B) By the employer alleging that the presently certified bargaining unit is no longer appropriate under Board criteria. The employer shall provide a copy of the petition to the current bargaining agent at the same time that the petition is filed with the Board.

(C) By an employee or group of employees, or any individual or employee organization purporting to act on their behalf, alleging that a majority of the employees in the bargaining unit no longer support the individual or employee organization currently certified as the bargaining agent. The petition shall bear signatures of not less than 50 percent plus one of the employees in the presently certified bargaining unit. The employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that files the petition shall, at the same time that the petition is filed with the Board, provide a copy of the petition to the employer and, if appropriate, the current bargaining agent.

(2)(A)(i) An employer shall, not more than seven business days after receiving a copy of the petition, file any objections to the appropriateness of the proposed bargaining unit and raise any other unit determination issues with the Board and provide a copy of the filing to the employee, group of employees, individual, or employee organization that filed the petition.

(ii) A hearing shall be held before the Board pursuant to subdivision (d)(1)(B) of this section in the event the employer challenges the appropriateness of the proposed bargaining unit, provided that a hearing shall not be held if the parties stipulate to the composition of the appropriate bargaining unit and resolve any unit determination issues before the hearing.

(iii) The Board may endeavor to informally mediate any dispute regarding the appropriateness of the proposed bargaining unit prior to the hearing.

(B)(i) Within five business days after receiving a copy of the petition, the employer shall file with the Board and the employee or group of employees, or the individual or employee organization purporting to act on their behalf, a list of the names and job titles of the employees in the proposed bargaining unit. To the extent possible, the list of employees shall be in alphabetical order by last name and provided in electronic format.

(ii) An employee or group of employees, or any person purporting to act on their behalf, that is seeking to demonstrate that the current bargaining agent is no longer supported by ~~at least 51 percent~~ a majority of the employees in the bargaining unit shall not be entitled to obtain a list of the employees in the bargaining unit from the employer pursuant to this subdivision (a)(2)(B), but may obtain a list pursuant to subdivision (e)(3) of this section after the Board has investigated its petition and determined that a secret ballot election shall be conducted.

(iii) The list shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from copying and inspection under the Public Records Act.

* * *

(b) The Board, a Board member, or a person or persons designated by the Board shall investigate the petition and do one of the following:

(1) Determine that the petition has made a sufficient showing of interest pursuant to ~~subdivision~~ subdivisions (a)(1)(A) and (C) of this section.

(2)(A) If it finds reasonable cause to believe that a question of unit determination or representation exists, the Board shall schedule a hearing to be held before the Board not more than ~~ten~~ 10 business days after the petition was filed with the Board.

* * *

(e)(1) Except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection (h) of this section, in determining the representation of municipal employees in a collective bargaining unit, the Board shall conduct an election by secret ballot of the employees and certify the results to the interested parties and to the employer. The election shall be held not more than 23 business days after the petition is filed with the Board except as otherwise provided pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection.

(2) The original ballot shall permit a vote against representation by anyone named on the ballot. No representative will be certified with less than a ~~51 percent affirmative vote~~ majority of all votes cast. If it is asserted that the certified bargaining agent is no longer supported by at least ~~51~~ 50 percent plus one of the employees in the bargaining unit and there is no attempt to seek the election of another employee organization or individual as bargaining representative, there shall be at least ~~51 percent negative vote~~ a majority of all votes cast to decertify the existing bargaining agent.

* * *

Sec. 5g. 21 V.S.A. § 1635 is amended to read:

§ 1635. ELECTION; BARGAINING UNIT

(a) ~~Petitions~~ Certification and decertification petitions and elections shall be conducted pursuant to the procedures provided in 3 V.S.A. §§ 941 and 942, except that only one bargaining unit shall exist for independent direct support providers, and the exclusive representative shall be the exclusive representative for the purpose of grievances.

* * *

Sec. 5h. 33 V.S.A. § 3607 is amended to read:

§ 3607. PETITIONS FOR ELECTION; FILING; INVESTIGATIONS;
HEARINGS; DETERMINATIONS

(a) A petition may be filed with the Board in accordance with rules prescribed by the Board:

(1) By an early care and education provider or group of providers or any individual or labor organization acting on the providers' behalf:

(A) ~~alleging~~ Alleging that not less than 30 percent of the providers in the petitioned bargaining unit wish to be represented for collective bargaining and that the State declines to recognize their representative as the representative defined in this chapter; ~~or,~~

(B) ~~asserting~~ Asserting that the labor organization that has been certified as the bargaining representative no longer represents a majority of early care and education providers. The petition alleging that the labor organization is no longer supported by a majority of the providers shall bear signatures of not less than 50 percent plus one of the providers in the bargaining unit.

