

S.195

Introduced by Senator Carris

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Taxation; government operations; information

Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require the department of finance and management to provide certain interactive information on its website. The information will encourage Vermonters to be heard on policy issues and will help any Vermonter learn more about the state's fiscal planning.

An act relating to revenue and spending information

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT WEBSITE

(a) The commissioner of the department of finance and management shall provide a website service for Vermonters that will allow users to see graphical representations of the state's revenue sources and items of expense.

(b) The representations described in subsection (a) of this section shall take the form of interactive pie charts so that, for example, the chart depicting revenue sources will show each revenue source as a dollar amount and as a percentage of the total revenue of the state. Each major category of revenue source will be interactive so that a user can click on an item to obtain

1 additional information on that category and the subcategories within the
2 category. For example, the major category of “income tax” will be
3 subcategorized into corporate income taxes, personal income taxes, and trust
4 taxes. Other major categories shall include property taxes, sales and use taxes,
5 and any other categories the commissioner deems appropriate.

6 (c) The pie chart representing state expenses shall also be separated into
7 major categories including education, transportation, and social services and
8 into subcategories within the major categories so that a user can see the state’s
9 expenses in as detailed a manner as is possible.

10 (d) All of the categories and subcategories shall be interactive so that a user
11 will be able to modify variables such as income tax rates or sales tax rates, and
12 the program will calculate the changed revenues accordingly. Similarly, users
13 will be able to modify items of expense, and the program will calculate the
14 changed costs. Users will not be able to modify items of expense that are fixed
15 or not set by the legislature, such as federal highway funds, and there shall be a
16 threshold of plus or minus 10 percent for changes to other items of expense so
17 that entire programs cannot be eliminated.

18 (e) This program shall be available for all Vermonters, but each user shall
19 have to provide a unique user identification and password in order to access the
20 interactive features.

1 Sec. 2. OVERSIGHT

2 The speaker of the house and the president pro tempore of the senate shall
3 each designate one member from their respective chambers to oversee the
4 commissioner's progress and development of the interactive website
5 application.

6 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect upon passage, and the commissioner shall
8 endeavor to have the services described in this act available by December 15,
9 2010.