

House Calendar

Friday, May 07, 2010

123rd DAY OF ADJOURNED SESSION

House Convenes at 9:30 A.M.

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ACTION CALENDAR

Unfinished Business of Thursday, May 6 2010

Senate Proposal of Amendment

H. 470

An act relating to restructuring of the judiciary

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 4 V.S.A. § 1 is amended to read:

§ 1. ~~SUPREME COURT~~ UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM ESTABLISHED

~~There shall be a supreme court for the state, which shall be held at the times and places appointed by law. The judiciary shall be a unified court system under the administrative control of the supreme court. It shall consist of an appellate division, which shall be the supreme court, and a trial division, which shall consist of a trial court of general jurisdiction to be known as the superior court, and a judicial bureau.~~

Sec. 2. 4 V.S.A. § 2 is amended to read:

§ 2. SUPREME COURT ESTABLISHED; JURISDICTION

(a) The supreme court shall have exclusive jurisdiction of appeals from judgments, rulings, and orders of the superior court, ~~the district court and all other courts~~, administrative agencies, boards, commissions, and officers unless otherwise provided by law.

* * *

Sec. 3. 4 V.S.A. § 21a is amended to read:

§ 21a. DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

(a) The administrative judge shall assign and specially assign superior ~~and district~~ judges, including himself or herself, and environmental judges to the superior, ~~environmental, district, and family courts~~ court. ~~If the administrative judge determines that additional judicial time is needed to address cases filed in environmental court, the judge may assign or specially assign up to four judges on a part-time basis to the environmental court. When assigning or specially assigning judges to the environmental court, the administrative judge shall give consideration to experience and expertise in environmental and zoning law, and shall assign or specially assign judges in a manner to provide~~

~~appropriate attention to all geographic areas of the state.~~ All superior judges except environmental judges shall be subject to the requirements of rotation as ordered by the supreme court. Assignments made pursuant to the rotation schedule shall be subject to the approval of the supreme court.

(b) In making any assignment under this section, the administrative judge shall give consideration to the experience, temperament, and training of a judge and the needs of the court. In making an assignment to the environmental ~~court~~ division, the administrative judge shall give consideration to experience and expertise in environmental and land use law and shall assign or specially assign judges in a manner to provide appropriate attention to all geographic areas of the state.

(c) In making any assignments to the environmental ~~court~~ division under this section, the administrative judge shall regularly assign ~~both environmental judges through August 2008 and a minimum of two judges thereafter~~, at least one of whom shall be an environmental judge. An environmental judge may be assigned to ~~another~~ other divisions in the superior court only with the judge's consent and for a period of time not exceeding two years. When assigned to other divisions in the superior court, the environmental judge shall have all the powers and responsibilities of a superior judge.

Sec. 4. 4 V.S.A. § 22(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) The chief justice may appoint and assign a retired justice or judge with his or her consent or a superior judge ~~or district judge~~ to a special assignment on the supreme court. The chief justice may appoint, and the administrative judge shall assign, an active or retired justice or a retired judge, with his or her consent, to any special assignment in the ~~district, family, environmental or superior courts~~ court or the judicial bureau. The administrative judge shall assign a judge to any special assignment in the ~~district, family, environmental or superior court~~. ~~Preference shall be given to superior judges to sit in superior courts. Preference shall be given to district judges to sit in district courts.~~

(b) The administrative judge may appoint and assign a member of the Vermont bar residing within the state of Vermont to serve temporarily as:

- (1) an acting judge in a ~~district, family, environmental, or superior court~~;
- (2) an acting magistrate; or
- (3) an acting hearing officer to hear cases in the judicial bureau.

Sec. 5. 4 V.S.A. § 25(c) is amended to read:

(c) The supreme court may allow supreme court justices, superior ~~court~~ judges, ~~district court judges~~, environmental ~~court~~ judges, magistrates, hearing officers, probate ~~court~~ judges, superior court clerks, or any ~~state compensated~~

state-compensated employees of the judicial branch not covered by a collective bargaining agreement to take an administrative leave of absence without pay, or with pay if the person is called to active duty in support of an extended national or state military operation. These judicial officers and state employees shall be entitled to be compensated in the same manner as judicial branch employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement called to active duty. The court administrator, at the direction of the supreme court, shall include provisions in the personnel rules of the judiciary to administer these leaves of absence.

Sec. 6. 4 V.S.A. § 26 is amended to read:

§ 26. HALF-TIME JUDGES

Of the superior ~~and district~~ judge positions authorized by this title, up to two may be shared, each by two half-time judges. Of the magistrate positions authorized by this title, one may be shared by two half-time magistrates. Of the hearing officer positions authorized by this title, one may be shared by two half-time hearing officers. Half-time superior ~~and district~~ judges, magistrates, and hearing officers shall be paid proportionally and shall receive the same benefits as state employees who share a job. Half-time superior judges, magistrates, and hearing officers shall not engage in the active practice of law for remuneration.

Sec. 7. 4 V.S.A. § 30 is added to read:

§ 30. SUPERIOR COURT

(a)(1) A superior court having statewide jurisdiction is created. The superior court shall have the following divisions:

(A) A civil division, which shall be a court of record and have jurisdiction over the matters described in section 31 of this title. The Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure shall apply in the civil division.

(B) A criminal division, which shall be a court of record and have jurisdiction over the matters described in section 32 of this title. The Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure shall apply to criminal matters in the criminal division, and the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure shall apply to civil matters in the criminal division.

(C) A family division, which shall be a court of record and have jurisdiction over the matters described in section 33 of this title. The Vermont Rules of Family Procedure shall apply in the family division.

(D) An environmental division, which shall be a court of record and have jurisdiction over the matters described in section 34 of this title. The Vermont Rules for Environmental Proceedings shall apply in the

environmental division.

(2) The supreme court shall promulgate rules, subject to review by the legislative committee on judicial rules under chapter 1 of Title 12, which establish criteria for the transfer of cases between divisions.

(b) The supreme court shall by rule divide the superior court into 14 geographical units which shall follow county lines, except that, subject to the venue requirements of subsection 1001(e) of this title, the environmental division shall be a court of statewide jurisdiction and shall not be otherwise divided into geographical units. The superior court shall be held in each unit of the state.

(c) Terms of the superior court shall be stated by administrative orders of the supreme court. The court administrator shall provide appropriate security services for each court in the state.

* * * Delayed Effective Date * * *

Sec. 7a. 4 V.S.A. § 30 is amended to read:

§ 30. SUPERIOR COURT

(a)(1) A superior court having statewide jurisdiction is created. The superior court shall have the following divisions:

* * *

(E) A probate division, which shall have jurisdiction over the matters described in section 35 of this title. The Vermont Rules of Probate Procedure shall apply in the probate division.

* * *

Sec. 7b. 4 V.S.A. § 31 is added to read:

§ 31. JURISDICTION; CIVIL DIVISION

The civil division shall have:

(1) original and exclusive jurisdiction of all original civil actions, except as otherwise provided in sections 2, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 1102 of this title;

(2) appellate jurisdiction of causes, civil and criminal, appealable to the court; and

(3) original jurisdiction, concurrent with the supreme court, of proceedings in certiorari, mandamus, prohibition, and quo warranto;

(4) exclusive jurisdiction to hear and dispose of any requests to modify or enforce orders in civil cases previously issued by the superior or district

court other than orders relating to those actions listed in sections 437 and 454 of this title; and

(5) any other matter brought before the court pursuant to law that is not subject to the jurisdiction of another division.

Sec. 7c. 4 V.S.A. § 32 is added to read:

§ 32. JURISDICTION; CRIMINAL DIVISION

(a) The criminal division shall have jurisdiction to try, render judgment, and pass sentence in prosecutions for felonies and misdemeanors.

(b) The criminal division shall have jurisdiction to try and finally determine prosecutions for violations of bylaws or ordinances of a village, town, or city, except as otherwise provided.

(c) The criminal division shall have jurisdiction of the following civil actions:

(1) Appeals of final decisions of the judicial bureau.

(2) DUI license suspension hearings filed pursuant to chapter 24 of Title 23.

(3) Extradition proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 159 of Title 13.

(4) Drug forfeiture proceedings under subchapter 2 of chapter 84 of Title 18.

(5) Fish and wildlife forfeiture proceedings under chapter 109 of Title 10.

(6) Liquor forfeiture proceedings under chapter 19 of Title 7.

(7) Hearings relating to refusal to provide a DNA sample pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 1935.

(8) Automobile forfeiture and immobilization proceedings under chapters 9 and 13 of Title 23.

(9) Sex offender proceedings pursuant to 13 V.S.A. §§ 5411(e) and 5411d(f).

(10) Restitution modification proceedings pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7043(h).

(11) Municipal parking violation proceedings pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1974a(e), if the municipality has established an administrative procedure enabling a person to contest the violation, and the person has exhausted the administrative procedure.

(12) Proceedings to enforce chapter 74 of Title 9, relating to energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment.

(13) Proceedings to enforce 21 V.S.A. § 268, relating to commercial building energy standards.

Sec. 7d. 4 V.S.A. § 33 is added to read:

§ 33. JURISDICTION; FAMILY DIVISION

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:

(1) All desertion and support proceedings and all parentage actions filed pursuant to chapter 5 of Title 15.

(2) All rights of married women proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 3 of Title 15.

(3) All enforcement of support proceedings filed pursuant to Title 15B.

(4) All annulment and divorce proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 11 of Title 15.

(5) All parent and child proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 15 of Title 15.

(6) Grandparents' visitation proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 18 of Title 15.

(7) All uniform child custody proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 19 of Title 15.

(8) All juvenile proceedings filed pursuant to chapters 51, 52, and 53 of Title 33, 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.

(9) All enforcement of support proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 39 of Title 33.

(10) All protective services for developmentally disabled persons proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 215 of Title 18.

(11) All mental health proceedings filed pursuant to chapters 179, 181, and 185 of Title 18.

(12) All involuntary sterilization proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 204 of Title 18.

(13) All care for mentally retarded persons proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 206 of Title 18.

(14) All abuse prevention proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 21 of Title 15. Any superior judge may issue orders for emergency relief pursuant to 15 V.S.A. § 1104.

(15) All abuse and exploitation proceedings filed pursuant to subchapter 2 of chapter 69 of Title 33.

(16) All proceedings relating to the dissolution of a civil union.

(17) All requests to modify or enforce orders previously issued by the district or superior court relating to any of the proceedings identified in subdivisions (1)–(16) of this section.

Sec. 7e. 4 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

§ 34. JURISDICTION; ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

The environmental division shall have:

(1) jurisdiction of matters arising under chapters 201 and 220 of Title 10;

(2) jurisdiction of matters arising under chapter 117 and subchapter 12 of chapter 61 of Title 24; and

(3) original jurisdiction to revoke permits under chapter 151 of Title 10.

Sec. 7f. 4 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

§ 35. JURISDICTION; PROBATE DIVISION

The probate division shall have jurisdiction of:

(1) the probate of wills;

(2) the settlement of estates;

(3) the administration of trusts pursuant to Title 14A;

(4) trusts of absent persons' estates;

(5) charitable, cemetery, and philanthropic trusts;

(6) the appointment of guardians, and of the powers, duties, and rights of guardians and wards;

(7) proceedings concerning chapter 231 of Title 18;

(8) accountings of attorneys-in-fact where no guardian has been appointed and the agent has reason to believe the principal is incompetent;

- (9) adoptions and relinquishment for adoption;
- (10) uniform gifts to minors;
- (11) changes of name;
- (12) issuance of new birth certificates and amendment of birth certificates;
- (13) correction or amendment of civil marriage certificates and death certificates;
- (14) emergency waiver of premarital medical certificates;
- (15) proceedings relating to cemetery lots;
- (16) trusts relating to community mausoleums or columbaria;
- (17) civil actions brought under subchapter 3 of chapter 107 of Title 18, relating to disposition of remains;
- (18) proceedings relating to the conveyance of a homestead interest of a spouse under a legal disability;
- (19) the issuance of declaratory judgments;
- (20) issuance of certificates of public good authorizing the civil marriage of persons under 16 years of age;
- (21) appointment of administrators to discharge mortgages held by deceased mortgagees;
- (22) appointment of trustees for persons confined under sentences of imprisonment;
- (23) fixation of compensation and expenses of boards of arbitrators of death taxes of Vermont domiciliaries;
- (24) emancipation of minors proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 217 of Title 12;
- (25) grandparent visitation proceedings under chapter 18 of Title 15;
and
- (26) other matters as provided by law.

Sec. 8. 4 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

§ 36. COMPOSITION OF THE COURT

(a) Unless otherwise specified by law, when in session, a superior court shall consist of:

- (1) For cases in the civil or family division, one presiding superior judge

and two assistant judges, if available.

(2)(A) For cases in the family division, except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision, one presiding superior judge and two assistant judges, if available.

(B) The family court shall consist of one presiding superior judge sitting alone in the following proceedings:

(i) All juvenile proceedings filed pursuant to chapters 51, 52, and 53 of Title 33, 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.

(ii) All protective services for developmentally disabled persons proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 215 of Title 18.

(iii) All mental health proceedings filed pursuant to chapters 179, 181, and 185 of Title 18.

(iv) All involuntary sterilization proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 204 of Title 18.

(v) All care for mentally retarded persons proceedings filed pursuant to chapter 206 of Title 18.

(vi) All proceedings specifically within the jurisdiction of the office of magistrate.

(3) For cases in the criminal division, one superior judge sitting alone.

(4) For cases in the probate division, one probate judge sitting alone.

(5) For cases in the environmental division, one environmental judge sitting alone.

(b) Questions of law and fact. In all proceedings, questions of law shall be decided by the presiding judge. In cases not tried before a jury, questions of fact shall be decided by the court. Mixed questions of law and fact shall be deemed to be questions of law. The presiding judge alone shall decide which are questions of law, questions of fact, and mixed questions of law and fact. Written or oral stipulations of fact submitted by the parties shall establish the facts related therein, except that the presiding judge, in his or her discretion, may order a hearing on any such stipulated fact. Neither the decision of the presiding judge under this subsection nor participation by an assistant judge in a ruling of law shall be grounds for reversal unless a party makes a timely objection and raises the issue on appeal.

(c) Availability of assistant judges. If two assistant judges are not

available, the court shall consist of one presiding judge and one assistant judge. In the event that court is being held by the presiding judge and one assistant judge and they do not agree on a decision, a mistrial shall be declared. If neither assistant judge is available, the court shall consist of the presiding judge alone, and the unavailability of an assistant judge shall not constitute reversible error.

(d) Method of determining availability. Before commencing a hearing in any matter in which the court by law may consist of the presiding judge and assistant judges, the assistant judges physically present in the courthouse shall determine whether they are available for the case. If two or more cases are being heard at one time and assistant judges may by law participate in either, each assistant judge may determine in which case he or she will participate.

(e) Duty to complete hearing or trial. After an assistant judge has decided to participate in a hearing or trial, he or she shall not withdraw therefrom except for cause. However, if the assistant judge is not available for a scheduled hearing or trial or becomes unavailable during trial, the matter may continue without his or her participation, and he or she may not return to participate.

(f) Emergency relief. A presiding judge may hear a petition for emergency relief when the court is not sitting and may issue temporary orders as necessary.

(g) Jury trial. In order to preserve the right to trial by jury, when issues sounding in law and in equity are presented in the same action, the supreme court shall provide by rule for trial by jury, when demanded, of issues sounding in law.

Sec. 9. 4 V.S.A. § 37 is added to read:

§ 37. VENUE

(a) The venue for all actions filed in the superior court, whether heard in the civil, criminal, family, environmental, or probate division, shall be as provided in law.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the supreme court may promulgate venue rules, subject to review by the legislative committee on judicial rules under chapter 1 of Title 12, which are consistent with the following policies:

(1) Proceedings involving a case shall be heard in the unit in which the case was brought, subject to the following exceptions:

(A) when the parties have agreed otherwise;

(B) status conferences, minor hearings, or other nonevidentiary proceedings; or

(C) when a change in venue is necessary to ensure access to justice for the parties or required for the fair and efficient administration of justice.

(2) The electronic filing of cases on a statewide basis should be facilitated, and the court is authorized to promulgate rules establishing an electronic case-filing system.

(3) The use of technology to ease travel burdens on citizens and the courts should be promoted. For example, venue requirements should be deemed satisfied for some court proceedings when a person, including a judge, makes an appearance via video technology, even if the judge is not physically present in the same location as the person making the appearance.

Sec. 10. 4 V.S.A. § 71(a) and (e) are amended to read:

(a) There shall be ~~15~~ 32 superior judges, whose terms of office shall, except in the case of an appointment to fill a vacancy or unexpired term, begin on April 1 in the year of their appointment or retention, and continue for six years.

(e) The supreme court shall designate one of the superior ~~or district~~ judges to serve as administrative judge. The administrative judge shall serve at the pleasure of the supreme court.

Sec. 11. 4 V.S.A. § 73 is amended to read:

§ 73. ASSIGNMENT

~~(a) The supreme court may establish no more than three geographic divisions for the assignment of superior judges. In accordance with the direction of the supreme court, the administrative judge shall assign the superior judges among the geographic units and divisions and shall establish a rotation schedule, both within and outside the division to which the judges are regularly assigned. The rotation schedule shall be on file in the office of the clerk of each superior court, and copies shall be furnished upon request of the superior court. The administrative judge shall assign a presiding judge to each unit and may assign a judge to preside in more than one unit. Only in~~ In a case where a superior judge is disqualified or unable to attend any term of court or part thereof to which he or she has been assigned ~~may~~, the administrative judge may assign another superior judge to act as ~~presiding~~ judge at that term or part thereof ~~and only~~ for that period during which the assigned judge is disqualified or unable to attend. If during a term of the superior court the court in a unit is unable to complete all or part of the work before it in a reasonable time, the administrative judge, with the approval of the supreme court, may modify

judge assignments to reduce delays in that unit. The court shall publish the judicial rotation schedule in electronic format and distribute it electronically to attorneys licensed in Vermont.

(b) Pursuant to section 21a of this title, the administrative judge shall ~~specialy~~ assign superior judges to hear and determine family court matters. The administrative judge shall insure that such hearings are held promptly. Any contested divorce case which has been pending for more than one year shall be advanced for prompt hearing upon the request of any party.

(c) ~~Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, the administrative judge may, pursuant to section 21a of this title, specially assign a district court judge to family court to hear matters specified in subsection (b).~~ As necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the superior court, the presiding judge of the unit may specially assign a superior judge assigned to a division in the unit, including the presiding judge, to preside over one or more cases in a different division. As the administrative judge determines necessary for the operation of the superior court throughout the state, and with the approval of the supreme court, the administrative judge may additionally assign for a specified period of time a superior judge to preside over a particular type of case, or over a particular type of motion or other judicial proceeding, in all or part of the units in the state.

Sec. 12. 4 V.S.A. § 75 is amended to read:

§ 75. POWERS OF JUSTICE; ~~OR SUPERIOR JUDGE OR DISTRICT JUDGE~~ AFTER EXPIRATION OF TERM OR VACATION OF OFFICE

Whenever the term of office of a justice, superior judge ~~or district judge,~~ environmental judge, magistrate, or hearing officer expires or ~~he or she~~ otherwise vacates the office, ~~he the justice, judge, magistrate, or hearing officer~~ shall have the same authority to conclude causes ~~he or she has~~ partly or fully heard ~~before him~~ that ~~he or she~~ would have had if ~~he had remained~~ remaining in that office. ~~He~~ The justice, judge, magistrate, or hearing officer may make and sign findings and orders for judgments or decrees in causes pending before him ~~and or her,~~ may make interlocutory orders and decrees.—~~He, and~~ shall be paid compensation commensurate with that paid specially assigned judicial officers as provided by section 23 of this title.

Sec. 13. 4 V.S.A. § 111 is amended to read:

§ 111. SUPERIOR COURT SESSIONS

(a) ~~A superior court shall be held in each county at the times and places appointed by law.~~

(~~b~~) When the business of a superior court cannot otherwise be disposed of

with reasonable dispatch, by direction of the administrative judge, there may be held additional sessions of that superior court simultaneously with the regular session consisting of a presiding judge and one or more assistant judges, if available.

~~(e)(b)~~ A superior court may be temporarily recessed or adjourned from the place designated for holding a regular term or session to another place ~~in the county~~ having adequate facilities, when the regular facilities at the ~~county designated~~ courthouse are not adequate.