(2) By the State alleging that one or more individuals or labor organizations have presented a claim to be recognized as the exclusive representative defined in this chapter.

* * *

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to collective bargaining"

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on General and Housing?, **Rep. Greer of Bennington** moved to amend the report of the Committee on General and Housing by adding a new reader assistance heading and section to be Sec. 5i to read as follows:

* * * Wages and Medium of Payment * * *

Sec. 5i. 21 V.S.A. § 342 is amended to read:

§ 342. WEEKLY PAYMENT OF WAGES

* * *

(b)(1) An employee who:

(1)(A) voluntarily leaves employment shall be paid on the last regular pay day, or if there is no regular pay day, on the following Friday;

(2)(B) is discharged from employment shall be paid within 72 hours of following discharge; or

(3)(C) is absent from ~~his or her~~ the employee's regular place of employment on the employer's regular scheduled date of wages or salary payment shall be entitled to payment upon demand.

(2) The final payment of wages to an employee who leaves employment, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, shall include payment for any unused accrued vacation leave.

* * *

Thereupon, **Rep. Greer of Bennington** asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on General and Housing?, **Rep. Harrison of Chittenden** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on General and Housing?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 81. Nays, 51.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Austin of Colchester	Dolan of Essex Junction	McFaun of Barre Town
Bartholomew of Hartland	Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	McGill of Bridport
Bartley of Fairfax	Duke of Burlington	Mihaly of Calais
Berbeco of Winooski	Durfee of Shaftsbury	Morris of Springfield
Birong of Vergennes	Eastes of Guilford	Morrow of Weston
Bishop of Colchester	Emmons of Springfield	Mrowicki of Putney
Black of Essex	Galfetti of Barre Town	Noyes of Wolcott
Bluemle of Burlington	Garofano of Essex	Nugent of South Burlington
Bos-Lun of Westminster	Goldman of Rockingham	Ode of Burlington
Boutin of Barre City	Goodnow of Brattleboro	Oliver of Sheldon
Boyden of Cambridge	Greer of Bennington	Olson of Starksboro
Brady of Williston	Harple of Glover	Pezzo of Colchester
Brown of Richmond	Headrick of Burlington	Pouech of Hinesburg
Burke of Brattleboro	Holcombe of Norwich	Priestley of Bradford
Burkhardt of South Burlington	Hooper of Burlington	Rachelson of Burlington
Burrows of West Windsor	Houghton of Essex Junction	Satcowitz of Randolph
Carris-Duncan of Whitingham	Howard of Rutland City	Scheu of Middlebury
Casey of Montpelier	Hunter of Manchester	Squirrel of Underhill
Chapin of East Montpelier	James of Manchester	Stevens of Waterbury
Cole of Hartford	Kleppner of Burlington	Stone of Burlington
Conlon of Cornwall	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sweeney of Shelburne
Cooper of Pownal	LaLonde of South Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown	Torre of Moretown
Cordes of Bristol	Logan of Burlington	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Critchlow of Colchester	Long of Newfane	White of Waitsfield
Dodge of Essex	Masland of Thetford	White of Bethel
	McCann of Montpelier	Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Higley of Lowell	Morrissey of Bennington
Bosch of Clarendon	Howland of Rutland Town	Nelson of Derby
Branagan of Georgia	Kascenska of Burke	Nielsen of Brandon
Burt of Cabot	Keyser of Rutland City	North of Ferrisburgh
Canfield of Fair Haven	Kimbell of Woodstock	Page of Newport City
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Parsons of Newbury
Charlton of Chester	Lalley of Shelburne *	Pinsonault of Dorset
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Powers of Waterford
Demar of Enosburgh	Lipsky of Stowe	Pritchard of Pawlet
Dobrovich of Williamstown	Luneau of St. Albans City	Quimby of Lyndon
Donahue of Northfield *	Maguire of Rutland City	Sibilia of Dover
Feltus of Lyndon	Malay of Pittsford	Southworth of Walden
Goslant of Northfield	Marcotte of Coventry	Steady of Milton
Gregoire of Fairfield	McCoy of Poultney	Tagliavia of Corinth
Hango of Berkshire	Micklus of Milton	Toof of St. Albans Town
Harrison of Chittenden	Morgan, L. of Milton	Wells of Brownington
Harvey of Castleton	Morgan, M. of Milton	Winter of Ludlow

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Arsenault of Williston	Graning of Jericho	Sheldon of Middlebury
Burditt of West Rutland	Hooper of Randolph	Surprenant of Barnard
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Krasnow of South	Taylor of Milton
Christie of Hartford	Burlington	Walker of Swanton
Cina of Burlington	Minier of South Burlington	Waszazak of Barre City
Dickinson of St. Albans	Nigro of Bennington	
Town	O'Brien of Tunbridge	

Rep. Donahue of Northfield provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Thirty percent to petition to organize, thirty percent to petition to no longer support being organized – either way leading to a full vote, not a final action. Equal voice to both to seek a vote is established in current law. That balance should not be disturbed to give one voice more weight than the other. I vote no.”

Rep. Lalley of Shelburne provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support unions and the right to organize. However, this bill broadly applied to organizations of all sizes could discourage entrepreneurs and the small businesses Vermont depends on and whose investment we seek to attract to create new jobs and opportunities for Vermonters.”

Thereafter, third reading was ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 41

House bill, entitled

An act relating to abuse of the dead body of a person

Was taken up and, pending consideration of the Senate proposal of amendment, on motion of **Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington**, action on the bill was postponed until May 14, 2025.

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 98

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 15A V.S.A. § 1-114 is added to read:

§ 1-114. CONFIRMATORY ADOPTION FOR CHILDREN BORN
THROUGH ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Assisted reproduction” means a method of causing pregnancy other than sexual intercourse and includes:

(A) intrauterine, intracervical, or vaginal insemination;

(B) donation of gametes;

(C) donation of embryos;

(D) in vitro fertilization and transfer of embryos; and

(E) intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

(2) “Donor” means a person who contributes a gamete or gametes or an embryo or embryos to another person for assisted reproduction or gestation, whether or not for consideration. This term does not include:

(A) a person who gives birth to a child conceived by assisted reproduction except as otherwise provided in 15C V.S.A. chapter 8; or

(B) a parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 7 or an intended parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 8.

(3) “Marriage” includes civil union and any legal relationship that provides substantially the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities as marriage and is recognized as valid in the state or jurisdiction in which it was entered.

(4) “Petitioners” means the persons filing a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(b) Whenever a child is born as a result of assisted reproduction and the person or persons who did not give birth are a parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 703 or presumed parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 401 and the parents seek to file a petition to confirm parentage through an adoption of the child, the court shall permit the parents to file a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(c) A complete petition shall comprise the following:

(1) the petition for adoption signed by all parents;

(2) a copy of the petitioners’ marriage certificate, if petitioners are married;

(3) a declaration signed by the parents explaining the circumstances of the child's birth through assisted reproduction, attesting to their consent to assisted reproduction, and stating that there are no other persons with a claim to parentage of the child under Title 15C; and

(4) a certified copy of the child's birth certificate.

(d) A complete petition for adoption, as described in subsection (c) of this section, shall serve as the petitioners' written consents to adoption and no additional consent or notice shall be required.

(e) If the petitioners conceived through assisted reproduction with donor gametes or donor embryos, the court shall not require notice of the adoption to the donor or consent to the adoption by the donor.

(f) Unless otherwise ordered by the court for good cause shown and supported by written findings of the court demonstrating good cause, for purposes of evaluating and granting a petition for adoption pursuant to this section, the court shall not require:

(1) an in-person hearing or appearance, although the court may require a remote hearing;

(2) an investigation or home study by, a notice to, or the approval of the Department for Children and Families;

(3) a criminal-record check;

(4) verification that the child is not registered with the federal register for missing children or the central register; or

(5) a minimum residency period in the home of the petitioners.

(g) The court shall grant the adoption under this section and issue an adoption decree promptly after the filing of a complete petition and upon finding that:

(1) for marital parents, the parent who gave birth and the spouse were married at the time of the child's birth and the child was born through assisted reproduction; or

(2) for nonmarital parents:

(A) the person who gave birth and the nonmarital parent consented to the assisted reproduction; and

(B) no other person has a claim to parentage pursuant to Title 15C or that any other person with a claim to parentage of the child who is required to be provided notice of, or who must consent to, the adoption has been notified or provided consent to the adoption.