~~(d)~~ ~~A superior court may be temporarily recessed or adjourned from the place designated for holding a regular term or session to another place outside the county having adequate facilities, when the regular facilities at the county courthouse are not adequate and when the court and all litigants in the case agree to said transfer.~~

~~(e)(c)~~ The administrative judge may assign assistant judges, with their consent, to a special assignment in a court where they have jurisdiction in another county when assistant judges of that county are unavailable or the business of the courts so require.

Sec. 14. 4 V.S.A. § 112 is amended to read:

§ 112. [Repealed.]

Sec. 15. 4 V.S.A. § 115 is amended to read:

§ 115. STATED TERMS OF SUPERIOR COURT

~~Terms of the superior court shall be stated by the administrative orders of the supreme court. The superior court shall operate continuously irrespective of the term in which events occur. Terms are designated for purposes of determining the rotation schedule of superior judges and the responsibility of a superior judge once a term has expired. When at the expiration of a term a superior judge is no longer assigned to a specified unit, the judge shall complete any matters that have been heard or taken under advisement for that unit. The administrative judge, pursuant to rules of the supreme court, may specially assign a superior judge to continue to preside over one or more cases even though the judge is no longer assigned to the unit of origin of the case or cases. In the absence of such a direction or of an assignment made pursuant to subsection 73(c) of this title, a judge who at the end of a term is no longer assigned to a unit shall have no further responsibility for cases in that unit.~~

Sec. 16. 4 V.S.A. § 219 is amended to read:

§ 219. POWERS OF CHANCELLOR

The powers and jurisdiction of the courts that were heretofore vested in the

courts of chancery are vested in the superior court. ~~District Superior, environmental,~~ and probate judges have the powers of a chancellor in passing upon all civil matters which may come before them.

Sec. 17. 4 V.S.A. § 272 is added to read:

§ 272. PROBATE DISTRICTS; PROBATE JUDGES

(a) There shall be one probate district in each county, which shall be designated by the name of the county. Each probate district shall elect one probate judge.

(b) To hold the position of probate judge, a person shall be admitted by the supreme court to practice law. This subsection shall not apply to any person who holds the office of probate judge on July 1, 2010.

(c) The administrative judge may specially assign a probate judge to hear a case in a geographical district other than the district for which the probate judge was elected.

Sec. 17a. 4 V.S.A. § 278 is added to read:

§ 278. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANT JUDGES

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an assistant judge or a candidate for the office of assistant judge may also seek election to the office of probate judge, and if elected to both offices, may serve both as an assistant judge and as probate judge.

(b) In the event a probate matter arises in the superior court over which an assistant judge is also the probate judge that presides, or has presided, over the same or related probate matter in the probate court, the assistant judge shall be disqualified from hearing and deciding the probate matter in the superior court.

(c) In the event a probate matter arises in the probate court over which a probate judge is also an assistant judge that presides, or has presided, over the same or related probate matter in the superior court, the probate judge shall be disqualified from hearing and deciding the probate matter in the probate court.

Sec. 18. DELETED

Sec. 18a. 4 V.S.A. § 311a is amended to read:

§ 311a. VENUE GENERALLY

For proceedings authorized to the probate courts division of superior court, venue shall lie as provided in Title 14A for the administration of trusts, and otherwise in a probate district of the court as follows:

* * *

(26) Declaratory judgments (unless otherwise provided in Title 14A for proceedings relating to the administration of trusts):

(A) if any related proceeding is then pending in any probate division of the superior court, in that district;

(B) if no proceeding is pending:

(i) in the district where the petitioner resides; or

(ii) if a decedent's estate, a guardian or ward, or trust governed by Title 14 is the subject of the proceeding, in any district where venue lies for a proceeding thereon.

(27) Issuance of certificates of public good authorizing the civil marriage of persons under 16 years of age: in the district or county unit where either applicant resides, if either is a resident of the state; otherwise in the district or county unit in which the civil marriage is sought to be consummated.

(28) Appointment of a trustee for a person confined under a sentence of imprisonment: in the district or county unit in which the person resided at the time of sentence, or in the district or county unit in which the sentence was imposed.

* * *

Sec. 19. DELETED

Sec. 20. 4 V.S.A. § 355 is amended to read:

§ 355. DISQUALIFICATION OR DISABILITY OF JUDGE

When a probate judge is incapacitated for the duties of ~~his~~ office by absence, removal from the district, resignation, sickness, death, or otherwise or if ~~he, his wife~~ the judge or the judge's spouse or child is heir or legatee under a will filed in ~~his~~ the judge's district, or if ~~he~~ the judge is executor or administrator of the estate of a deceased person in his or her district, or is interested as a creditor or otherwise in a question to be decided by the court, he or she shall not act as judge. ~~His~~ The judge's duties shall be performed by ~~the register, if not disqualified, or a judge of another district or an assistant judge of the superior court of the county in which such district is situated. The register or judge shall have jurisdiction to act while such disqualification, incapacity or vacancy exists~~ a superior judge assigned by the presiding judge of the unit.

Sec. 21. 4 V.S.A. § 356 is amended to read:

§ 356. AUTHORITY OF JUDGE AFTER END OF TERM

(a) A probate judge whose term of office has expired, or who has vacated

such office, shall have authority to act in the capacity of probate judge to conclude causes and proceedings partly or fully heard before ~~him~~ the judge as probate judge as fully and effectively as he or she could ~~had~~ if he or she remained in such office. He or she may make, sign, and enter findings, decisions, orders, and decrees in causes or proceedings so pending before him or her as probate judge, and all such acts so performed by ~~him~~ the judge shall have as full force and effect as they would have had if he or she had remained in office.

(b) The jurisdiction conferred by subsection (a) of this section shall not be exercised ~~unless the successor to the retiring judge shall file and cause to be recorded in such cause or proceeding within 30 days from the time of assuming office a certificate stating that such cause or proceeding was partly or fully heard before such retiring judge and that jurisdiction thereof shall be retained by such retiring judge~~ if the presiding judge of the unit determines that the successor to the probate judge will assume jurisdiction for all or part of the cases.

(c) A probate judge who exercises the jurisdiction conferred by subsection (a) of this section shall receive compensation at a rate fixed by the ~~successor judge, and the compensation and necessary expenses allowed by the successor judge shall be paid by the state~~ court administrator.

Sec. 22. 4 V.S.A. § 357 is amended to read:

§ 357. REGISTERS OF PROBATE; APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL; COMPENSATION; CLERKS

(a) ~~The probate judge shall appoint and remove registers of probate and clerical assistants for the probate courts, who shall be paid by the state and shall be state employees and shall be entitled to all fringe benefits and compensation accorded classified state employees who are similarly situated, as determined by the court administrator subject to any applicable statutory limits, unless otherwise covered by the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of employment, negotiated pursuant to chapter 28 of Title 3, in consultation with the court administrator,~~ shall appoint a register of probate for each district. The probate judge may request that the court administrator designate one or more staff persons as additional registers.

(b) ~~Subject to the approval of the court administrator, more than one register of probate may be appointed in any probate district as the business of the court requires.~~

Sec. 23. 4 V.S.A. § 362 is amended to read:

§ 362. OATHS

A probate judge or register may administer oaths ~~necessary in the transaction of business before the probate court and oaths required to be administered to persons executing trusts under the appointment of such court.~~

Sec. 23a. 4 V.S.A. § 363 is amended to read:

§ 363. POWERS

(a) A The probate division of the superior court may issue warrants, subpoenas, and processes in conformity with the law necessary to compel the attendance of witnesses or to produce books, papers, documents, or tangible things, or to carry into effect the orders, sentences, or decrees of the probate ~~court~~ division or the powers granted it by law.

(b) A The probate division of the superior court may appoint not more than three masters to report on a particular issue or to do or perform particular acts or to receive and report evidence.

Sec. 24. 4 V.S.A. § 364 is amended to read:

§ 364. COMMITMENT TO ENFORCE ORDERS

If a person does not comply with an order, sentence, or decree of the probate division of the superior court in a proceeding formerly within the jurisdiction of the probate court, the court may issue a warrant committing the person to the custody of the commissioner of corrections until compliance is given.

Sec. 25. 4 V.S.A. § 369 is amended to read:

§ 369. NONRESIDENT'S ESTATE; NOTICE TO COMMISSIONER OF TAXES; INFORMATION TO BANKS

(a) When an executor or administrator is appointed to administer within this state an estate of a deceased person who resided in another state or country at the time of his or her death, the judge ~~of probate so appointing~~ who issued the appointment shall forthwith notify in writing ~~forthwith~~ the commissioner of taxes in writing of ~~such~~ the appointment, giving the name and residence of ~~such~~ the deceased person at the time of his or her death, the name and residence of the executor or administrator, the date of his or her appointment, and ~~identifying~~ the ~~probate~~ court making such the appointment.

(b) The commissioner shall keep a full record in each case and upon inquiry made of him or her by any savings bank or savings institution in the state shall at once notify ~~such~~ the bank or institution whether, as shown by his or her record, an executor or administrator has been appointed by any ~~probate~~ court in the state to administer the estate of the deceased person named in ~~such~~

the inquiry. If there has been such an appointment, the commissioner shall furnish the above information to ~~such~~ the bank or institution forthwith.

Sec. 26. DELETED

Sec. 27. 4 V.S.A. § 436a is amended to read:

§ 436a. —SPECIAL CIRCUIT AT WATERBURY

There is hereby established a special unit of the ~~district~~ family division of the superior court to hold sessions in the town of Waterbury for the sole purpose of exercising jurisdiction over applications for treatment of mentally ill individuals under Title 18. That unit shall have exclusive jurisdiction of any application for involuntary hospitalization arising under the provisions of 18 V.S.A. §§ 7801, 7803, and 8001 where the proposed patient is confined to the Vermont State Hospital at Waterbury. The special unit shall not exercise any other civil or criminal jurisdiction otherwise exercised by the ~~district court created under section 436 of this title superior court~~. A district superior judge shall be assigned by the administrative judge to the special unit, ~~who need not be a resident of the town of Waterbury or of the territorial unit in which the town of Waterbury is otherwise located. The district judge assigned to the special unit may be assigned by the administrative judge to serve temporarily in another unit where he may exercise the same jurisdiction as any district judge. If another district judge is assigned to the special unit temporarily, he shall exercise only the jurisdiction conferred on that unit.~~

Sec. 28. DELETED

Sec. 28a. 4 V.S.A. § 455 is amended to read:

§ 455. TRANSFER OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS

(a) Any guardianship action filed in the probate division of the superior court pursuant to chapter 111, subchapter 2, article 1 of Title 14 and any adoption action filed in the probate court division pursuant to Title 15A may be transferred to the family division of the superior court as provided in this section.

(b) The family ~~court~~ division shall order the transfer of the proceeding on motion of a party or on its own motion if it finds that the identity of the parties, issues, and evidence are so similar in nature to the parties, issues, and evidence in a proceeding pending in the family court division that transfer of the probate action to the family court division would expedite resolution of the issues or would best serve the interests of justice.

Sec. 29. 4 V.S.A. § 461 is amended to read:

§ 461. OFFICE OF MAGISTRATE; JURISDICTION; SELECTION; TERM

(a) The office of magistrate is created within the family division of the superior court. Except as provided in section 463 of this title, the office of magistrate shall have nonexclusive jurisdiction ~~concurrent with the family court~~ to hear and dispose of the following cases and proceedings:

(1) Proceedings for the establishment, modification, and enforcement of child support.

(2) Cases arising under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act.

(3) Child support in parentage cases after parentage has been determined.

(4) Cases arising under ~~section 5533 of Title 33~~ 33 V.S.A. § 5116, when delegated by ~~the family~~ a presiding judge of the superior court.

(5) Proceedings to establish, modify, or enforce temporary orders for spousal maintenance in accordance with ~~sections 15 V.S.A. §§ 594a and 752 of Title 15~~.

(6) Proceedings to modify or enforce temporary or final parent-child contact orders issued pursuant to this title.

(7) Proceedings to establish parentage.

(8) Proceedings to establish temporary parental rights and responsibilities and parent-child contact.

(b) A magistrate shall be an attorney admitted to practice in Vermont with at least four years of general law practice. Magistrates shall be nominated, appointed, and confirmed in the manner of superior judges.

(c) The term of office of a magistrate shall be six years. Any appointment to fill a vacancy shall be for the unexpired portion of the term vacated. A magistrate may be reappointed by the governor under this section without review by the judicial nominating board, but a reappointment shall require the consent of the senate.

(d) Magistrates shall be exempt employees of the judicial branch, subject to the Code of Judicial Conduct, and, except as provided in section 26 of this title, shall devote full time to their duties. The supreme court shall prescribe training requirements for magistrates.

(e) A magistrate shall have received training on the subject of parent-child contact before being assigned to hear and determine motions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(6) of this section.

(f) [Repealed.]

Sec. 29a. 4 V.S.A. § 461a is amended to read:

§ 461a. ESSEX COUNTY; POWERS OF ASSISTANT JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES IN FAMILY COURT PROCEEDINGS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, an assistant judge of Essex County who has satisfactorily completed the training provided by the Vermont supreme court pursuant to Sec. 20 of Act No. 221 of the 1990 adjourned session, or a similar course of training that has been approved by the supreme court, shall act as a magistrate and hear and dispose of proceedings for the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support and establishment of parentage in all cases filed or pending in the family division of the superior court in Essex County.

(b) The administrative judge may appoint and may specially assign ~~the a~~ magistrate ~~assigned to Essex County~~ to serve as the presiding ~~family court~~ judge in the family division of the superior court in Essex County. ~~The magistrate assigned shall not hear and dispose of proceedings assigned to the assistant judges in subsection (a) of this section, unless authorized by section 463 of this title.~~

(c) No Vermont family court action filed or pending in Essex County, except for temporary abuse prevention ~~orders that are sought as emergency relief pursuant to V.R.F.P. 9(c) after regular court hours~~ proceedings and juvenile proceedings under Title 33, shall be heard at or transferred to ~~any other location, except Guildhall~~ the family division in another unit of the superior court.

Sec. 29b. 4 V.S.A. § 461c is amended to read:

§ 461c. POWERS OF ASSISTANT JUDGES IN DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, an assistant judge ~~who has served in that office for a minimum of two years~~ may elect to hear and determine a complaint or action which seeks a divorce, legal separation, or civil union dissolution in cases where a final stipulation of the parties has been ~~reached~~ filed with the court.

(b) When an assistant judge elects to hear such cases, the clerk shall set it for hearing before the assistant judge if available. ~~In the event both assistant judges elect to hear such cases, the senior assistant judge shall make case assignments.~~

(c) ~~Assistant judges~~ Prior to hearing an uncontested domestic matter, an assistant judge shall sit with a superior judge on domestic proceedings for a minimum of 100 hours, satisfactorily complete a minimum of 30 hours of training ~~on the subjects of child support and divorce, which shall be provided by the office of child support, and in order to hear and determine complaints~~

~~under this section upon completion of the training, assistant judges not already conducting hearings under this section as of July 1, 1995, shall on subjects relevant to domestic proceedings and the code of judicial conduct, and conduct a minimum of three uncontested divorce domestic hearings with a family court superior judge who shall, in his or her sole discretion, certify to the supreme court administrative judge that the assistant judge is qualified to preside over matters under this section. Upon application of an assistant judge, some or all of these requirements may be waived by the administrative judge based on equivalent experience. The requirements set forth herein shall only apply to assistant judges who elect to conduct uncontested final hearings in domestic cases after July 1, 2010. An assistant judge already conducting hearings under this section as of July 1, 2010, shall be deemed to have complied with these requirements.~~

Sec. 30. 4 V.S.A. § 462 is amended to read:

§ 462. FINDINGS; ORDERS; STIPULATIONS

(a) The magistrate shall make findings of fact, conclusions, and a decision and shall issue an order. An order issued by a magistrate may be enforced by the family division of the superior court in the county unit in which the magistrate hearing was held. ~~A motion for contempt of a magistrate's order shall be heard as expeditiously as possible by the family court judge upon motion of either party or upon motion of the family court judge or magistrate.~~

(b) A magistrate may issue an order based on a stipulation regarding any preliminary matter necessary to issue a child support order.

(c) If the stipulation of the parties regarding child support includes matters other than preliminary matters necessary to issue a child support order, the stipulation may be accepted and approved by the magistrate in respect to those preliminary matters and signed by the magistrate as an order of the family division of the superior court.

(d) A magistrate shall issue an order for child support based upon the actual physical living arrangements of the children during the prior three months if the parties have not stipulated concerning parental rights and responsibilities. If parental rights and responsibilities are contested, the family division of the superior court shall make an order allocating parental rights and responsibilities.

Sec. 31. 4 V.S.A. § 463 is amended to read:

§ 463. JURISDICTION OF FAMILY DIVISION OF SUPERIOR COURT OVER CHILD SUPPORT

Upon motion of either party, upon motion of the magistrate, or upon the

~~family~~ court's own motion, a judge of the family division of the superior court may hear and determine the issue of child support, provided there is a prior existing support order in effect or an interim or temporary order and the court finds one of the following:

* * *

(4) Such good and substantial cause as the ~~family~~ court may find, consistent with the principle that support cases shall be heard in a timely manner.

Sec. 32. 4 V.S.A. § 601 is amended to read:

§ 601. JUDICIAL NOMINATING BOARD CREATED; COMPOSITION

(a) A judicial nominating board is created for the nomination of supreme court justices, ~~and superior and district judges,~~ magistrates, the chair of the public service board, and members of the public service board.

* * *

(d) The judicial nominating board shall adopt rules under chapter 25 of Title 3 which shall establish criteria and standards for the nomination of qualified candidates for ~~judicial appointment including~~ justices of the supreme court, superior judges, magistrates, the chair of the public service board, and members of the public service board. The criteria and standards shall include, but not be limited to, such factors as integrity, legal knowledge and ability, judicial temperament, impartiality, health, experience, diligence, administrative and communicative skills, social consciousness, and public service.

* * *

Sec. 33. 4 V.S.A. § 602 is amended to read:

§ 602. —DUTIES

(a) Prior to submission of names of qualified candidates for justices of the supreme court, superior judges ~~and district judges,~~ magistrates, the chair of the public service board, and members of the public service board to the governor ~~or general assembly as set forth in subsection (b) of this section,~~ the board shall submit to the court administrator of the supreme court a list of all candidates, and ~~he~~ the administrator shall disclose to the board information solely about professional disciplinary action taken or pending concerning any candidate. From the list of candidates presented, the judicial nominating board shall select by majority vote, provided that a quorum is present, qualified candidates ~~as set forth in subsection (b)~~ for the position to be filled.

(b) Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of a supreme court justice, or a superior ~~or district~~ judge, or when an incumbent does not declare that he or she

will be a candidate to succeed himself or herself, the judicial nominating board shall submit to the governor the names of as many persons as it deems qualified to be appointed to the office. There shall be included in the qualifications for appointment that the person shall be an attorney at law who has been engaged in the practice of law or a judge in the state of Vermont for a period of at least five out of the ten years preceding ~~his~~ appointment, and with respect to a candidate for superior ~~or district~~ judge particular consideration shall be given to the nature and extent of ~~his~~ the candidate's trial practice.

* * *

Sec. 34. 4 V.S.A. § 603 is amended to read:

§ 603. ~~JUDGES;~~ APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICES, JUDGES, MAGISTRATES, PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD CHAIRS, AND MEMBERS

Whenever the governor appoints a supreme court justice ~~or~~ a superior ~~or district~~ judge, a magistrate, a chair of the public service board, or a member of the public service board, he ~~shall do so~~ or she shall select from the list of names of qualified persons submitted ~~to him~~ by the judicial nominating board pursuant to law. The names of candidates submitted and not selected shall remain confidential.

Sec. 35. 4 V.S.A. § 605 is amended to read:

§ 605. POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY JUDGES PROHIBITED

Superior ~~and district~~ judges shall not make any contribution to or hold any office in a political party or organization or take part in any political campaign.

Sec. 36. 4 V.S.A. § 608 is amended to read:

§ 608. FUNCTIONS

(a) Declarations submitted to the general assembly by a supreme court justice under subsection 4(c) of this title, or by a superior court judge under subsection 71(b) of this title ~~or by a district court judge under subsection 604(a) of this title~~ shall be referred immediately to the joint committee on judicial retention. The declarations shall be accompanied by a supporting statement by the judge or justice seeking retention. In the case of a ~~district or~~ superior court judge, the declaration shall also be accompanied by information on the next succeeding rotation schedule for the judge seeking retention.

(b) The joint committee responsible for the recommendation of retention shall review the candidacies of those justices, and superior judges ~~and district judges~~ desiring to succeed themselves. In conducting its review, the committee shall evaluate judicial performance, including ~~but not limited to~~ such factors as integrity, judicial temperament, impartiality, health, diligence,

legal knowledge and ability, and administrative and communicative skills.

* * *

(d) A judge or justice seeking retention has the right to present oral or written testimony to the committee relative to his or her retention, may be represented by counsel, and may present witnesses to testify in his or her behalf. Copies of written comments received by the committee shall be forwarded to the judge or justice. A judge or justice seeking retention has the right to a reasonable time period to prepare and present to the committee a response to any testimony or written complaint adverse to his or her retention and has the right to be present during any public hearing conducted by the committee.

* * *

(g) The votes on retention under subsections 4(c), and 71(b) and 604(a) of this title shall be conducted in one joint assembly of the general assembly, except that in the event that the joint committee reports to the general assembly that it is not able to make its recommendation on a particular justice or judge under subsection (b) of this section on or before the date set for such joint assembly, the vote on such individual or individuals shall be deferred to a subsequent joint assembly, and separate ballots shall be used despite any other statutory provisions relating to the votes on retention.

Sec. 37. 4 V.S.A. § 651 is amended to read:

§ 651. ~~COUNTY CLERK AS CLERK~~ CLERKS OF COURTS

~~Each county clerk shall be clerk of the superior court for the county. The court administrator shall act as clerk of the supreme court as provided in section 8 of this title. The court administrator shall appoint a superior court clerk for each unit. The court administrator may appoint the same person to be clerk in more than one unit. With approval of the court administrator, the clerk shall hire office staff. The clerk shall have the powers and responsibilities formerly held by the clerk of the district court or the family court and may delegate specific powers and responsibilities to assigned staff. Unless so designated by the assistant judges of a specific county, with the approval of the court administrator, a superior court clerk shall not also serve as a county clerk.~~

Sec. 38. 4 V.S.A. § 652 is amended to read:

§ 652. RECORDS OF JUDGMENTS AND OTHER PROCEEDINGS;
DOCKETS; CERTIFIED COPIES

The clerk shall:

* * *

(4) Except as provided in section 22 V.S.A. § 454 of Title 22, ~~he shall~~ keep on file and preserve all process, pleadings, and papers relating to causes in superior court which together with the records of the court, ~~he or she~~ shall give to any person, on demand and tender of the legal fees, certified copies of any of the records, proceedings or minutes in his or her office, and all proper certificates, under the seal of the court. However, the clerk shall not disclose the filing of an action or release any records, proceedings, or minutes pertaining to it until service of process has been completed; nor shall ~~he~~ the clerk disclose any materials or information required by law to be kept confidential. Original court records shall be maintained for two years after final court action and thereafter may be maintained on microfilm or electronic media.

Sec. 39. 4 V.S.A. § 657 is amended to read:

§ 657. TRANSCRIBING DAMAGED RECORDS

When records in the court clerk's office become faded, defaced, torn, or otherwise injured, so as to endanger the permanent legibility or proper preservation of the same, by an order in writing recorded in the court clerk's office, the court administrator shall direct the court clerk to provide suitable books and transcribe such records therein. At the end of a transcript of record so made, ~~he~~ the clerk shall certify under ~~his~~ official signature and the seal of the court that the same is a true transcript of the original record. Such transcript or a duly certified copy thereof shall be entitled to the same faith and credit and have the same force as the original record. The expense of making such transcript shall be paid by the ~~county~~ state.

Sec. 40. 4 V.S.A. § 658 is amended to read:

§ 658. SUPREME COURT RECORDS

Whenever the records of the supreme court are transcribed by the ~~county~~ superior court clerk, ~~he~~ the clerk shall forthwith transmit the original of such record to the court administrator for safekeeping, together with a certified copy thereof. The ~~county~~ superior court clerk shall keep on file an additional certified copy of such transcription in place of the original so transmitted. A copy of such original record certified by the court administrator from the original or a copy certified by the ~~county~~ superior court clerk from the transcript retained on file ~~by him~~ shall be entitled to the same faith and credit and have the same force as the original record. The expense of making such transcript and of transmittal of the original record shall be paid by the state.

Sec. 41. 4 V.S.A. § 659 is amended to read:

§ 659. MICROFILMING PRESERVATION OF COURT RECORDS

(a) The supreme court by administrative order may provide for permanent preservation of all court records by ~~microfilming, or by any other~~ photographic or electronic process which will provide compact records in reduced size, in accordance with standards established by the ~~department of buildings and general services of the Vermont agency of administration~~ secretary of state which take into account the quality and security of the ~~microphotographed~~ records, and ready access to the ~~micrographic~~ record of any cause so recorded.

(b) After ~~microfilming~~ preservation in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, the supreme court by administrative order may provide for the disposition of original court records by destruction or in cases where the original court record may have historical or intrinsic value by transfer to ~~an appropriate institutional facility such as the archives of the secretary of state, the department of buildings and general services of the agency of administration,~~ the Vermont historical society, or the ~~university~~ University of Vermont.

Sec. 42. 4 V.S.A. § 691 is amended to read:

§ 691. CLERKS AND ASSISTANTS; APPOINTMENT; COMPENSATION

(a) The superior court clerk, with the approval of the court administrator, ~~with the advice of the district judge concerned,~~ may appoint hire and remove ~~clerks and assistant clerks~~ staff for the ~~district~~ superior court subject to the terms of any applicable collective bargaining agreement. The clerks and ~~assistant clerks~~ staff shall be state employees and shall be entitled to all fringe benefits and compensation accorded classified state employees who are similarly situated, subject to any applicable statutory limits, unless covered by a collective bargaining agreement that sets forth the terms and conditions of employment negotiated pursuant to the provisions of chapter 28 of Title 3.

(b) A staff person for the superior court may also serve as the county clerk if the court administrator approves of such service with the concurrence of the assistant judges. If a superior court staff person serves as county clerk pursuant to this subsection, the court administrator and the assistant judges shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with respect to the duties, work schedule, and compensation of the person serving.

Sec. 42a. 3 V.S.A. § 1011 is amended to read:

§ 1011. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of 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:

* * *

(J) ~~A~~ An employee paid by the state who is appointed part-time as county clerk who is compensated pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1181 4 V.S.A. § 651 or 691.

* * *

Sec. 43. 4 V.S.A. § 740 is amended to read:

§ 740. COURT RECORDS; DOCKETS; CERTIFIED COPIES

The supreme court by administrative order shall provide for the preparation, maintenance, recording, indexing, docketing, preservation, and storage of all ~~family~~ court records and the provision, subject to confidentiality requirements of ~~chapter 55 of Title 33~~ law or court rules, of certified copies of those records to persons requesting them.

Sec. 44. 4 V.S.A. § 798 is amended to read:

§ 798. PROBATIVE FORCE OF TRANSCRIPTS

All transcripts of evidence or proceedings in a cause or hearing tried in superior court, ~~probate court or district court~~ or before an auditor, referee, or commissioner, ordered to be reported by ~~the presiding judge~~, a probate or district superior judge, and made by or under the direction of the reporter and duly certified by him or her to be a verbatim transcript of ~~his~~ the verbatim stenographic notes of such evidence or proceedings, shall be received as evidence in any action, civil or criminal, if relevant thereto.

Sec. 44a. 4 V.S.A. § 799 is amended to read:

§ 799. PROBATE COURT REPORTERS

~~The court administrator, upon~~ Upon request of a probate judge, the superior court clerk shall appoint and assign a ~~stenographic reporter~~ staff member to make a verbatim report of the proceeding in a probate court.

Sec. 45. 4 V.S.A. § 803(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) Subject to any rules prescribed by the supreme court pursuant to law, electronic sound or sound and video recording equipment may be used for the recording of any ~~civil, criminal, or probate proceedings~~ superior court or judicial bureau proceeding, testimony, objections, rulings, exceptions, arraignments, pleas, sentences, statements, and remarks made by any attorney

or judge, oral instructions given by the judge, and any other judicial proceedings to the same extent as any recording by a stenographer or reporter permitted or required under existing statutes.

(b) For the purpose of operating ~~the sound~~ recording equipment, the judge may appoint or designate the official reporter of that court, a special reporter, the clerk of the court, any ~~assistant clerks~~ staff of the court, the court officer, or any other designated court personnel. The person operating ~~the sound~~ recording equipment shall subscribe to an oath that the operator will well and truly operate it to record all matters and proceedings.

Sec. 46. 4 V.S.A. § 952(a) is amended to read:

(a) The court administrator, subject to the approval of the supreme court, shall make rules regarding the qualifications, lists, and selection of all jurors and prepare questionnaires for prospective jurors. Each ~~jury commission~~ superior court clerk shall, in conformity with ~~said~~ the rules, prepare a list of jurors from residents of its county unit. The rules shall be designed to assure that the list of jurors prepared by the jury commission shall be representative of the citizens of its county unit in terms of age, sex, occupation, economic status, and geographical distribution.

Sec. 47. 4 V.S.A. § 953(a), (b), and (e) are amended to read:

(a) The ~~jury commission~~ clerk, in order to ascertain names of persons eligible as jurors, may consult the latest census enumeration, the latest published city, town, or village telephone or other directory, the listers' records, the elections records, and any other general source of names.

(b) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the court administrator may obtain the names, addresses, and dates of birth of persons which are contained in the records of the department of motor vehicles, the department of labor, the department of taxes, the department of health, and the department for children and families. The court administrator may also obtain the names of voters from the secretary of state. After the names have been obtained, the court administrator shall compile them and provide the names, addresses, and dates of birth to the ~~jury commission~~ clerk in a form that will not reveal the source of the names. The ~~jury commission~~ clerk shall include the names provided by the court administrator in the list of potential jurors.

(e) All public officers shall, on request, furnish the ~~jury commission~~ clerk or the court administrator without charge, any information it may require to enable it to select eligible persons, ascertain their qualifications, or determine the number needed.

Sec. 48. 4 V.S.A. § 954 is amended to read:

§ 954. DEPOSIT OF LIST

Prior to the first day of July in each biennial year, the ~~jury commission clerk~~ shall prepare and file a current master list of jurors ~~in the office of the county clerk~~ and certify its completion and filing to the court administrator. The current master lists shall contain the number of names necessary adequately to serve the needs of the courts involved for a two-year period beginning July 1.

Sec. 49. 4 V.S.A. § 955 is amended to read:

§ 955. QUESTIONNAIRE

The ~~jury commission clerk~~ shall send a jury questionnaire prepared by the court administrator to each person selected. When returned, it shall be retained in the county superior court clerk's office, ~~except that those questionnaires submitted by prospective jurors for service in the district court of Vermont shall be deposited with the clerk of the district court concerned.~~ The questionnaire shall at all times during business hours be open to inspection by the court and attorneys of record of the state of Vermont.

Sec. 50. 4 V.S.A. § 957 is amended to read:

§ 957. DRAWING AND SUMMONING JURORS

The manner of drawing and summoning jurors from the lists provided shall be in accordance with the rules of the court in which they are called to serve and all applicable statutes, including section 952 of this title, requiring that the panel shall be representative of the citizens of the county unit in terms of age, sex, occupation, economic status, and geographical distribution.

Sec. 51. 4 V.S.A. § 959 is amended to read:

§ 959. GRAND JURORS; VENIRE

The ~~jury commission clerk~~, as directed by the judges of each superior court, shall summon 18 judicious persons within the county unit to appear at any stated or special term of that court to serve as grand jurors of the county unit. The clerk of the court shall issue a venire accordingly.

Sec. 52. 4 V.S.A. § 961(a) is amended to read:

(a) Any person who fails to return a completed questionnaire within ten days of its receipt may be summoned by the county superior court clerk ~~forthwith~~ to appear forthwith before the clerk to fill out a jury questionnaire. Any person so summoned who fails to appear as directed shall be ordered forthwith by the presiding judge to appear and show cause for his or her failure to comply with the summons. Any person who fails to appear pursuant to such order or who fails to show good cause for noncompliance may be found in contempt of court and shall be subject to the penalties for contempt.

Sec. 53. 4 V.S.A. § 1001 is amended to read:

§ 1001. ENVIRONMENTAL COURT DIVISION

(a) ~~An environmental court having statewide jurisdiction is created as a court of record subject to the authority granted to the supreme court. The environmental court division shall consist of two judges, each sitting alone.~~

(b) ~~Two environmental judges shall be appointed within the judicial branch who shall to hear matters arising under 10 V.S.A. chapters 201 and 220 and matters arising under 24 V.S.A. chapter 117 and chapter 61, subchapter 12. In addition, the judges shall have original jurisdiction to revoke permits under 10 V.S.A. chapter 151 in the environmental division and to hear other matters in the superior court when so assigned by the administrative judge pursuant to subsection 21a(c) of this title.~~

(c) An environmental judge shall be an attorney admitted to practice before the Vermont supreme court. An environmental judge shall be nominated, appointed, confirmed, paid, and retained, and shall receive all benefits in the manner of a superior ~~court~~ judge.

(d) An environmental judge shall be appointed on April 1, for a term of six years or the unexpired portion thereof.

(e) Evidentiary proceedings in the environmental ~~court~~ division shall be held in the county in which all or a portion of the land which is the subject of the appeal is located or where the violation is alleged to have occurred, unless the parties agree to another location; provided, however, that the environmental judge shall offer expeditious evidentiary hearings so that no such proceedings are moved to another county to obtain an earlier hearing. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, all nonevidentiary hearings may be conducted by telephone or video conferencing using an audio or video record. If a party objects to a telephone hearing, the court may require a personal appearance for good cause.

(f) ~~The environmental court shall be provided with a dedicated minimum of one court manager, two law clerks, one case manager, and two docket clerk-courtroom operators. These positions shall not be subject to any rotation with other courts. The environmental court shall receive the same funding and provisions for security as provided to county courthouses. [Repealed.]~~

(g) The supreme court may enact rules and develop procedures consistent with this chapter to govern the operation of the environmental ~~court~~ division and proceedings in ~~the court~~ it. In adopting these rules, the supreme court shall ensure that the rules provide for:

- (1) expeditious proceedings that give due consideration to the needs of

pro se litigants;

(2) the ability of the judge to hold pretrial conferences by telephone;

(3) the use of scheduling orders under the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure in order to limit discovery to that which is necessary for a full and fair determination of the proceeding; and

(4) the appropriate use of site visits by the presiding judge to assist the court in rendering a decision.

Sec. 53a. 4 V.S.A. § 1002 is amended to read:

§ 1002. CONDUCT OF HEARINGS

Hearings before the environmental ~~court~~ division shall be conducted in an impartial manner subject to rules of the supreme court providing for a summary, expedited proceeding.

Sec. 53b. 4 V.S.A. § 1004 is amended to read:

§ 1004. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

(a) In connection with any proceedings under chapter 201 of Title 10, each party shall provide all other parties with all written statements and information in the possession, custody, or control of the party relative to the violation, including any technical studies, tests and reports, maps, architectural and engineering plans and specifications, drawings, graphs, charts, photographs, and other data compilations from which information can be obtained, the names and addresses of the party's witnesses, and any other information which the environmental ~~court~~ division deems necessary, in its sole discretion, to a fair and full determination of the proceeding.

(b) No other discovery or depositions, written interrogatories or requests to admit shall be permitted except that which is necessary for a full and fair determination of the proceeding.

Sec. 53c. 10 V.S.A. § 8002 is amended to read:

§ 8002. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(12) “Environmental court” means the environmental division of the superior court established by 4 V.S.A. § 30.

Sec. 53d. 10 V.S.A. § 8221 is amended to read:

§ 8221. CIVIL ENFORCEMENT

(a) The secretary, or the land use panel of the natural resources board with respect to matters relating to land use permits under chapter 151 of this title only, may bring an action in the civil division of the superior court to enforce the provisions of law specified in subsection 8003(a) of this title, to ensure compliance, and to obtain penalties in the amounts described in subsection (b) of this section. The action shall be brought by the attorney general in the name of the state.

* * *

Sec. 53e. 10 V.S.A. § 8502 is amended to read:

§ 8502. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(3) “Environmental court” means the environmental ~~court established under 4 V.S.A. chapter 27~~ division of the superior court established by 4 V.S.A. § 30.

* * *

Sec. 54. 4 V.S.A. § 1103 is amended to read:

§ 1103. VENUE

Venue for violation hearings in the judicial bureau shall be in the unit of the ~~district superior~~ district superior court where the violation is alleged to have occurred.

Sec. 55. 4 V.S.A. § 1104 is amended to read:

§ 1104. APPOINTMENT OF HEARING OFFICERS

The administrative judge shall appoint members of the Vermont bar to serve as hearing officers to hear cases. Hearing officers shall be subject to the Code of Judicial Conduct. ~~At least one hearing officer shall reside in each territorial unit of the district court.~~

Sec. 55a. 4 V.S.A. § 1108 is amended to read:

§ 1108. ~~CIVIL ORDINANCE AND TRAFFIC~~ JUDICIAL BUREAU VIOLATIONS; JURISDICTION OF ASSISTANT JUDGES

(a) Subject to the limits of this section and notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an assistant judge sitting alone shall have the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties to hear and decide ~~civil ordinance and traffic judicial bureau~~ judicial bureau violations as a hearing officer has under the provisions of this chapter.

(b)(1) An assistant judge who elects to hear and decide ~~civil ordinance and traffic judicial bureau~~ violations shall:

(A) ~~have served in that office for a minimum of two years;~~
[Repealed.]

(B) have successfully completed at least 40 hours of training which shall be provided by the bureau; and

(C) annually complete eight hours of continuing education ~~every year~~ relating to jurisdiction exercised under this section.

(2) Training shall be paid for by the county, which expenditure is hereby authorized. Law clerk assistance shall be available to the assistant judges.

(c) The administrative judge may assign or direct assignment of an assistant judge with his or her consent to hear a ~~civil ordinance or traffic judicial bureau~~ violation case within the county in which the assistant judge presides or in a county other than the county in which the assistant judge presides if the assistant judge has elected to hear and decide ~~civil ordinance and traffic judicial bureau~~ violations under this section.

Sec. 55b. 4 V.S.A. § 1106(d) is amended to read:

(d) ~~With approval of his or her supervisor, a~~ A law enforcement officer may void or amend a complaint issued by that officer by so marking the complaint and returning it to the bureau, regardless of whether the amended complaint is a lesser included violation. At the hearing, a law enforcement officer may void or amend a complaint issued by that officer ~~subject to the approval of the hearing in the discretion of that officer.~~

Sec. 56. 5 V.S.A. § 43 is amended to read:

§ 43. REVIEW BY SUPERIOR COURT

A party to a cause who feels aggrieved by the final order, judgment, or decree of the board may appeal to a superior court under Rule 74 of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure. However, the board, before final judgment, may permit an appeal to be taken by any party to a superior court for determination of questions of law in the same manner as the supreme court may by rule provide for appeals before final judgment from a superior court ~~or a district court.~~ Notwithstanding the provisions of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure or the Vermont Rules of Appellate Procedure, neither the time for filing a notice of appeal nor the filing of a notice of appeal, as provided in this section, shall operate as a stay of enforcement of an order of the board unless the board or a superior court grants a stay under the provisions of section 44 of this title.

Sec. 57. 5 V.S.A. § 3535 is amended to read:

§ 3535. RIGHT OF ACTION ON NONPAYMENT OF DAMAGES

When a railroad corporation has entered upon and used land and real estate for the construction and accommodation of its railroad, and has, by its engineers, agents, or servants, entered upon land contiguous to the railroad or the works connected therewith, and taken materials to use in the construction of its road, and has not paid the owner therefor, nor, within two years from such entry, had the damages appraised by commissioners, and an award made and delivered, a person claiming damages, within six years after such entry, may bring an action therefor before a district superior court, ~~if the claim is not over \$200.00, otherwise in the superior court~~. An answer justifying the entry under the act incorporating the company shall not bar the action, but the plaintiff shall recover only his or her actual damages.

Sec. 58. 6 V.S.A. § 484(b) is amended to read:

(b) The secretary or his or her inspector may enter upon the premises of a licensed dealer or processor, at reasonable times, for purposes of inspecting the premises, records, equipment, and inventory in a reasonable manner to determine whether the provisions of this chapter and the rules adopted hereunder are being observed. If entry is refused, the secretary may apply to a superior ~~or district~~ court judge for an administrative search warrant.

Sec. 59. 6 V.S.A. § 3316(b) is amended to read:

(b) ~~Washington County superior court, or any other~~ The superior court, has legal and equitable jurisdiction to enforce, prevent, and restrain violations of this chapter and has legal and equitable jurisdiction in all other cases arising under this chapter. The superior ~~and district~~ courts are granted jurisdiction to handle criminal matters arising under this chapter and rules.

Sec. 60. 9 V.S.A. § 2154 is amended to read:

§ 2154. ASSIGNEE'S BOND

The assignee shall execute to the superior court for the ~~county~~ unit in which the assignor resides a bond with sureties to the satisfaction of such court and conditioned for the faithful performance of such trust. The assignee shall execute such bond at the time of making such assignment, and the same may be prosecuted by parties aggrieved as provided in chapter 101 of Title 14, relative to bonds ~~taken to the probate court~~ governed by that chapter.

Sec. 61. 10 V.S.A. § 497 is amended to read:

§ 497. REMOVAL OF SIGNS

The owner of a sign which is not licensed under this chapter and which is

not a legal on-premise or exempt sign meeting the requirements set forth in this chapter, other than a sign which was lawfully erected and maintained prior to March 23, 1968, shall be in violation of this chapter until it is removed. The travel information council, or the secretary of transportation or his designee pursuant to authority delegated by the council, may, upon failure of the owner to remove such sign, order its removal by the agency of transportation, and the agency of transportation shall thereupon remove the sign without notice or further proceeding, at the expense of the owner. The expense may be recovered by the state in an action on this statute, which shall be instituted in the superior court ~~or Vermont district court having jurisdiction~~ in the unit for the area in which the sign is located. A copy of the notice of removal shall be sent by certified mail to the owner at the last known address. If an illegal sign is re-erected after the initial removal notice is executed, the agency of transportation shall have the authority to remove that illegal sign without additional prior notice to the owner. The agency of transportation or the legislative body of a municipality shall have the authority to remove or relocate, or both, without prior notice, any sign, device, or display which is temporary in nature and not affixed to a substantive structure which is erected within 24.75 feet of the actual centerline of any highway under its jurisdiction and within the public highway right-of-way.

Sec. 62. 10 V.S.A. § 6205(c) is amended to read:

(c) A leaseholder may bring an action against the park owner for a violation of sections 6236–6243 of this title. The action shall be filed in district superior court for the district unit in which the alleged violation occurred. ~~If the leaseholder's claim against the owner exceeds the jurisdictional limit of the district court, an action may be brought in superior court in the county in which the alleged violation occurred.~~ No action may be commenced by the leaseholder unless the leaseholder has first notified the park owner of the violation by certified mail at least 30 days prior to bringing the action. During the pendency of an action brought by a leaseholder, the leaseholder shall pay rent in an amount designated in the lease, or as provided by law, which rental amount shall be deposited in an escrow account as directed by the court.

Sec. 63. 10 V.S.A. § 8014(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) The secretary may seek enforcement of a final administrative order or a landfill extension order in the civil, criminal, or environmental division of the superior or district court ~~or before the environmental court~~.

(b) If a penalty is assessed and the respondent fails to pay the assessed penalty within the time prescribed, the secretary may bring a collection action in any civil or criminal division of the superior or district court. In addition,

when a respondent, except for a municipality, fails to pay an assessed penalty or fails to pay a contribution under subdivision 8007(b)(2) of this title within the prescribed time period, the secretary or the land use panel shall stay the effective date or the processing of any pending permit application or renewal application in which the respondent is involved until payment in full of all outstanding penalties has been received. When a municipality fails to pay an assessed penalty or fails to pay a contribution under subdivision 8007(b)(2) of this title within the prescribed time period, the secretary or the land use panel may stay the effective date or the processing of any pending permit application or renewal application in which the municipality is involved until payment in full of all outstanding penalties has been received. For purposes of this subsection, "municipality" shall mean a city, town, or village. The secretary or the land use panel may collect interest on an assessed penalty that a respondent fails to pay within the prescribed time. The secretary or the land use panel shall collect interest on a contribution under subdivision 8007(b)(2) of this title that a respondent fails to pay within the prescribed time.

Sec. 64. 11 V.S.A. § 441 is amended to read:

§ 441. CORPORATION TO PRODUCE BOOKS ON NOTICE

(a) A corporation doing business within this state, whether organized under the laws of this or any other state or country, when notice therefor is served upon it according to the provisions of section 442 of this title, shall produce before any court, magistrate, grand jury, tribunal, or commission, acting under the authority of this state, all books, documents, correspondence, memoranda, papers, and data which may contain any information concerning any suit, proceedings, action, charge, or subject of inquiry pending before or to be determined by the court, magistrate, grand jury, tribunal, or commission, except a civil action in a superior court ~~or the district court~~, and which have been made or kept at any time within this state, and are in the custody or control of the corporation in this state or elsewhere at the time of service of the notice upon it.

(b) When notice therefor is served upon it according to the provisions of section 442 of this title, the corporation shall produce before any court, magistrate, grand jury, tribunal, or commission acting under the authority of this state, all books, documents, correspondence, memoranda, papers, and data which may contain any information concerning any suit, proceedings, action, charge, or subject of inquiry pending before or to be determined by the court, magistrate, grand jury, tribunal, or commission, except a civil action in a superior court ~~or the district court~~, and which in any way relate to or contain entries, data, or memoranda concerning any transaction within this state or with any party residing or having a place of business within this state, and

which are in the custody or control of the corporation in this state or elsewhere at the time of service of notice upon it.

Sec. 65. 12 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. DISSEMINATION OF ELECTRONIC CASE RECORDS

(a) The court shall not permit public access via the Internet to criminal or family case records ~~or family court case records~~. The court may permit criminal justice agencies, as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a, Internet access to criminal case records for criminal justice purposes, as defined in section 2056a.

(b) This section shall not be construed to prohibit the court from providing electronic access to:

(1) court schedules of the ~~district or family~~ superior court, or opinions of the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court; or

(2) state agencies in accordance with data dissemination contracts entered into under Rule 6 of the Vermont Rules of Electronic Access to Court Records.

Sec. 66. 12 V.S.A. § 122 is amended to read:

§ 122. SUPERIOR JUDGE; OR SUPERIOR COURT ~~AND DISTRICT COURT~~

When a party violates an order made against him or her in a cause brought to or pending before a superior judge or a superior court ~~or the district court~~ after service of the order upon that party, contempt proceedings may be instituted against him or her before the court or any superior judge. When, in a cause no longer on the docket of the court, the proceedings are brought before a superior judge, that judge forthwith shall order ~~forthwith~~ the cause to be brought forward on the docket of the court and may issue concurrently with the order a summons or capias against the party. The issuing of the summons or capias and any further proceedings thereon shall be minuted on the docket.

Sec. 67. 12 V.S.A. § 402 is amended to read:

§ 402. SUPERIOR COURT ACTIONS, VENUE GENERALLY; ~~RAILROADS~~

(a) An action before a superior court shall be brought in the ~~county~~ unit in which one of the parties resides, if either resides in the state; otherwise, on motion, the complaint shall be dismissed. If neither party resides in the state, the action may be brought in any ~~county~~ unit. Actions concerning real estate shall be brought in the ~~county~~ unit in which the lands, or some part thereof, lie.

(b) An action brought by a domestic railroad corporation to the superior

court may be brought either in the county unit in which the corporation has its principal office for the transaction of business, or in the county unit in which a defendant resides. An action or suit brought to the superior court, in which the corporation is defendant, may be brought in any county unit in which a road owned or operated by the corporation is located.

Sec. 67a. 12 V.S.A. § 403 is amended to read:

§ 403. PATENT RIGHTS

An action to recover a debt or demand, arising from the sale of or license to use a patent right, whether such demand is in the form of a promissory note or otherwise, shall be brought and tried in the county unit where the defendant resides or where such patent right was sold when such note or obligation purports to be given for a patent right, unless otherwise provided by law.

Sec. 68. 12 V.S.A. § 404 is amended to read:

§ 404. REMOVAL TO ANOTHER ~~COUNTY~~ UNIT

(a) When it appears to a presiding judge of a superior court that there is reason to believe that a civil action pending in such court cannot be impartially tried in the county unit where it is pending, on petition of either party, such judge shall order the cause removed to the superior court in another county unit for trial.

~~(b) Such petition shall be verified by affidavit and served upon the adverse party like a writ of summons, at least twelve days before the time of hearing. If the adverse party resides without the state, it may be served upon his attorney of record in the cause.~~

~~(c) When an order is made to remove a cause from one superior court to another and such order is filed with the clerk of the court in which the cause is pending, he shall forthwith transmit to the clerk of the court to which such cause is removed, the original papers with a certified copy of the docket entries therein and of the order of removal. He shall thereupon enter the same upon the docket and further proceedings shall be had as if the cause had been originally brought to and entered in such court.~~

~~(d) Attachments, recognizances, bonds, and orders in such cause, made before such removal, shall have the same validity as if the cause had continued in the court to which it was originally brought.~~

Sec. 69. 12 V.S.A. § 654(b) is amended to read:

(b) The signing of original writs is a ministerial act and may be done in advance of issuance. The signature of an attorney, except when he or she is the plaintiff, to a writ, pleading, notice of appeal, or other form, constitutes and

shall be deemed security, by way of recognizance, for the issuance of such writ or the filing of such pleading, notice of appeal, or other form, and such attorney shall be liable to each defendant ~~in the sum of \$10.00 for writs returnable before the district court and~~ in the sum of \$50.00 for writs returnable to a superior court.

Sec. 70. 12 V.S.A. § 1644 is amended to read:

§ 1644. WITNESSES MAY BE EXAMINED SEPARATELY

On the trial of a civil cause, in its discretion, upon the application of either party, the superior court ~~or district court~~ may order the witnesses of the adverse party examined separately and apart from each other.

Sec. 71. 12 V.S.A. § 1691(a) is amended to read:

(a) In the trial of actions at law, and on motion and due notice ~~thereof given~~, supreme, and superior ~~and district~~ courts may require the parties to produce any books or writings in their possession or power, which contain evidence pertinent to the issue or relative to the action, and if the party fails to comply with the order, the court may render judgment against such party by nonsuit or default.

Sec. 71a. 12 V.S.A. § 1950 is added to read:

§ 1950. NUMBER OF JURORS REQUIRED FOR A VERDICT IN A CIVIL ACTION

(a) In a civil action, unless the parties stipulate otherwise, the verdict or finding of the jury shall be unanimous or with not more than one juror dissenting.

(b) This section shall not affect the ability of the parties to stipulate that the jury may consist of any number less than 12 or that a verdict or a finding of a stated majority of the jurors shall be taken as the verdict or finding of the jury as provided by Rule 48 of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure.

Sec. 71b. REPORT FROM COURT ADMINISTRATOR

On or before January 15, 2014, the office of the court administrator shall report to the senate and house committees on judiciary on the implementation and the identifiable effects of Sec. 71a of this act. The report shall address whether there are any discernible impacts on the frequency and duration of medical malpractice litigation, whether there are any positive or negative impacts on the court system itself, and any appropriate recommendations, including whether this act should be repealed as provided in Sec. 71c of this act.

Sec. 71c. SUNSET

On January 15, 2015, Sec. 71a of this act (nonunanimous jury verdicts in civil actions) is repealed.

Sec. 72. 12 V.S.A. § 2136 is amended to read:

§ 2136. COSTS IN SUPREME, COUNTY, AND ~~DISTRICT~~ SUPERIOR COURTS WHEN NOMINAL DAMAGES ARE RECOVERED

When the plaintiff in an action in ~~district~~, superior or supreme court recovers judgment for a nominal sum for debt or damages, in its discretion, the court may make such order in respect to plaintiff's costs as is equitable, but not to exceed his or her taxable costs.

Sec. 73. 12 V.S.A. § 2357 is amended to read:

§ 2357. APPEALS FROM PROBATE COURT IN PROBATE PROCEEDINGS—FRAUD, ACCIDENT, OR MISTAKE

When the petitioner has been prevented from taking or entering an appeal in a probate proceeding by fraud, accident, or mistake, on petition and proof thereof, the supreme or superior court in its discretion may grant leave to file a notice of appeal from an order, sentence, decree, or denial of ~~a~~ the probate division of the superior court or from a determination of commissioners on the estate of a deceased person in those cases which are by law appealable.

Sec. 74. 12 V.S.A. § 2386 is amended to read:

§ 2386. PASSING CAUSES BEFORE FINAL JUDGMENT

(a) Before final judgment in civil actions or proceedings in the superior courts, or the probate courts, ~~or the district court~~, an appeal to the supreme court for the determination of questions of law may be taken in such manner and under such conditions as the supreme court may by rule provide.

(b) In its discretion and before final judgment, a superior court ~~or the district court~~ may permit an appeal to be taken by the respondent or the state in a criminal cause to the supreme court for determination of questions of law. The supreme court shall hear and determine the questions and render final judgment thereon or remand the proceedings as justice and the state of the cause may require.

Sec. 74a. 12 V.S.A. § 2386 is amended to read:

§ 2386. PASSING CAUSES BEFORE FINAL JUDGMENT

(a) Before final judgment in civil actions or proceedings in the superior courts ~~or the probate courts~~, an appeal to the supreme court for the determination of questions of law may be taken in such manner and under such conditions as the supreme court may by rule provide.

* * *

Sec. 75. 12 V.S.A. § 2551 is amended to read:

§ 2551. SUPREME COURT JURISDICTION OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS IN SUPERIOR ~~AND PROBATE~~ COURTS

The supreme court shall have jurisdiction of questions of law arising in the course of the proceedings of the superior ~~and probate~~ courts in probate matters, as in other causes.

Sec. 76. 12 V.S.A. § 2556(a) is amended to read:

(a) In the two following cases, an executor, administrator, or creditor may appeal to the superior court from the decision and report of the commissioners, if notice of appeal is filed with the clerk of the superior court appealed to ~~and the register of the probate court~~ within ~~thirty~~ 30 days after the return of the commissioner's report:

* * *

Sec. 77. 12 V.S.A. § 3011 is amended to read:

§ 3011. ACTIONS

Trustee process may be used in any civil action commenced in a superior court ~~or the district court~~ except in actions for malicious prosecution, libel, slander, or alienation of affections.

Sec. 78. 12 V.S.A. § 3087 is amended to read:

§ 3087. —RECOGNIZANCE FOR TRUSTEE'S COSTS

The plaintiff in a trustee process shall give security for costs to the trustee by way of recognizance by some person other than the plaintiff. The security shall be ~~in the sum of \$10.00 for a summons returnable before the district court~~ ~~and~~ in the sum of \$50.00 for a summons returnable to a superior court. If trustee process issues without a minute of the recognizance, with the name of the surety and the sum in which he or she is bound, signed by the clerk, thereon, the trustee shall be discharged.

Sec. 79. 12 V.S.A. § 3151 is amended to read:

§ 3151. —TRUSTEE MAY FILE BOND AND SELL PROPERTY

When such action is pending in the supreme, or superior, ~~or district~~ court, the trustee may sell the property, and the purchaser shall hold the same released from the mortgage and attachment, if such trustee files with the clerk of ~~such~~ the court ~~or with the judge of such district court~~:

* * *

Sec. 80. 12 V.S.A. § 4251 is amended to read:

§ 4251. ACTIONS FOR ACCOUNTING—JURY

The superior ~~courts~~ court shall have original jurisdiction, ~~exclusive of the district court,~~ in actions for an accounting other than accountings involved in the administration of trusts under Title 14A. When the defendant in such an action brought in one of the following ways pleads in defense an answer which, if true, makes him or her not liable to account, the issue thus raised may be tried to a jury:

* * *

Sec. 81. 12 V.S.A. § 4711 is amended to read:

§ 4711. DECLARATORY JUDGMENT; SCOPE

Superior courts ~~and probate courts~~ within their respective jurisdictions shall have power to declare rights, status, and other legal relations whether or not further relief is or could be claimed. An action or proceeding shall not be open to objection on the ground that a declaratory judgment or decree is prayed for. The declaration may be either affirmative or negative in form and effect. Such declarations shall have the force and effect of a final judgment or decree.

Sec. 82. 12 V.S.A. § 5136(c) is amended to read:

(c) The office of the court administrator shall ensure that the superior court ~~and the district court have~~ has procedures in place so that the contents of orders and pendency of other proceedings can be known to ~~both~~ all courts for cases in which an order against stalking or sexual assault proceeding is related to a criminal proceeding.

Sec. 83. 12 V.S.A. § 5531(c) is amended to read:

(c) In small claims actions where the plaintiff makes a claim for relief greater than \$3,500.00, the defendant shall have the right to request a special assignment of a judicial officer. Upon making this request, a superior judge, ~~a district judge,~~ or a member of the Vermont bar appointed pursuant to 4 V.S.A. § 22(b) shall be assigned to hear the action.

Sec. 84. 12 V.S.A. § 5538 is amended to read:

§ 5538. APPEALS

Any party may appeal from a small claims judgment to superior court. The administrative judge shall assign the appeal to a ~~district or~~ superior judge who shall not have participated in any way in the decision being appealed. The appeal shall be heard and decided, based on the record made in the small claims ~~court~~ procedure. No appeal as of right exists to the supreme court. On

motion made to the supreme court by a party to the action, the supreme court may allow an appeal from the superior court.

Sec. 84a. 12 V.S.A. § 5540a is amended to read:

§ 5540a. JURISDICTION OVER SMALL CLAIMS; ASSISTANT JUDGES

(a)(1) Subject to the limitations in this section and notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, assistant judges of Essex, Caledonia, Rutland, and Bennington ~~counties~~ Counties sitting alone shall hear and decide small claims actions filed under this chapter with the Essex, Caledonia, Rutland, and Bennington superior courts.

(2) Subject to the limitations in this section and notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, assistant judges of Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Washington, Windham, and Windsor ~~counties~~ Counties sitting alone shall hear and decide small claims actions filed under this chapter with the appropriate superior court if the assistant judges first elect to successfully complete the training required in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) With the exception of assistant judges authorized to preside in small claims matters prior to the effective date of this act who have successfully completed the testing requirements established herein, an assistant judge hearing cases under this section shall have completed at least 100 hours of relevant training and testing, and observed 20 hours of small claims hearings in accordance with the protocol for said training and observation which shall be established by a majority of the assistant judges of the state, which shall include attendance at colleges or classes available in various locations in and outside the state to lay judges. An assistant judge who hears cases under this section shall complete 16 hours of continuing education every year relating to jurisdiction exercised under this section and shall file a certificate to such effect with the court administrator. Training shall be paid for on a per capita basis of those judges electing to take the training by the county, which expenditure is hereby authorized. Law clerk assistance available to superior ~~court~~ judges shall be available to the assistant judges.

* * *

(e) ~~Subdivision (a)(2) of this section shall be repealed effective on July 1, 2012. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 84b. INTENT; REPORT

(a) The general assembly intends that the association of assistant judges encourage all of its members to undergo the required education for and to hear cases in all the types of matters in which assistant judges are permitted by law

to sit.

(b) On or before January 15, 2011, the association of assistant judges shall report to the senate and house committees on judiciary:

(1) participation rates describing the number and percentage of assistant judges who have elected to hear cases in the matters in which they are permitted by law to do so;

(2) recommendations for legislation regarding education requirements for assistant judges; and

(3) changes in county budgets directly attributable to the restructuring of the judiciary under this act.

Sec. 85. 12 V.S.A. § 5541 is amended to read:

§ 5541. COMPOSITION OF ~~SMALL CLAIMS~~ COURT IN SMALL CLAIMS CASES

For the purposes of this chapter, the superior court in small claims cases shall consist of the presiding judge sitting alone, an assistant judge sitting alone pursuant to section 5540 of this chapter, ~~or~~ an acting judge assigned pursuant to ~~section 22(b) of Title 4~~ V.S.A. § 22(b).

Sec. 86. 12 V.S.A. § 5702 is amended to read:

§ 5702. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

The Vermont ~~district~~ superior court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over proceedings under this chapter, any provision of any statute, municipal charter, or ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding, except as provided in chapter 24 of Title 23. Venue for adjudicating offenses prosecuted by use of the uniform snowmobile/boating complaint shall be in the unit of the ~~district~~ superior court having jurisdiction over the geographical area where the offense is alleged to have occurred.

Sec. 87. 12 V.S.A. § 5705(b) and (d) are amended to read:

(b) Three ~~district~~ superior court judges appointed by the court administrator shall establish schedules, within the limits prescribed by law, of the amounts of fines to be imposed. The court administrator shall appoint three persons who shall meet with the ~~district~~ superior judges and recommend a fine schedule. One person appointed shall be a member of the department of public safety, one shall be a delegate from the Vermont association of snow travelers, and one shall be a member of the general public who has an interest in boating and boating safety.

(d) If a defendant fails to answer or appear as directed on a uniform

snowmobile/boating complaint or by the ~~district~~ superior court judge, or fails to pay the fine imposed after judgment, the court may proceed under section 5704 of this title.

Sec. 88. 12 V.S.A. § 5852 is amended to read:

§ 5852. OATHS OF OFFICE; BY WHOM ADMINISTERED

When other provision is not made by law, oaths of office may be administered by any justice of the supreme court, superior judge, assistant judge, justice of the peace, ~~judge of the district court~~, notary public, or the presiding officer, secretary, or clerk of either house of the general assembly, or by the governor.

Sec. 89. 12 V.S.A. § 7105 is amended to read:

§ 7105. RULES OF PROCEDURE

Windsor ~~county~~ County court diversion, in conjunction with the Windsor County youth court advisory board established pursuant to section 7109 of this title, and after consultation with the youth court officers, the Windsor ~~county~~ County state's attorney, the office of the public defender for Windsor ~~county~~ County, and the presiding judges in ~~Windsor family and district courts~~ the unit of the superior court that includes Windsor County, shall adopt rules of procedure for the youth court prior to its first hearing.

Sec. 90. 12 V.S.A. § 7109(a) is amended to read:

(a) The Windsor ~~county~~ County youth court advisory board is created. The board shall consist of the presiding ~~family court~~ superior judge ~~in~~ for the unit that includes Windsor ~~county~~ County or designee, the Windsor ~~county~~ County state's attorney or designee, the superintendents of the Hartford, Springfield, and Windsor southeast supervisory union school districts or their designees, three youth court officers, three persons to be appointed by the Vermont supreme court, and the chair of the Windsor ~~county~~ County court diversion or designee. ~~All members of the board shall be appointed or designated by August 15, 1995, for terms expiring on June 30, 1999.~~ The supreme court appointees shall each be licensed to practice law in this state, and at least one of the supreme court appointees shall have at least three years' experience in representing delinquent children. The members of the board shall serve on a voluntary basis without compensation.

Sec. 91. 12 V.S.A. § 7152 is amended to read:

§ 7152. JURISDICTION

The probate division of the superior court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all proceedings concerning the emancipation of minors.

Sec. 92. 12 V.S.A. § 7153(a) is amended to read:

(a) A minor may petition the probate division of the superior court in the probate district in which the minor resides at the time of the filing for an order of emancipation. The petition shall state:

(1) The minor's name and date of birth.

(2) The minor's address.

(3) The names and addresses, if known, of the minor's parents.

(4) The names and addresses of any guardians or custodians, including the commissioner ~~of social and rehabilitation services~~ for children and families, appointed for the minor, if appropriate.

(5) Specific facts in support of the emancipation criteria in section 7151(b) of this chapter.

(6) Specific facts as to the reasons why emancipation is sought.

Sec. 93. 12 V.S.A. § 7155(d) is amended to read:

(d) Any order of guardianship or custody shall be vacated before the court may issue an order of emancipation. Other orders of any division of the family or probate superior court may be vacated, modified, or continued in this proceeding if such action is necessary to effectuate the order of emancipation. Child support orders relating to the support of the minor shall be vacated, except for the duty to make past-due payments for child support, which, under all circumstances, shall remain enforceable.

Sec. 94. 13 V.S.A. § 4 is amended to read:

§ 4. ACCESSORY BEFORE THE FACT

A person who is accessory before the fact by counseling, hiring, or otherwise procuring an offense to be committed may be informed against or indicted, tried, convicted, and punished as if he or she were a principal offender in the criminal division of the superior court in the ~~county or in the district court in the territorial~~ unit where the principal might be prosecuted.

Sec. 95. 13 V.S.A. § 6 is amended to read:

§ 6. —PROSECUTION AND VENUE

~~Such~~ An accessory after the fact may be prosecuted, convicted, and punished whether the principal has or has not been previously convicted, or is or is not amenable to justice, in the criminal division of the superior court in the ~~county or in the district court in the territorial~~ unit where such person became an accessory or where the principal offense is committed.

Sec. 96. 13 V.S.A. § 901 is amended to read:

§ 901. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A ~~district~~ superior judge, sheriff, deputy sheriff, or constable having notice or knowledge of the unlawful, tumultuous, or riotous assemblage of three or more persons within his or her jurisdiction, among or as near as he or she can safely come to such rioters, shall command them in the name of the state of Vermont immediately and peaceably to disperse. If after such command ~~such~~ the rioters do not disperse, such officer or magistrate and ~~such any~~ other person as he or she commands to assist him or her shall apprehend and forthwith take them before a ~~district~~ criminal division of a superior court.

Sec. 97. 13 V.S.A. § 2502 is amended to read:

§ 2502. PETIT LARCENY

~~Superior and district courts shall have concurrent jurisdiction of the~~ For offenses mentioned in section 2501 of this title where the money or other property stolen does not exceed \$900.00 in value, ~~and the court~~ may sentence the person convicted to imprisonment for not more than one year or to pay a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or both.

Sec. 98. 13 V.S.A. § 2561(c) is amended to read:

(c) A buyer, receiver, seller, possessor, or concealer under subsection (a) or (b) of this section may be prosecuted and punished in the criminal division of the superior court in the ~~county or in the district court in the territorial~~ unit where the person stealing the property might be prosecuted, although such property is bought, received, or concealed in another county or ~~territorial~~ unit.

Sec. 99. 13 V.S.A. § 3011 is amended to read:

§ 3011. OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF JURY

An officer, sworn to take charge of a jury impaneled by the superior ~~or district~~ court for the trial of a cause, who, after they have been charged by the court, suffers a person to speak to them upon matters submitted to their charge, or speaks to them himself or herself about the same, except to ask if they are agreed upon a verdict, before they deliver their verdict in court, or are discharged, shall be fined not more than \$500.00. The constable or other person having charge of a jury impaneled by a justice, who in like manner offends, shall be fined not more than \$200.00.

Sec. 100. 13 V.S.A. § 3256(a) is amended to read:

(a) The victim of an offense involving a sexual act may obtain an order from the ~~district~~ criminal or family division of the superior court in which the offender was convicted of the offense, or was adjudicated delinquent, requiring

that the offender be tested for the presence of the etiologic agent for acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and other sexually-transmitted diseases, including gonorrhea, herpes, chlamydia, and syphilis. If requested by the victim, the state's attorney shall petition the court on behalf of the victim for an order under this section. For the purposes of this section, "offender" includes a juvenile adjudicated a delinquent.

Sec. 101. 13 V.S.A. § 4601 is amended to read:

§ 4601. GENERAL RULE

When not otherwise provided, criminal causes shall be tried in the criminal division of the superior court in the ~~county, or in the district court in the territorial~~ unit, where an offense within the jurisdiction of such court is committed.

Sec. 101a. 13 V.S.A. § 4602 is amended to read:

§ 4602. WHEN ACT IN ONE COUNTY OR ~~TERRITORIAL~~ UNIT CAUSES DEATH IN ANOTHER

A person feloniously wounding or poisoning a person in one ~~county or territorial~~ unit of the ~~district superior~~ court, whose death results therefrom in another ~~county or territorial~~ unit, may be tried in the criminal division of the superior court in either ~~county or in the district court in either territorial~~ unit, if the offense is within the jurisdiction of such court.

Sec. 101b. 13 V.S.A. § 4603 is amended to read:

§ 4603. OFFENSE ON BOUNDARY

If an offense is committed on the boundary of two or more ~~counties or territorial~~ units of the ~~district superior~~ court, or within 100 rods of such boundary, such offense may be alleged in the information or indictment to have been committed and may be prosecuted in the criminal division of the superior court in any of such counties or in the ~~district criminal division of the superior~~ court in any of such ~~territorial~~ units, if the offense is within the jurisdiction of such court.

Sec. 102. 13 V.S.A. § 4631 is amended to read:

§ 4631. AUTHORITY

The supreme court may by rule provide for change of venue in criminal prosecutions ~~in the superior and district courts~~ upon motion, for the prevention of prejudice to the defendant or for the convenience of parties and witnesses and in the interests of justice. The court to which a prosecution is transferred shall thereby have jurisdiction of the cause, and the same proceedings shall be had therein as though ~~such court were in the county or territorial unit in which~~

~~the offense was committed~~ the venue had not been changed.

Sec. 103. 13 V.S.A. § 4635 is amended to read:

§ 4635. ORDER FOR REMOVAL OF DEFENDANT

When a motion for change of venue has been granted and the defendant is in custody, the judge granting the motion shall issue an order in writing to the officer having the defendant in custody, commanding him or her to deliver the defendant to the keeper of the jail serving the ~~county or territorial~~ unit of the ~~district court~~ in which the trial is further proceedings are ordered to be had.

Sec. 104. 13 V.S.A. § 4638 is amended to read:

§ 4638. WHICH STATE'S ATTORNEY TO PROSECUTE

The state's attorney of the county in which the respondent is informed or complained against or indicted shall appear in behalf of the state ~~at the trial of the respondent~~ in the court to which the ~~trial~~ case is removed, and in proceedings relating thereto he or she shall have the same powers and be subject to the same duties and liabilities as though the trial were had in the county for which he or she is ~~such~~ the attorney.

Sec. 105. 13 V.S.A. § 4903 is amended to read:

§ 4903. TRANSPORTING PRISONER THROUGH STATE

Whenever an offender is apprehended in a neighboring state, and it may be necessary to transport him or her through this state to the place where the offense was committed, ~~the superior court, a presiding judge thereof, a superior judge or a judge of a district court,~~ upon application and proof that lawful process has issued against ~~such~~ the offender, shall issue a warrant under his or her hand and seal, directed to a sheriff or his or her deputy, or to a person by name who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of his or her duty, authorizing such conveyance.

Sec. 106. 13 V.S.A. § 4953 is amended to read:

§ 4953. ARREST PRIOR TO REQUISITION

Whenever any person within this state shall be charged on the oath of any credible person before any judge or magistrate of this state with the commission of any crime in any other state, and, except in cases arising under section 4946 of this title, with having fled from justice, or with having been convicted of a crime in that state and having escaped from confinement, or having broken the terms of his or her bail, probation, or parole, or whenever complaint shall have been before a superior judge, ~~assistant judge of the superior court, or judge of a district court~~ within this state, setting forth on the affidavit of a credible person in another state that a crime has been committed

in such other state and that the accused has been charged in ~~such~~ that state with the commission of a crime, and, except in cases arising under section 4946, has fled from justice, or with having been convicted of a crime in that state and having escaped from confinement, or having broken the terms of his or her bail, probation, or parole and is believed to have been found in this state, such judge shall issue a warrant ~~directed~~ to any sheriff or constable directing him or her to apprehend the person charged, wherever he or she may be found in this state, and bring him or her before the same or any other superior judge, ~~assistant judge of the superior court or judge of a district court~~ who may be available in or convenient of access to the place where the arrest may be made, to answer the charge or complaint and affidavit; and a certified copy of the sworn charge or complaint and affidavit upon which the warrant is issued shall be attached to the warrant.

Sec. 107. 13 V.S.A. § 4954 is amended to read:

§ 4954. ARREST WITHOUT A WARRANT

The arrest of a person may be lawfully made by an officer or a private citizen without a warrant upon reasonable information that the accused stands charged in the courts of another state with a crime punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year. When so arrested, the accused shall be taken before a superior judge, ~~assistant judge of the superior court, or judge of a district court~~ as soon as may be, and complaint shall be made against him or her under oath, setting forth the ground for the arrest as in section 4953 of this title; and thereafter his or her answer shall be heard as if he or she had been arrested on a warrant.

Sec. 108. 13 V.S.A. § 5043 is amended to read:

§ 5043. HEARING, COMMITMENT, DISCHARGE

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 without unnecessary delay take the person arrested before a superior judge, ~~assistant judge of the superior court, or a judge of a district court~~ of the county unit in which the arrest was made, who shall conduct a hearing for the purpose of determining the lawfulness of the arrest. If ~~such~~ the judge determines that the arrest was lawful, he or she shall commit the person arrested to await for a reasonable time the issuance of an extradition warrant by the governor of this state or admit such person to bail pending the issuance of such warrant. If ~~such~~ the judge determines that the arrest was unlawful, he or she shall discharge the person arrested.

Sec. 109. 13 V.S.A. § 5131 is amended to read:

§ 5131. APPLICATION FOR INQUEST

Upon the written application of the state's attorney, a judge of the superior court, ~~or of a district court~~, may institute and conduct an inquest upon any criminal matter under investigation by the state's attorney.

Sec. 109a. 13 V.S.A. § 5317 is amended to read:

§ 5317. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INFORMATION

(a) The information required to be furnished to victims under this chapter shall be provided upon request of the victim and, unless otherwise specifically provided, may be furnished either orally or in writing.

(b) A person responsible for furnishing information may rely upon the most recent name, address, and telephone number furnished by the victim.

(c) The court, state's attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement agencies, and the departments of corrections and of public safety shall develop and implement an automated notification system to deliver the information required to be furnished to victims under this chapter.

Sec. 109b. REPORT

Prior to implementing the automated victim notification system required by Sec. 109a of this act, the court, state's attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement agencies, and the departments of corrections and of public safety shall report on the costs of the system to the senate and house committees on appropriations and on judiciary.

Sec. 110. 13 V.S.A. § 6642 is amended to read:

§ 6642. SUMMONING WITNESSES IN THIS STATE TO TESTIFY IN ANOTHER STATE

If a judge of a court of record in any state which by its laws has made provision for commanding persons within that state to attend and testify in an action in this state, certifies under the seal of such court that there is ~~such an~~ action pending in ~~such that~~ court, that a person being within this state is a material witness in ~~such the~~ action, and that his or her presence will be required for a specified number of days, upon presentation of ~~such the~~ certificate to any superior judge ~~or a judge of a district court~~ in the ~~county unit~~ in which ~~such the~~ person is, ~~such the~~ judge shall fix a time and place for a hearing in ~~such county the unit~~ and shall notify the witness ~~thereof~~ by an order stating the purpose of the hearing and directing him or her to appear therefor at a time and place certain.

Sec. 111. 13 V.S.A. § 6646 is amended to read:

§ 6646. WITNESS FROM ANOTHER STATE SUMMONED TO TESTIFY
IN THIS STATE

If a person in any state, which by its laws has made provision for commanding persons within its borders to attend and testify in an action in this state, is a material witness in ~~such an~~ an action pending in a court of record in this state, a superior judge ~~or a judge of a district court~~ may issue a certificate under the seal of the court stating these facts and specifying the number of days the witness will be required. ~~Such~~ The certificate may include a recommendation that the witness be taken into immediate custody and delivered to an officer of this state to assure his or her attendance in this state. ~~Such~~ The certificate shall be presented to a judge of a court of record of the state in which the witness is found.

Sec. 112. 13 V.S.A. § 7004 is amended to read:

§ 7004. RECORD OF CONVICTIONS; REPORT TO COMMISSIONER OF
PUBLIC SAFETY

In all cases of felony or misdemeanor in which a conviction or plea of guilty is had in their respective courts, clerks of ~~the superior and district courts~~ court shall forthwith forward to the commissioner of public safety, on quadruplicate forms to be furnished by him or her, for file in the identification and records division of the department of public safety, a certified report of ~~such the~~ the conviction, together with the sentence and ~~such any~~ any other facts as which may be required by the commissioner. A fee of ~~50 cents~~ \$0.50 for such certified report shall be allowed by the commissioner of finance and management in settlement of the accounts of such courts.

Sec. 113. 13 V.S.A. § 7034 is amended to read:

§ 7034. ~~WHEN APPEALS FROM SEVERAL JUSTICE'S JUDGMENTS
ARE NOT ENTERED~~

~~If such person appeals to the county or district court from two or more judgments by the same justice at different times, and fails to enter his or her appeals within the time required, the justice may issue a single mittimus to carry his or her judgments into effect, as provided in section 7033 of this title, and the 24 hours shall commence from the time of signing the mittimus, and such time shall be indorsed thereon. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 114. 13 V.S.A. § 7043(i) is amended to read:

(i) The restitution unit may bring an action, including a small claims procedure, to enforce a restitution order against an offender in the civil division of the superior or small claims court of the county unit where the offender resides or in the county unit where the order was issued. In an action under

this subsection, a restitution order issued by the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court shall be enforceable in the civil division of the superior court or in a small claims court procedure in the same manner as a civil judgment. Superior and small claims ~~court~~ filing fees shall be waived for an action under this subsection, and for an action to renew a restitution judgment.

Sec. 115. 13 V.S.A. § 7178 is amended to read:

§ 7178. SUSPENSION OF FINES

A superior ~~or district court~~ judge, in his or her discretion, may suspend all or any part of the fine assessed against a respondent.

Sec. 116. 13 V.S.A. § 7401 is amended to read:

§ 7401. APPEAL

In criminal actions or proceedings ~~in the superior courts or the district court~~, the defendant may appeal to the supreme court as of right all questions of law involved in any judgment of conviction and in any other order or judgment as to which the state has appealed, provided that if the state fails to perfect or prosecute such appeal, the appeal of the defendant shall not be heard.

Sec. 117. 13 V.S.A. § 7403 is amended to read:

§ 7403. APPEAL BY THE STATE

(a) In a prosecution for a misdemeanor, questions of law decided against the state ~~by a superior or district court~~ shall be allowed and placed upon the record before final judgment. The court may pass the same to the supreme court before final judgment. The supreme court shall hear and determine the questions and render final judgment thereon, or remand the cause ~~to such superior or district court~~ for further trial or other proceedings, as justice and the state of the cause may require.

(b) In a prosecution for a felony, the state shall be allowed to appeal to the supreme court any decision, judgment, or order ~~of a district or superior court~~ dismissing an indictment or information as to one or more counts.

(c) In a prosecution for a felony, the state shall be allowed to appeal to the supreme court from a decision or order ~~of a district or superior court~~:

* * *

Sec. 118. 13 V.S.A. § 7554(d) and (f) are amended to read:

(d)(1) A person for whom conditions of release are imposed and who is detained as a result of his or her inability to meet the conditions of release or who is ordered released on a condition that he or she return to custody after specified hours shall, within 48 hours of application, be entitled to have the

conditions reviewed by a judge in the court having original jurisdiction over the offense charged. A person applying for review shall be given the opportunity for a hearing. Unless the conditions of release are amended as requested, the judge shall set forth in writing or orally on the record a reasonable basis for continuing the conditions imposed. In the event that a judge in the court having original jurisdiction over the offense charged is not available, any ~~district or~~ superior judge may review such conditions.

(2) A person for whom conditions of release are imposed shall, within five working days of application, be entitled to have the conditions reviewed by a judge in the court having original jurisdiction over the offense charged. A person applying for review shall be given the opportunity for a hearing. Unless the conditions of release are amended as requested, the judge shall set forth in writing or orally on the record a reasonable basis for continuing the conditions imposed. In the event that a judge in the court having original jurisdiction over the offense charged is not available, any ~~district or~~ superior judge may review such conditions.

(f) The term “judicial officer” as used in this section and section 7556 of this title shall mean a clerk of a superior ~~or district~~ court or a superior ~~or district court~~ judge.

Sec. 119. 13 V.S.A. § 7560a(a) is amended to read:

(a) If a person who has been released on a secured or unsecured appearance bond or a surety bond fails to appear in court as required:

(1) The court may:

(A) issue a warrant for the arrest of the person; and

(B) upon hearing and notice thereof to the bailor or surety, forfeit any bail posted on the person.

(2)(A) The state’s attorney may file a motion to forfeit the amount of the bond against the surety in the civil or criminal division of the superior ~~or district~~ court where the bond was executed.

(B) A motion filed under this subdivision shall:

(i) include a copy of the bond;

(ii) state the facts upon which the motion is based; and

(iii) be served upon the surety.

Sec. 120. 14 V.S.A. § 101 is amended to read:

§ 101. WILL NOT EFFECTIVE UNTIL ALLOWED

A will shall not pass either real or personal estate unless it is proved and allowed in the probate division of the superior court, or by appeal in the superior or supreme court.

Sec. 121. 14 V.S.A. § 203 is amended to read:

§ 203. PROBATE PROCEEDINGS WITHIN THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF PROBATE COURT; SERVICE; JURISDICTION OVER PERSONS

In proceedings within the exclusive jurisdiction of the probate division of the superior court where notice is required, interested persons may be bound by the orders of the court in respect to property in or subject to the laws of this state by notice in conformity with law or the rules of probate procedure. An order is binding as to all who are given notice of the proceeding though less than all interested persons are notified.

Sec. 122. 14 V.S.A. § 1728 is amended to read:

§ 1728. COURT TO DETERMINE QUESTIONS OF ADVANCEMENT

Questions as to an advancement made, or alleged to have been made by the deceased to an heir, may be heard and determined by the probate division of the superior court and shall be specified in the decree assigning the estate. The final decree of the probate ~~court~~ division, or of the ~~superior or~~ supreme court on appeal, shall be binding on the persons interested in the estate.

Sec. 123. 14 V.S.A. § 2664 is amended to read:

§ 2664. CREATION OF PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP

(a) The family division of the superior court may establish a permanent guardianship at a permanency planning hearing or at any other hearing in which a permanent legal disposition of the child can be made, including a child protection proceeding pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 5528, or a delinquency proceeding pursuant to 33 V.S.A. § 5529. The court shall also issue an order permitting or denying visitation, contact, or information with the parent at the same time the order of permanent guardianship is issued. Before issuing an order for permanent guardianship, the court shall find by clear and convincing evidence all of the following:

* * *

(c) After the family division of the superior court issues a final order establishing permanent guardianship, the case shall be transferred to the appropriate probate court in the district in which the permanent guardian resides. Jurisdiction shall continue to lie in the probate court. Appeal of any decision by the probate court shall be de novo to the family court.

Sec. 123a. 14 V.S.A. § 2664 is amended to read:

§ 2664. CREATION OF PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP

* * *

(c) After the family division of the superior court issues a final order establishing permanent guardianship, the case shall be transferred to the appropriate probate division of the superior court in the district in which the permanent guardian resides. Jurisdiction shall continue to lie in the probate ~~court~~ division. Appeal of any decision by the probate division of the superior court shall be de novo to the family ~~court~~ division.

Sec. 124. 14 V.S.A. § 2927 is amended to read:

§ 2927. REMEDY, AFTER GUARDIAN'S DISCHARGE, REEXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS

After the trust of a guardian is terminated, if the ward or the ward's legal representatives are dissatisfied with the account as allowed by the probate division of the superior court during the continuance of the trust, within two years, and if the ward or the legal representatives do not at the time of the termination of the trust reside in this state, within four years thereafter, they may file a motion to reopen the estate for a reexamination of the account. After notice as provided by the rules of probate procedure, the court shall reexamine accounts previously allowed. A party may appeal from the decision of the probate ~~court~~ division to the civil division of the superior court. The final allowance of accounts in these proceedings shall be conclusive between the parties.

Sec. 125. 14 V.S.A. § 3062 is amended to read;

§ 3062. JURISDICTION; REVIEW OF GUARDIAN'S ACTIONS

(a) The probate division of the superior court shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over all proceedings brought under the authority of this chapter or pursuant to ~~section 18 V.S.A. § 9718 of Title 18.~~

(b) The probate division of the superior court shall have supervisory authority over guardians. Any interested person may seek review of a guardian's proposed or past actions by filing a motion with the court.

Sec. 126. 15 V.S.A. § 658(d) and (e) are amended to read:

(d) The ~~family~~ superior court judge or magistrate may order a parent who is in default of a child support order, to participate in employment, educational, or training related activities if the court finds that participation in such activities would assist in addressing the causes of the default. The court may also order the parent to participate in substance abuse or other counseling if the

court finds that such counseling may assist the parent to achieve stable employment. Activities ordered under this section shall not be inconsistent with any requirements of a state or federal program in which the parent is participating. For the purpose of this subsection, “employment, educational, or training related activities” shall mean:

* * *

(e) A consent to the adoption of a child or the relinquishment of a child, for the purpose of adoption, covered by a child support order shall terminate an obligor’s duty to provide future support for the adopted child without further order of the ~~family~~ court. Unpaid support installments accrued prior to adoption are not discharged and are subject to the jurisdiction of the ~~family~~ court. In a case involving a child covered by a Vermont child support order, the probate division of the superior court shall file the consent or relinquishment with the family division of the superior court ~~that issued in the case in which~~ the support order was issued and shall notify the office of child support of any order terminating parental rights and of the final adoption decree. Upon receipt of the consent or relinquishment, the office of child support shall terminate the obligor’s duty to provide further support.

Sec. 126a. 15 V.S.A. § 658(e) is amended to read:

(e) A consent to the adoption of a child or the relinquishment of a child, for the purpose of adoption, covered by a child support order shall terminate an obligor’s duty to provide future support for the adopted child without further order of the court. Unpaid support installments accrued prior to adoption are not discharged and are subject to the jurisdiction of the court. In a case involving a child covered by a Vermont child support order, the probate division of the superior court shall also file the consent or relinquishment with the family division of the superior court in the case in which the support order was issued and shall notify the office of child support of any order terminating parental rights and of the final adoption decree. Upon receipt of the consent or relinquishment, the office of child support shall terminate the obligor’s duty to provide further support.

Sec. 127. 15 V.S.A. § 1011(a) is amended to read:

(a) A ~~superior, juvenile or probate~~ court which has considered or is considering the custody or visitation of a minor child may award visitation rights to a grandparent of the child, upon written request of the grandparent filed with the court, if the court finds that to do so would be in the best interest of the child.

Sec. 128. 15 V.S.A. § 1101 is amended to read:

§ 1101. DEFINITIONS

The following words as used in this chapter shall have the following meanings:

* * *

(3) A “foreign abuse prevention order” means any protection order issued by the court of any other state that contains provisions similar to relief provisions authorized under this chapter, the Vermont ~~Family Court Rules for Family Proceedings~~, chapter 69 of Title 33, or chapter 178 of Title 12.

* * *

Sec. 129. 15 V.S.A. § 1102 is amended to read:

§ 1102. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

(a) The family division of the superior court shall have jurisdiction over proceedings under this chapter.

(b) Emergency orders under section 1104 of this title may be issued by a judge of the ~~district~~, criminal, civil, or family division of the superior ~~or family~~ court.

* * *

Sec. 130. 15 V.S.A. § 1106 is amended to read:

§ 1106. PROCEDURE

(a) Except as otherwise specified in this chapter, proceedings commenced under this chapter shall be in accordance with the ~~family court rules~~ Vermont Rules for Family Proceedings and shall be in addition to any other available civil or criminal remedies.

(b) The court administrator shall establish procedures to insure access to relief after regular court hours, or on weekends and holidays. The court administrator is authorized to contract with public or private agencies to assist plaintiffs to seek relief and to gain access to ~~district~~, superior ~~and family~~ courts. Law enforcement agencies shall assist in carrying out the intent of this section.

(c) The office of the court administrator shall ensure that the ~~family court and the district~~ superior court ~~have~~ has procedures in place so that the contents of orders and pendency of other proceedings can be known to ~~both~~ all courts for cases in which an abuse prevention proceeding is related to a criminal proceeding.

Sec. 131. 15A V.S.A. § 6-102(c) is amended to read:

(c) Within 30 days after a decree of adoption becomes final, the ~~register clerk of the probate superior court or the clerk of the family court~~ shall send to the registry a copy of any document signed pursuant to section 2-105 of this title.

Sec. 132. DELETED

Sec. 133. DELETED

Sec. 134. DELETED

Sec. 135. DELETED

Sec. 136. DELETED

Sec. 137. DELETED

Sec. 138. DELETED

Sec. 139. DELETED

Sec. 140. 17 V.S.A. § 2602(b) is amended to read:

(b) In the case of recounts other than specified in subsection (a) of this section, the following procedure shall apply. A petition for a recount shall be filed within 10 days after the election. The petition shall be filed with the civil division of the superior court, Washington County, in the case of candidates for state or congressional office, or for a presidential election; the petition shall be filed with the superior court in any county in which votes were cast for the office to be recounted, in the case of any other office. The petition shall be supported, if possible, by a certified copy of the certificate of election prepared by the canvassing committee, verifying the total number of votes cast and the number of votes cast for each candidate.

Sec. 141. 17 V.S.A. § 2603(c) is amended to read:

(c) The complaint shall be filed within 15 days after the election in question, or if there is a recount, within 10 days after the court issues its judgment on the recount. In the case of candidates for state or congressional office, for a presidential election, or for a statewide public question, the complaint shall be filed with the civil division of the superior court, Washington ~~county~~ County. In the case of any other candidate or public question, the complaint shall be filed with the superior court in any county in which votes were cast for the office or question being challenged.

Sec. 142. DELETED

Sec. 143. DELETED

Sec. 144. 18 V.S.A. § 1055 is amended to read:

§ 1055. TUBERCULOSIS-COMPULSORY EXAMINATIONS

When the commissioner of health has reasonable cause to believe that any person has tuberculosis in an active stage or in a communicable form, ~~he~~ the commissioner may request the person to undergo an examination at a clinic or hospital approved by the secretary of the agency of human services for that purpose at the expense of the state by a physician qualified in chest diseases. If the person refuses the examination, the commissioner may petition the ~~district superior~~ superior court for the ~~district~~ unit where the person resides for an order requiring the person to submit to examination. When the court finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that the person has tuberculosis in an active stage or in a communicable form, it may order the person to be examined.

Sec. 145. 18 V.S.A. § 4053(b) is amended to read:

(b) In addition to the other remedies provided in this chapter, the board is hereby authorized through the attorney general or state's attorneys to apply to the civil or criminal division of any superior ~~or district~~ court ~~to apply for~~, and the court shall have jurisdiction upon hearing and for cause shown, to grant a temporary or permanent injunction restraining any person from violating any provision of this chapter, irrespective of whether or not there exists an adequate remedy at law.

Sec. 146. 18 V.S.A. § 4055 is amended to read:

§ 4055. MARKING; NOTICE

(a) Whenever a duly authorized agent of the board finds or has probable cause to believe that any food, drug, device, or cosmetic is adulterated, or so misbranded as to be dangerous or fraudulent, within the meaning of this chapter, he or she shall affix to such article a tag or other appropriate marking, giving notice that the article is, or is suspected of being, adulterated or misbranded and has been detained or embargoed, and warning all persons not to remove or dispose of the article by sale or otherwise until permission for removal or disposal is given by the agent or the court. It shall be unlawful for any person to remove or dispose of the detained or embargoed article by sale or otherwise without that permission.

(b) When an article detained or embargoed under subsection (a) has been found by the agent to be adulterated, or misbranded, he or she shall petition the ~~presiding judge~~ civil or criminal division of the superior court ~~or district court~~ in ~~whose jurisdiction~~ the unit where the article is detained or embargoed, for a libel for condemnation of the article. When the agent has found that an article so detained or embargoed is not adulterated or misbranded, he or she shall remove the tag or other marking.

(c) If the court finds that a detained or embargoed article is adulterated or misbranded, the article shall, after entry of the decree, be destroyed at the expense of the claimant thereof, under the supervision of the agent, and all court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses, shall be taxed against the claimant of the article or his or her agent; provided, that when the adulteration or misbranding can be corrected by proper labeling or processing of the article, the court, after entry of the decree and after the costs, fees, and expenses have been paid and a good and sufficient bond, conditioned that the article shall be so labeled or processed, has been executed, may by order direct that the article be delivered to the claimant thereof for such labeling or processing under the supervision of an agent of the board. The expense of the supervision shall be paid by the claimant. The bond shall be returned to the claimant of the article on representation to the court by the board that the article is no longer in violation of this chapter and that the expenses of supervision have been paid.

* * *

Sec. 147. 18 V.S.A. § 5144(a) is amended to read:

(a) Marriages may be solemnized by a supreme court justice, a superior court judge, ~~a district judge~~, a judge of probate, an assistant judge, a justice of the peace, an individual who has registered as an officiant with the Vermont secretary of state pursuant to section 5144a of this title, a member of the clergy residing in this state and ordained or licensed, or otherwise regularly authorized thereunto by the published laws or discipline of the general conference, convention, or other authority of his or her faith or denomination, or by such a clergy person residing in an adjoining state or country, whose parish, church, temple, mosque, or other religious organization lies wholly or in part in this state, or by a member of the clergy residing in some other state of the United States or in the Dominion of Canada, provided he or she has first secured from the probate ~~court of the district~~ division of the superior court in the unit within which the marriage is to be solemnized a special authorization, authorizing him or her to certify the marriage if ~~such~~ the probate judge determines that the circumstances make the special authorization desirable. Marriage among the Friends or Quakers, the Christadelphian Ecclesia, and the Baha'i Faith may be solemnized in the manner heretofore used in such societies.

Sec. 148. 18 V.S.A. § 5231(a) and (f) are amended to read:

(a) Any individual who is a near relative of the decedent or the custodian of the decedent's remains may file an action in the probate division of the superior court requesting the court to appoint an individual to make decisions regarding the disposition of the decedent's remains or to resolve a dispute

regarding the appropriate disposition of remains, including any decisions regarding funeral goods and services. The court or the individual filing the action may move to join any necessary person under the jurisdiction of the court as a party. The agency of human services may also be joined as a party if it is suggested on the record that there will be insufficient financial resources to pay for funeral goods and services.

(f) Any appeal from the probate court shall be on the record to the civil division of the superior court. There shall be no appeal as a matter of right to the supreme court.

Sec. 149. 18 V.S.A. § 5531(c) is amended to read:

(c) The probate division of the superior court shall have jurisdiction to determine all questions arising under the provisions of this section.

Sec. 150. 18 V.S.A. § 7106 is amended to read:

§ 7106. NOTICE OF HOSPITALIZATION AND DISCHARGE

Whenever a patient has been admitted to a hospital ~~or training school~~ other than upon his or her own application, the head of the hospital ~~or school~~ shall immediately notify the patient's legal guardian, spouse, parent or parents, or nearest known relative or interested party, if known. If the involuntary hospitalization or admission was without court order, notice shall also be given to the ~~district~~ superior court judge for the ~~district~~ family division of the superior court in the unit wherein the hospital is located. If the hospitalization or admission was by order of any court, the head of the hospital ~~or training school~~ admitting or discharging an individual shall forthwith make a report thereof to the commissioner and to the court which entered the order for hospitalization or admission.

Sec. 150a. 18 V.S.A. § 7112 is amended to read:

§ 7112. APPEALS

A patient ~~or student~~ may appeal any decision of the board. The appeal shall be to the family division of the superior court of the county wherein the hospital ~~or school~~ is located. The appeal shall be taken in such manner as the supreme court may by rule provide, except that there shall not be any stay of execution of the decision appealed from.

Sec. 150b. 18 V.S.A. § 7903 is amended to read:

§ 7903. TRANSFERS TO FEDERAL FACILITIES

Upon receipt of a certificate from an agency of the United States that accommodations are available for the care of any individual hospitalized under this part of this title, and that the individual is eligible for care or treatment in a

hospital or institution of that agency, the commissioner may cause his transfer to that agency for hospitalization. The ~~district~~ judge who ordered the individual to be hospitalized, and the attorney, guardian, if any, spouse, and parent or parents, or if none be known, an interested party, in that order, shall be notified immediately of the transfer by the commissioner. No person may be transferred to an agency of the United States if he or she is confined pursuant to conviction of any felony or misdemeanor, or if he or she has been acquitted of a criminal charge solely on the ground of mental illness, unless prior to transfer the ~~district~~ judge who originally ordered hospitalization of such person enters an order for the transfer after appropriate motion and hearing. Any person so transferred shall be deemed to be hospitalized by that agency pursuant to the original order of hospitalization.

Sec. 150c. 18 V.S.A. § 8009 is amended to read:

§ 8009. ADMINISTRATIVE DISCHARGE

* * *

(b) The head of the hospital shall discharge a judicially hospitalized patient when the patient is no longer a patient in need of further treatment. When a judicially hospitalized patient is discharged, the head of the hospital shall notify the applicant, the certifying physician ~~and~~, the family division of the superior court, and anyone who was notified at the time the patient was hospitalized.

(c) A person responsible for providing treatment other than hospitalization to an individual ordered to undergo a program of alternative treatment, under ~~sections~~ section 7618 or 7621 of this title, may terminate the alternative treatment to the individual if the provider of this alternative treatment considers him clinically suitable for termination of treatment. Upon termination of alternative treatment, the family division of the superior court shall be so notified by the provider of the alternative treatment.

Sec. 151. 18 V.S.A. § 8010(b) is amended to read:

(b) In that event and if the head of the hospital determines that the patient is a patient in need of further treatment, the head of the hospital may detain the patient for a period not to exceed four days from receipt of the notice to leave. Before expiration of the four-day period the head of the hospital shall either release the patient or apply to the ~~district~~ family division of the superior court in the ~~district~~ unit in which the hospital is located for the involuntary admission of the patient. The patient shall remain in the hospital pending the court's determination of the case.

Sec. 152. 18 V.S.A. § 8845(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) A person committed under this subchapter may be discharged from custody by a ~~district~~ superior judge after judicial review as provided herein or by administrative order of the commissioner.

(b) Procedures for judicial review of persons committed under this subchapter shall be as provided in section 8834 of this title except that proceedings shall be brought in the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court in the unit in which the person resides or, if the person resides out of state, in the unit which issued the original commitment order.

Sec. 153. 18 V.S.A. § 9052 is amended to read:

§ 9052. TRANSFER OF PATIENTS

The compact administrator shall consult with the immediate family of any person whom he or she proposes to transfer from a state institution to an institution in another state which is a party to this compact and shall take final action as to the transfer of such person only with the approval of the ~~district~~ superior court of the ~~district~~ unit of original commitment.

Sec. 154. 18 V.S.A. § 9303 is amended to read:

§ 9303. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

(a) The family division of the superior court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all proceedings brought under the authority of this chapter. Proceedings under this chapter shall be commenced in the family division of the superior court for the county in which the person with developmental disabilities is residing.

* * *

Sec. 154a. 18 V.S.A. § 9303 is amended to read:

§ 9303. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

(a) The family division of the superior court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all proceedings brought under the authority of this chapter. Proceedings under this chapter shall be commenced in the family division of the superior court for the ~~county~~ unit in which the person with developmental disabilities is residing.

(b)(1) The probate division of the superior court shall have concurrent jurisdiction to appoint the commissioner to serve as a temporary guardian for a person in need of guardianship when:

(A) a petition has been filed pursuant to ~~section~~ 14 V.S.A. § 3063 of Title 14;

(B) the probate division of the superior court finds that the

respondent is a person in need of guardianship as defined in subdivision 9302(5) of this title; and

(C) no suitable private guardian can be located.

(2) Within 60 days after appointment as a temporary guardian, the commissioner shall file a petition in the family division of the superior court for appointment under this chapter and for modification or termination of the probate ~~court~~ division order.

Sec. 155. 18 V.S.A. § 9316(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) The commissioner shall provide guardianship services in accordance with the order of the probate or family division of the superior court until termination or modification thereof by the court.

(b) The commissioner, the person with developmental disabilities, or any interested person may petition the appointing court, if it exists, or the ~~family superior~~ superior court for the ~~district unit~~ where the person resides to modify or terminate the judgment pursuant to which the commissioner is providing guardianship. The petitioner, or the commissioner as petitioner, and the respondent shall be the parties to a petition to modify or terminate guardianship.

Sec. 155a. 18 V.S.A. § 9316(a) is amended to read:

(a) The commissioner shall provide guardianship services in accordance with the order of the probate division or family division of the superior court until termination or modification thereof by the court.

Sec. 156. 20 V.S.A. § 26 is amended to read:

§ 26. CHANGE OF VENUE BECAUSE OF ENEMY ATTACK

In the event that the place where a civil action or a criminal prosecution is required by law to be brought, has become and remains unsafe because of an attack upon the United States or Canada, such action or prosecution may be brought in or, if already pending, may be transferred to the superior ~~or district~~ court as appropriate in an unaffected ~~county or territorial~~ unit and there tried in the place provided by law for such court.

Sec. 157. 20 V.S.A. § 1882 is amended to read:

§ 1882. SUBPOENAS

In connection with any investigation into the internal affairs of the department, the commissioner may request subpoenas for the testimony of witnesses or the production of evidence. The fees for travel and attendance of witnesses shall be the same as for witnesses and officers before a ~~district~~

superior court. The fees in connection with subpoenas issued on behalf of the commissioner or the department shall be paid by the state, upon presentation of proper bills of costs to the commissioner. Notwithstanding 3 V.S.A. §§ 809a and 809b, subpoenas requested by the commissioner shall be issued and enforced by the ~~district~~ superior court of the ~~district~~ unit in which the person subpoenaed resides in accordance with the Vermont ~~District Court Civil~~ Rules of Civil Procedure.

Sec. 158. 20 V.S.A. § 1935 is amended to read:

§ 1935. PROCEDURE IF PERSON REFUSES TO GIVE SAMPLE

(a) If a person who is required to provide a DNA sample under this subchapter refuses to provide the sample, the commissioner of the department of corrections or public safety shall file a motion in the ~~district~~ superior court for an order requiring the person to provide the sample.

* * *

(f) Venue for proceedings under this section shall be in the territorial unit of the ~~district~~ superior court where the conviction occurred. Hearings under this section shall be conducted by the ~~district~~ superior court without a jury and shall be subject to the ~~District Court Civil Rules~~ Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure as consistent with this section. The state has the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence. Affidavits of witnesses shall be admissible evidence which may be rebutted by witnesses called by either party. The affidavits shall be delivered to the other party at least five days prior to the hearing.

(g) A decision of the ~~district~~ superior court under this section may be appealed as a matter of right to the supreme court. The court's order shall not be stayed pending appeal unless the respondent is reasonably likely to prevail on appeal.

Sec. 159. 20 V.S.A. § 2056 is amended to read:

§ 2056. CERTIFIED RECORDS

Upon the request of a superior ~~or district court~~ judge, the attorney general, or a state's attorney, the center shall prepare the record of arrests, convictions, or sentences of a person. The record, when duly certified by the commissioner of public safety or the director of the center, shall be competent evidence in the courts of this state. Such other information as is contained in the center may be made public only with the express approval of the commissioner of public safety.

Sec. 160. 23 V.S.A. § 1205 is amended to read:

§ 1205. CIVIL SUSPENSION; SUMMARY PROCEDURE

* * *

(d) Form of notice. The notice of intention to suspend and of suspension shall be in a form prescribed by the supreme court. The notice shall include an explanation of rights, a form to be used to request a hearing, and, if a hearing is requested, the date, time, and location of the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court where the person must appear for a preliminary hearing. The notice shall also contain, in boldface print, the following:

* * *

(3) If you wish to request a hearing before the ~~district~~ superior court, you must mail or deliver your request for a hearing within seven (7) days after (date of notice).

* * *

(f) Review by ~~district~~ 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 ~~district~~ 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 ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court that a hearing has been requested and ~~who shall then~~ provide 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.

* * *

(2) No less than seven days before the final hearing, and subject to the requirements of ~~District Court Civil Rule~~ 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.

* * *

(j) Venue and conduct of hearings. Venue for proceedings under this section shall be in the territorial unit of the ~~district~~ superior court where the offense is alleged to have occurred. Hearings under this section shall be summary proceedings conducted by the ~~district~~ criminal division of the

superior court without a jury and shall be subject to the ~~District Court Civil Rules~~ Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure only as consistent with this section. The state has the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence. Affidavits of law enforcement officers, chemists of either party, or expert witnesses of either party shall be admissible evidence which may be rebutted by witnesses called by either party. The affidavits shall be delivered to the other party at least five days prior to the hearing.

(k) Appeal. A decision of the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court under this section may be appealed as a matter of right to the supreme court. The suspension shall not be stayed pending appeal unless the defendant is reasonably likely to prevail on appeal.

* * *

Sec. 161. 23 V.S.A. § 1213c(c) is amended to read:

(c) Service of notice. The notice of hearing shall be served as provided for in the ~~District Court Civil Rules~~ Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure on the registered owner or owners and any lienholders as shown on the certificate of title for the vehicle as shown in the records of the department of motor vehicles in the state in which the vehicle is registered or titled.

Sec. 162. 23 V.S.A. § 3021(b) and (d) are amended to read:

(b) In addition to the powers specifically granted to the commissioner in this chapter, he or she may:

* * *

(5) compel the attendance of witnesses and order the production of any relevant books, records, papers, vouchers, accounts, or other documents of any person the commissioner has reason to believe is liable for the payment of a tax or of any person believed to have information pertinent to any matter under investigation by the commissioner at any hearing held under this chapter. The fees for travel and attendance of witnesses summoned or used by the commissioner and fees for officers shall be the same as for witnesses and officers before a ~~district~~ the criminal division of the superior court and shall be paid by the state upon presentation of proper bills of cost to the commissioner of finance and management, but no fees or expenses shall be payable to a witness charged with a use tax liability.

(d) Any superior ~~or district~~ judge upon application of the commissioner may compel the attendance of witnesses, the giving of testimony, and the production of any books, records, papers, vouchers, accounts, or documents before the commissioner in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same penalties as if before a superior ~~or district~~ court.

Sec. 163. 24 V.S.A. § 71a is amended to read:

§ 71a. COURTHOUSES

(a) Except as provided herein, each county shall provide and own a suitable courthouse, pay all utility and custodial services, and keep such courthouse suitably furnished and equipped for use by the superior court and probate court, together with suitable offices for the county clerk, assistant judges, and probate judges. Office space for the probate court may be provided elsewhere by the county. ~~Each county shall provide fireproof safes or vaults for the safekeeping of the official files and records required to be kept by county officials, including the files and records of a justice of the peace who has vacated his or her office. Use of the county courthouse by the supreme court, district court, family court or the judicial bureau may be permitted by the assistant judges when such use does not conflict with the use of the building by the superior court, provided that the office of court administrator shall pay the cost of any such use should the assistant judges choose not to pay the cost by use of county funds. The county shall provide at least the facilities for judicial operations, including staff, that it provided on July 1, 2009.~~

(b) ~~If the state provides a building in which the superior court is held all judicial operations in a county are contained in one court building owned by the state, the county clerk and assistant judges may also be located in the same building. The assistant judges, the court administrator and the commissioner of buildings and general services shall be the superintendents of the building. They shall make decisions regarding building construction, space allocations, and use of the facility after consulting with the district court and the superior court presiding judges judge and the probate judge if housed in the building assistant judges.~~ The county shall no longer be required to maintain a courthouse.

(c) The court administrator, in consultation with the presiding judge of the superior court, shall determine what judicial operations will occur in the county courthouse.

Sec. 163a. 24 V.S.A. § 71a is amended to read:

§ 71a. COURTHOUSES

(a) Except as provided herein, each county shall provide and own a suitable courthouse, pay all utility and custodial services, and keep such courthouse suitably furnished and equipped for use by the superior court ~~and probate court~~, together with suitable offices for the county clerk, assistant judges, and probate judges. Office space for the probate division of the superior court may be provided elsewhere by the county. The county shall provide at least the facilities for judicial operations, ~~including staff,~~ that it provided on July 1,

2009.

* * *

Sec. 164. 24 V.S.A. § 72 is amended to read:

§ 72. —EXPENSES OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(a) The expenses connected with the superior court, unless otherwise provided, shall be paid by the state.

~~(b) All filing fees in small claims actions, including postjudgment fees, shall be held by the county in which they are filed.~~

Sec. 165. 24 V.S.A. § 75 is amended to read:

§ 75. TELEPHONE

Each county shall provide adequate telephone service for the county courthouse, the offices of the county clerk, ~~probate judge or register thereof,~~ and the sheriff.

Sec. 165a. 24 V.S.A. § 76 is amended to read:

§ 76. COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Each county ~~shall~~ may maintain a complete set of Vermont Reports including the digest thereof in the county clerk's office and in each probate office. The county may maintain in the courthouse or elsewhere such additional law books as in the opinion of the assistant judges are needful for the judges and officials having offices in the county.

Sec. 166. 24 V.S.A. § 77 is amended to read:

§ 77. COUNTY LANDS; PURCHASE; CONDEMNATION

(a) Each county may acquire and own such lands and rights in lands as in the opinion of the assistant judges are needful for county purposes.

(b) A county may condemn land in situations similar to those in which a municipality may condemn under section 2805 of this title by complying with the procedures established in sections 2805 through 2812 of this title, with the assistant judges performing the duties assigned by those sections to the selectmen.

(c) In any proceeding brought by a county under subsection (b) of this section, the assistant judges shall be disqualified, and the proceeding shall be heard by the presiding judge, sitting alone.

Sec. 167. 24 V.S.A. § 131 is amended to read:

§ 131. POWERS AND DUTIES

The assistant judges ~~of the superior court~~ shall have the care and superintendence of county property, may take deeds and leases of real estate to the county, rent or sell and convey unused lands belonging to the county, keep the courthouse, jail, and other county buildings insured, and make needed repairs and improvements in and around the same.

Sec. 168. 24 V.S.A. § 137 is amended to read:

§ 137. JURISDICTION

~~District and superior~~ Superior courts, within their respective jurisdictions, may take cognizance of actions in favor of or against the county.

Sec. 169. 24 V.S.A. § 171 is amended to read:

§ 171. APPOINTMENT

The assistant judges ~~of the superior court, with the concurrence of the presiding judge of such court,~~ shall appoint a county clerk who shall be sworn and hold his or her office during the pleasure of such judges and until his or her successor is appointed and has qualified.

Sec. 170. 24 V.S.A. § 175 is amended to read:

§ 175. BOND TO COUNTY

Before entering upon the duties of his or her office, a county clerk shall become bound to the county in the sum of \$3,000.00, with sufficient sureties, by way of recognizance, before ~~two of the judges of the superior court~~ the assistant judges, or give a bond to the county executed by principal and sureties in like sum to be approved by ~~two of the judges of the superior court~~ the assistant judges, conditioned for the faithful performance of his or her duties. Such bonds of county clerks shall be taken biennially in the month of February and recorded in the office of the county clerk.

Sec. 171. 24 V.S.A. § 176 is amended to read:

§ 176. DEPUTY CLERK

A county clerk may, subject to the approval of the assistant judges, appoint one or more deputies who may perform the duties of clerk for whose acts he or she shall be responsible and whose deputations he or she may revoke at pleasure. A record of the appointments shall be made in the office of the clerk. In case of the death of the clerk or his or her inability to act, the deputy or deputies in order of appointment shall perform the duties of the office until a clerk is appointed. In case of the suspension of the clerk's duties as a condition of release pending trial for violating 13 V.S.A. § 2537, the assistant judges of the county shall appoint a person to perform the duties of the office until the charge of violating 13 V.S.A. § 2537 is resolved. ~~If the assistant~~

~~judges cannot agree upon appointing a person, the judge of the superior court of the county shall make the appointment.~~ The compensation for the clerk and deputy clerk shall be fixed by the assistant judges and paid for by the county. Such compensation may include such employment benefits as are presently provided to state employees, including, ~~but not limited to,~~ health insurance, life insurance, and pension plan, the expense for which shall be borne by the county and the employees.

Sec. 172. 24 V.S.A. § 178 is amended to read:

§ 178. RECORD OF SHERIFF'S COMMISSION; COPIES; EVIDENCE

~~Such~~ The county clerk shall record, in a book kept for that purpose, sheriffs' commissions with the oath of office indorsed thereon, ~~and recognizances taken by the judges of the superior court, out of court, for the appearance of criminals confined in jail.~~ In case of loss or destruction of an original commission or recognizance, a certified copy of the record may be used in court as evidence of the facts therein contained.

Sec. 173. 24 V.S.A. § 183 is amended to read:

§ 183. CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT OF NOTARY PUBLIC ~~OR MASTER~~

Immediately after the appointment of a notary public ~~or master~~, the county clerk shall send to the secretary of state a certificate of such appointment, on blanks furnished by ~~such~~ the secretary, containing the name, signature, and legal residence of the appointee, and the term of office of each notary public. ~~Such~~ The secretary shall cause such certificates to be bound in suitable volumes and to be indexed. Upon request, ~~such~~ the secretary may certify the appointment, qualification, and signature of ~~such~~ a notary public ~~or master~~ on tender of his or her legal fees.

Sec. 174. 24 V.S.A. § 211 is amended to read:

§ 211. APPOINTMENT; VACANCY

Biennially, on February 1, the assistant judges ~~of the superior court~~ shall appoint a treasurer for the county who shall hold office for two years and until his or her successor is appointed and qualified. If ~~such~~ the treasurer dies or in the opinion of the assistant judges becomes disqualified, they may appoint a treasurer for the unexpired term. If the treasurer has his or her duties suspended as a condition of release pending trial for violating 13 V.S.A. § 2537, the assistant judges of the county shall appoint a person to perform the duties of the treasurer until the charge of violating 13 V.S.A. § 2537 is resolved. If the assistant judges cannot agree upon whom to appoint, the auditor of accounts shall make the appointment.

Sec. 175. 24 V.S.A. § 212 is amended to read:

§ 212. BOND

Before entering upon the duties of his or her office, a county treasurer shall become bound to the county in the sum of \$5,000.00, with sufficient sureties, by way of recognizance, before ~~two of the judges of the superior court~~ the assistant judges, or give a bond to the county executed by principal and sureties in like sum to be approved by ~~two of the judges of the superior court~~ the assistant judges, conditioned for the faithful performance of his or her duties. ~~Such~~ The recognizance or bond shall be lodged with and recorded by the county clerk. ~~Such bond shall be~~ and renewed annually in the month of February.

Sec. 176. 24 V.S.A. § 291 is amended to read:

§ 291. BOND; OATH

Before entering upon the duties of his or her office, a sheriff shall become bound to the treasurer of the county in the sum of \$100,000.00, with two or more sufficient sureties by way of recognizance, before ~~a justice of the supreme court or the two assistant judges of the superior court~~ in such county, or give a bond to the treasurer executed by such sheriff with sufficient sureties in like sum to be approved by ~~a justice of the supreme court or by the two assistant judges of the superior court~~, conditioned for the faithful performance of his or her duties and shall take the oath of office before one of ~~such~~ the judges, who shall certify the same on the sheriff's commission. Such recognizance or bond and the commission shall be forthwith recorded in the office of the county clerk.

Sec. 177. 24 V.S.A. § 294 is amended to read:

§ 294. SHERIFF IMPRISONED

If a sheriff is confined in prison by legal process, his or her functions as sheriff shall be suspended. When ~~he~~ the sheriff is released from imprisonment during his or her term of office, he or she shall file a certificate of his or her discharge signed by one of the judges of the superior court, in the office of the county clerk, and deliver a like certificate to the high bailiff. Thereupon he or she shall resume the powers and execute the duties of sheriff.

Sec. 178. 24 V.S.A. § 361(a) is amended to read:

(a) A state's attorney shall prosecute for offenses committed within his or her county, and all matters and causes cognizable by the supreme, and superior ~~and district~~ courts in behalf of the state; file informations and prepare bills of indictment, deliver executions in favor of the state to an officer for collection immediately after final judgment, taking duplicate receipts therefor, one of

which shall be sent to the commissioner of finance and management, and take measures to collect fines and other demands or sums of money due to the state or county.

Sec. 179. 24 V.S.A. § 441 is amended to read:

§ 441. APPOINTMENT; JURISDICTION; EX OFFICIO NOTARIES; APPLICATION

(a) The assistant judges of the superior court may appoint as many notaries public for the county as the public good requires, ~~to hold~~. Notaries public so appointed shall hold office until ten days after the expiration of the term of office of such judges, ~~whose~~ and their jurisdiction shall extend throughout the state.

(b) The clerk of the supreme court, county clerks, ~~district~~ superior court clerks, ~~family~~ deputy superior court clerks, justices of the peace, and town clerks and their assistants shall be ex officio notaries public.

(c) Every applicant for appointment and commission as a notary public shall complete an application to be filed with the county clerk of the superior court stating that the applicant is a resident of the county and has reached the age of majority, giving his or her business or home address and providing a handwritten specimen of the applicant's official signature.

(d) An ex officio notary public shall cease to be a notary public when he or she vacates the office on which his or her status as a notary public depends.

Sec. 180. 24 V.S.A. § 441a is amended to read:

§ 441a. NONRESIDENT NOTARY PUBLIC

A nonresident may be appointed as a notary public, provided the individual resides in a state adjoining this state and maintains, or is regularly employed in, a place of business in this state. Before a nonresident may be appointed as a notary public, the individual shall file with the assistant judges of the superior court in the county where the individual's place of employment is located an application setting forth the individual's residence and the place of employment in this state. A nonresident notary public shall notify the assistant judges of the superior court, in writing, of any change of residence or of place of employment in this state.

Sec. 181. 24 V.S.A. § 442 is amended to read:

§ 442. OATH; CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT RECORDED; FORM

(a) A person appointed as notary public shall cause the certificate of his or her appointment to be filed and recorded in the office of the county clerk where issued. Before entering upon the duties of his office, he or she, as well

as an ex officio notary, shall take the oath prescribed by the constitution, and shall duly subscribe the same with his or her correct signature, which oath thus subscribed shall be kept on file by the county clerk as a part of the records of such county.

(b) The certificate of appointment shall be substantially in the following form:

STATE OF VERMONT, ss.

_____ County

This is to certify that A.B. of _____ in such county, was, on the _____ day of _____, 20 _____, appointed by the ~~assistant judges of the superior court~~ for such county a notary public for the term ending on February 10, 20 _____.

_____ ~~Assistant Judges of the superior court.~~

And at _____ in such county, on this _____ day of _____, 20 _____ personally appeared A.B. _____ and took oath of office prescribed in the constitution.

Before me,

C. D. _____

(Designation of the officer administering the oath).

Sec. 181a. 24 V.S.A. § 1940(c) is amended to read:

(c) A specialized investigative unit grants board is created which shall be comprised of the attorney general, the secretary of administration, the executive director of the department of state's attorneys, the commissioner of the department of public safety, a representative of the Vermont sheriffs' association, a representative of the Vermont association of chiefs of police, the executive director of the center for crime victim services, and the executive director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, ~~the~~. Specialized investigative units organized and operating under this section for the investigation of sex crimes, child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence, or crimes against those with physical or developmental disabilities may apply to the board for a grant or grants covering the costs of salaries and employee benefits to be expended during a given year for the performance of unit duties as well as unit operating costs for rent, utilities, equipment, training, and supplies. Grants under this section shall be approved by a majority of the entire board and shall not exceed 50 percent of the yearly salary and employee

benefit costs of the unit. Preference shall be given to grant applications which include the participation of the department of public safety, the department for children and families, sheriffs' departments, community victims' advocacy organizations, and municipalities within the region. However, a sheriff's department in a county with a population of less than 8,000 residents shall upon application receive a grant of \$20,000.00 to support a part-time specialized investigative unit investigator which shall be paid to the department as time is billed on a per hour rate as agreed by contract up to the maximum amount of the grant.

Sec. 182. 24 V.S.A. § 1974(c) is amended to read:

(c) Prosecutions of criminal ordinances shall be brought before the ~~district superior~~ court pursuant to ~~section 4 V.S.A. § 441 of Title 4.~~

Sec. 183. 24 V.S.A. § 3117 is amended to read:

§ 3117. APPEAL FROM ORDER

An owner or person interested who is aggrieved by such order may appeal as provided in the case of a person aggrieved by an order of a building inspector. However, the provisions of this section shall not prevent ~~such~~ the municipality from recovering the forfeiture provided in section 3116 of this title from the date of the service of the original notice, unless ~~such~~ the order is annulled by the board of arbitration, ~~district court~~ or a superior judge, as the case may be.

Sec. 184. 24 V.S.A. § 3808 is amended to read:

§ 3808. LIABILITY OF PERSON BOUND TO BUILD FENCE

When a person bound to support a portion of the division fence does not make or maintain his or her portion, he or she shall be liable for damages done to or suffered by the opposite party in consequence of such neglect. An owner or occupant of adjoining lands, after 10 days from the time notice is given to the opposite party, may make or put in repair the fence and recover from the opposite party damages arising from the neglect, with the expense of building or repairing the fence. ~~Actions under this section may be brought before a district court when the amount claimed does not exceed \$200.00.~~

Sec. 185. 28 V.S.A. § 103 is amended to read:

§ 103. INQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

* * *

(c) In any inquiry or investigation conducted by the commissioner, he or she shall have the same powers as are possessed by ~~district court~~ or superior

judges in chambers, and which shall include the power to:

- (1) Administer oaths;
- (2) Compel the attendance of witnesses;
- (3) Compel the production of documentary evidence.

(d) If any person disobeys any lawful order or subpoena issued by the commissioner pursuant to this section or refuses to testify to any matter regarding which he or she may be questioned lawfully, any ~~district court or~~ superior judge, upon application by the commissioner, shall order the obedience of the person in the same manner as if the person had disobeyed an order or subpoena of the ~~district court or~~ superior judge.

(e) The fees and traveling expenses of witnesses shall be the same as are allowed witnesses in the ~~district or~~ superior courts of the state and shall be reimbursed by the commissioner out of any appropriation or funds at the disposal of the department.

Sec. 186. 28 V.S.A. § 1531 is amended to read:

§ 1531. APPROPRIATE COURT

The phrase “appropriate court” as used in the agreement on detainees, with reference to the courts of this state, means the superior court where the Vermont charge is pending ~~or the district court~~.

Sec. 187. 29 V.S.A. § 1158 is amended to read:

§ 1158. —ACTS AND RESOLVES; VERMONT STATUTES ANNOTATED; DISTRIBUTION

(a) The state librarian shall deliver the acts and resolves as follows: to the secretary of state, six copies; to the clerk of the United States supreme court for the use of the court, one copy; to the governor’s office and to the governor and lieutenant governor, one copy each; to the ~~library~~ Library of Congress, four copies; to each county clerk, three copies; one to each of the following officers and institutions: each department of the United States government and upon request to federal libraries, elective and appointive state officers, the clerk of each state board or commission, superintendent of each state institution, the library of the ~~university~~ University of Vermont, the libraries of Castleton, Johnson, and Lyndon ~~state colleges~~ State Colleges, Vermont ~~technical college~~ Technical College, Middlebury ~~college~~ College, Norwich ~~university~~ University, St. Michael’s ~~college~~ College, senators and representatives of this state in Congress, members of the general assembly during the session at which such laws were adopted, the secretary and assistant secretary of the senate, clerk and assistant clerks of the house of representatives, the judges,

attorney, marshal, and clerk of the United States district court in this state, the judge of the second circuit United States court of appeals from Vermont, justices and ex-justices of the supreme court, superior judges, ~~district court judges~~, the reporter of decisions, judges and registers of probate, sheriffs, state's attorneys, town clerks; one each, upon request and as the available supply permits, to assistant judges ~~of the superior court~~, justices of the peace, chairman of the legislative body of each municipality and town treasurers; one within the state, to the Vermont historical society, to each county or regional bar law library, and one copy to each state or territorial library or supreme court library, and foreign library which makes available to Vermont its comparable publication, provided that if any of these officials hold more than one of the offices named, that official shall be entitled to only one copy.

(b) The state librarian shall distribute the copies of Vermont Statutes Annotated and cumulative pocket part supplements thereto, when issued, as follows: one each to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, the state treasurer, secretary of state, auditor of accounts, adjutant general, commissioner of buildings and general services, commissioner of taxes, sergeant at arms, and the head of each administrative department; four copies to the attorney general; one to each town clerk, three to each county clerk; one to each probate judge and two to the clerk of the supreme court; one to each ex-justice and justice of the supreme court, each superior judge, ~~district judge~~, and state's attorney; two to the judge of the second circuit United States court of appeals from Vermont and four to the United States district judges for the district of Vermont. One copy shall be given to each state institution, each county or regional bar law library, each university, college, and public library, as requested, and as many sets as are needed to effect exchange with state libraries and state law libraries. Current copies of the Vermont Statutes Annotated and supplements shall be kept for use in the offices of the officers and institutions mentioned. One copy shall be given to each member of the commission established by chapter 3 of Title 1 and counsel therefor, unless they are authorized to receive one in another capacity, and one to each of the ~~fifteen~~ 15 members of the joint special committee on revision of the laws authorized by No. 86 of the Acts of 1959. Additional copies may be sold to parties identified in this subsection at a price to be fixed by the state librarian.

Sec. 188. 30 V.S.A. § 12 is amended to read:

§ 12. REVIEW BY SUPREME COURT

A party to a cause who feels ~~himself or herself~~ aggrieved by the final order, judgment, or decree of the board may appeal to the supreme court. However, the board, in its discretion and before final judgment, may permit an appeal to

be taken by any party to the supreme court for determination of questions of law in such manner as the supreme court may by rule provide for appeals before final judgment from a superior court ~~or the district court~~. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Vermont ~~rules of civil procedure~~ Rules of Civil Procedure or the Vermont ~~rules of appellate procedure~~ Rules of Appellate Procedure, neither the time for filing a notice of appeal nor the filing of a notice of appeal, as provided herein, shall operate as a stay of enforcement of an order of the board unless the board or the supreme court grants a stay under the provisions of section 14 of this title.

Sec. 189. 32 V.S.A. § 467 is amended to read:

§ 467. ACCOUNTS WITH ~~COUNTY~~ SUPERIOR COURT CLERKS

The commissioner of finance and management shall issue ~~his or her~~ a warrant in favor of each ~~county~~ superior court clerk when ~~such~~ the clerk requires money for election or court expenses, and the state treasurer shall charge the same to the clerk. The clerk shall be credited for moneys properly disbursed by him or her, and the balance shall be paid by the clerk into the treasury.

Sec. 190. 32 V.S.A. § 469 is amended to read:

§ 469. REQUISITION FOR COURT EXPENSES

With the approval of the court administrator, the supreme court, ~~the environmental court~~, the judicial bureau, ~~the probate court~~, and the superior court, ~~the district court and the family court~~ may requisition money from the state to pay fees and expenses related to grand and petit jurors, fees and expenses of witnesses approved by the judge, expenses of guardians ad litem, expenses of elections, and other expenses of court operations. The cash advances shall be administered under the provisions of section 466 of this title.

Sec. 191. 32 V.S.A. § 503 is amended to read:

§ 503. PAYMENT OF MONEYS INTO TREASURY

Quarterly and oftener if the commissioner of finance and management so directs, ~~county~~ superior court clerks and other collectors and receivers of public money, except justices, shall pay all such money collected or held by them into the state treasury.

Sec. 192. 32 V.S.A. § 504 is amended to read:

§ 504. FINES PAID ~~COUNTY~~ SUPERIOR COURT CLERK

Damages and costs received in actions to which the state is a party, and fines and the amount of bonds and recognizances to the state taken in any county, shall be paid to the ~~county~~ superior clerk. His or her receipt shall be

the only valid discharge thereof and he or she shall pay the same into the state treasury.

Sec. 193. 32 V.S.A. § 506 is amended to read:

§ 506. FAILURE OF ~~COUNTY~~ SUPERIOR COURT CLERK TO PAY OVER

If a ~~county~~ superior court clerk neglects to make a return or pay into the state treasury any money as provided in this chapter, the commissioner of finance and management shall forthwith notify the state's attorney, who shall immediately prosecute the clerk and the sureties on his or her official bond.

Sec. 194. 32 V.S.A. § 508 is amended to read:

§ 508. RECEIPTS GIVEN BY STATE OFFICERS

State officers, except ~~county~~ superior court clerks and ~~district~~ superior judges, and every person in the employ of the state under salary or per diem established by statute, receiving money belonging to or for the use of the state, shall give the person paying such money a receipt therefor in such form as shall be prescribed by the state treasurer.

Sec. 195. 32 V.S.A. § 541 is amended to read:

§ 541. COLLECTION OF FINES AND COSTS

All fines, costs, including costs taxed as state's attorneys' and court fees, bail, and unclaimed fees collected by judges of ~~district courts~~ shall be paid into the proper treasury.

Sec. 196. 32 V.S.A. § 581 is amended to read:

§ 581. UNCLAIMED COSTS TO REVERT TO STATE

Fees allowed in a bill of costs to a ~~justice or judge~~ which are not demanded by the party to whom such fees are due within six months after such bill is allowed, shall revert to the use of the state ~~and, in the case of a justice, shall be paid by the justice to the county clerk within 30 days from the expiration of such period of six months;~~ and ~~such justice or the judge~~, after the expiration of six months, shall be relieved from all liability to parties to whom ~~such~~ the fees were due.

Sec. 197. 32 V.S.A. § 809 is amended to read:

§ 809. AUDITING OF COURT CLERK ACCOUNTS AND OF PROBATE JUDGES

The auditor shall examine the accounts of the judges of probate and superior court clerks and ascertain whether their fees are properly and

uniformly charged and rendered, and if ~~he or she~~ the auditor finds they are not, he or she shall direct the proper corrections to be made. ~~He or she~~ The auditor shall endeavor to obtain a uniform practice in the ~~probate~~ superior courts in that respect.

Sec. 198. 32 V.S.A. § 1141 is amended to read:

§ 1141. ASSISTANT JUDGES ~~OF SUPERIOR COURTS~~

(a)(1) The compensation of each assistant judge of the superior court, ~~which shall be paid by the state~~, shall be ~~\$136.28 a day as of July 9, 2006 and \$142.04 a day as of July 8, 2007~~ for time spent in the performance of official duties and necessary expenses as allowed to classified state employees. Compensation under this section shall be based on a ~~half-day~~ two-hour minimum and hourly thereafter.

(2)(A) The compensation paid to an assistant judge pursuant to this section shall be paid by the state except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision.

(B) The compensation paid to an assistant judge pursuant to this section shall be paid by the county at the state rate established in subdivision (a)(1) of this section when an assistant judge is sitting with a presiding superior judge in the civil or family division of the superior court.

(b) Assistant judges of the superior court shall receive pay for such days as they attend court when it is in actual session, or during a court recess when engaged in the special performance of official duties.

Sec. 199. 32 V.S.A. § 1142 is amended to read:

§ 1142. ~~JUDGES OF PROBATE~~ JUDGES

(a) The annual salaries of the ~~judges of probate~~ judges in the several probate districts, which shall be paid by the state in lieu of all fees or other compensation, shall be as follows:

	Annual Salary as of July 8, 2007	
(1) Addison	\$59,321	<u>52,439</u>
(2) Bennington	59,321	<u>61,235</u>
(3) Caledonia	59,321	<u>46,956</u>
(4) Chittenden	91,402	<u>91,395</u>
(5) Essex	28,853	<u>15,000</u>

(6) Fair Haven	43,594	
(7) <u>(6)</u> Franklin	59,321	<u>52,439</u>
(8) <u>(7)</u> Grand Isle	28,853	<u>15,000</u>
(9) Hartford	59,321	
(10) <u>(8)</u> Lamoille	53,594	<u>37,816</u>
(11) Marlboro	51,559	
(12) <u>(9)</u> Orange	51,559	<u>44,214</u>
(13) <u>(10)</u> Orleans	51,559	<u>43,300</u>
(14) <u>(11)</u> Rutland	75,859	<u>86,825</u>
(15) <u>(12)</u> Washington	75,859	<u>70,718</u>
(16) <u>(13)</u> Westminster <u>Windham</u>	43,594	<u>57,923</u>
(17) <u>(14)</u> Windsor	51,559	<u>75,859</u>

(b) ~~Judges of probate~~ Probate judges shall be paid by the state their actual and necessary expenses under the rules and regulations pertaining to classified state employees. The compensation for the probate judge of the Chittenden district shall be for full-time service.

(c) A probate judge whose salary is less than \$45,701.00 shall only be eligible for the least expensive medical benefit plan option available to state employees or may apply the state share of a single-person premium for the least expensive benefit plan option toward the purchase of another state or private health insurance plan. A probate judge whose salary is less than \$45,701.00 may participate in other state employee benefit plans.

Sec. 200. 32 V.S.A. § 1143 is amended to read:

§ 1143. –COMPENSATION OF APPOINTEES

Persons acting under the authority of the probate division of the superior court shall be paid as follows:

(1) For each day's attendance by executor, administrator, trustee, agent, or guardian, on the business of their appointment, \$4.00;

(2) For each day's attendance of commissioners, appraisers, or committee, \$4.00; and

(3) The probate division of the superior court may allow in cases of unusual difficulty or responsibility, such further sum as it judges reasonable.

Sec. 201. 32 V.S.A. § 1144 is amended to read:

~~§ 1144. — COMPENSATION OF APPRAISERS~~

~~An appraiser appointed in accordance with the provisions of chapters 181 and 183 of this title shall receive \$4.00 a day and his or her necessary expenses shall be paid by the state on the certificate of the judge of probate. But in cases requiring the appointment of an expert, the judge of probate may allow such further sum as he or she deems reasonable. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 202. DELETED

Sec. 203. 32 V.S.A. § 1431 is amended to read:

~~§ 1431. FEES IN SUPREME, AND SUPERIOR, DISTRICT, FAMILY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL COURTS~~

(a) Prior to the entry of any cause in the supreme court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$250.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section.

(b)(1) ~~Prior~~ Except as provided in subdivisions (2)–(5) of this subsection, prior to the entry of any cause in the superior court ~~or environmental court,~~ there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$250.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section.

(2) Prior to the entry of any divorce or annulment proceeding in the ~~family~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$250.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section; however, if the divorce or annulment complaint is filed with a stipulation for a final order acceptable to the court, the fee shall be \$75.00.

(3) Prior to the entry of any parentage or desertion and support proceeding brought under chapter 5 of Title 15 in the ~~family~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$100.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section; however, if the parentage or desertion and support complaint is filed with a stipulation for a final order acceptable to the court, the fee shall be \$25.00.

(4) Prior to the entry of any motion or petition to enforce an order for parental rights and responsibilities, parent-child contact, or maintenance in the ~~family~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$75.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section. Prior to the entry of any motion or petition to vacate or modify an order for parental rights and responsibilities, parent-child contact, or maintenance in the ~~family~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$100.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section. However, if the motion or petition is filed with a stipulation for an order acceptable to the court, the fee shall be \$25.00.

All motions or petitions filed by one party at one time shall be assessed one fee.

(5) Prior to the entry of any motion or petition to vacate or modify an order for child support in the ~~family~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$35.00 in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section; however, if the motion or petition is filed with a stipulation for an order acceptable to the court, there shall be no fee. A motion or petition to enforce an order for child support shall require no fee. All motions or petitions filed by one party at one time shall be assessed one fee; if a simultaneous motion is filed by a party under subdivision (4) of this subsection, the ~~subdivision (4)~~ fee under subdivision (4) shall be the only fee assessed.

* * *

(d) Prior to the entry of any subsequent pleading which sets forth a claim for relief in the supreme court or the superior, ~~environmental, or district~~ court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$100.00 for every appeal, cross-claim, or third-party claim and a fee of \$75.00 for every counterclaim in the superior ~~or environmental~~ court in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section. The fee for an appeal of a magistrate's decision in the ~~family~~ superior court shall be \$100.00. The filing fee for civil suspension proceedings filed pursuant to 23 V.S.A § 1205 shall be \$75.00, which shall be taxed in the bill of costs in accordance with sections 1433 and 1471 of this title.

(e) Prior to the filing of any postjudgment motion in the superior, ~~environmental, or district~~ court, including motions to reopen civil suspensions, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court for the benefit of the state a fee of \$75.00 except for small claims actions.

(f) The filing fee for all actions filed in the judicial bureau shall be \$50.00; the state or municipality shall not be required to pay the fee; however, if the respondent denies the allegations on the ticket, the fee shall be taxed in the bill of costs in accordance with sections 1433 and 1471 of this title and shall be paid to the clerk of the bureau for the benefit of the state.

(g) Prior to the filing of any postjudgment motion in the judicial bureau there shall be paid to the clerk of the bureau, for the benefit of the state, a fee of \$35.00. Prior to the filing of any appeal from the judicial bureau to the ~~district~~ superior court, there shall be paid to the clerk of the court, for the benefit of the state, a fee of \$100.00.

(h) Pursuant to Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure 3.1; or Vermont Rules of Appellate Procedure 24(a), ~~or District Court Civil Rules 3.1~~, part or all of the

filing fee may be waived if the court finds that the applicant is unable to pay it. The clerk of the court or the clerk's designee shall establish the in forma pauperis fee in accordance with procedures and guidelines established by administrative order of the supreme court.

Sec. 203a. 32 V.S.A. § 1431 is amended to read:

§ 1431. FEES IN SUPREME AND SUPERIOR COURTS

* * *

(c)(1) Prior to the entry of a small claims action, there shall be paid to the clerk ~~for the benefit of the county~~ in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section, a fee of \$75.00 if the claim is for more than \$1,000.00 and \$50.00 if the claim is for \$1,000.00 or less. Prior to the entry of any postjudgment motion in a small claims action, there shall be paid to the clerk ~~for the benefit of the county~~ a fee of \$50.00. The fee for every counterclaim in small claims proceedings shall be \$25.00, payable to the ~~county~~ clerk, if the counterclaim is for more than \$500.00, and \$15.00 if the counterclaim is for \$500.00 or less.

(2) All fees paid to the clerk pursuant to this subsection shall be for the benefit of the county, except that such fees shall be for the benefit of the state in a county where court facilities are provided by the state.

* * *

Sec. 203b. 32 V.S.A. § 1431 is amended to read:

§ 1431. FEES IN SUPREME AND SUPERIOR COURTS

* * *

(c)(1) Prior to the entry of a small claims action, there shall be paid to the clerk in lieu of all other fees not otherwise set forth in this section, a fee of \$75.00 if the claim is for more than \$1,000.00 and \$50.00 if the claim is for \$1,000.00 or less. Prior to the entry of any postjudgment motion in a small claims action, there shall be paid to the clerk a fee of \$50.00. The fee for every counterclaim in small claims proceedings shall be \$25.00, payable to the clerk, if the counterclaim is for more than \$500.00, and \$15.00 if the counterclaim is for \$500.00 or less.

~~(2) All fees paid to the clerk pursuant to this subsection shall be for the benefit of the county, except that such fees shall be for the benefit of the state in a county where court facilities are provided by the state.~~

(A) Except as provided in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (2), fees paid to the clerk pursuant to this subsection shall be divided as follows:

50 percent of the fee shall be for the benefit of the county and 50 percent of the fee shall be for the benefit of the state.

(B) In a county where court facilities are provided by the state, all fees paid to the clerk pursuant to this subsection shall be for the benefit of the state.

* * *

Sec. 204. 32 V.S.A. § 1434 is amended to read:

§ 1434. PROBATE COURTS CASES

(a) The following entry fees shall be paid to the probate division of the superior court for the benefit of the state, except for subdivision (17) of this subsection which shall be for the benefit of the county in which the fee was collected:

* * *

(14) Guardianships for minors	\$35.00 <u>\$85.00</u>
(15) Guardianships for adults	\$50.00 <u>\$100.00</u>
(16) Petitions for change of name	\$75.00 <u>\$125.00</u>

* * *

<u>(23) Petitions for partial decree</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
<u>(24) Petitions for license to sell real estate</u>	<u>\$50.00</u>

* * *

(b) For economic cause, the probate judge may waive this fee. No fee shall be charged for necessary documents pertaining to the opening of estates, trusts, and guardianships, including the issuance of two certificates of appointment and respective letters. No fee shall be charged for the issuance of two certified copies of adoption decree and two certified copies of instrument changing name.

(c) A fee of \$5.00 shall be paid for each additional certification of appointment of a fiduciary.

Sec. 205. 32 V.S.A. § 1436 is amended to read:

§ 1436. FEE FOR CERTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT AS NOTARY PUBLIC

~~(a)~~ For the issuance of a certificate of appointment as a notary public, the county clerk shall collect a fee of ~~\$20.00~~ \$30.00, of which ~~\$5.00~~ \$10.00 shall accrue to the state and ~~\$15.00~~ \$20.00 shall accrue to the county.

~~(b) Notwithstanding any statute to the contrary, fees collected as a result of this section shall be in lieu of any payments by the state to the county for the use of the county courthouse by the supreme, district, family, and environmental courts or by the judicial bureau.~~

Sec. 206. 32 V.S.A. § 1471 is amended to read:

§ 1471. TAXATION OF COSTS

(a) There shall be taxed in the bill of costs to the recovering party in the supreme, and superior, ~~family, district, or environmental~~ courts or the judicial bureau a fee equal to the entry fees, the cost of service fees incurred, and the total amount of the certificate of witness fees paid.

(b) Any costs taxed to the respondent in any action filed by the office of child support shall be paid to the clerk of the court for deposit in the general fund.

Sec. 207. 32 V.S.A. § 1511 is amended to read:

§ 1511. GRAND AND PETIT JURORS IN SUPERIOR ~~AND DISTRICT~~ COURT

There shall be allowed to grand and petit jurors in the superior ~~and district~~ court the following fees and expenses:

(1) For attendance, \$30.00 a day, on request, unless the jurors were otherwise compensated by their employer;

(2) For each talesman, \$30.00 a day, on request, unless the talesmen were otherwise compensated by their employer;

(3) Upon request and upon a showing of hardship, reimbursement for expenses necessarily incurred for travel from home to court, and return, at the rate of reimbursement allowed state employees for travel under the terms of the prevailing collective bargaining agreement.

Sec. 208. 32V.S.A. § 1514 is amended to read:

§ 1514. BOARD AND LODGING OF JURORS

When in a grand jury investigation or in the trial of a criminal or civil cause jurors are kept together by order of the court, their board and lodging and that of the officers having such jurors in charge shall be paid by the state. ~~This provision shall apply only to grand jurors and petit jurors in superior courts and petit jurors in district courts.~~

Sec. 209. 32 V.S.A. § 1518 is amended to read:

§ 1518. TOWN GRAND JURORS

In criminal causes ~~before a district court~~, the grand juror or other prosecuting officer shall be paid:

- (1) If the cause is disposed without trial, \$1.50;
- (2) For trial by court, \$2.00;
- (3) For trial by jury, \$2.50;
- (4) For each subsequent day, \$2.00 additional;
- (5) Ten cents a mile travel one way for one trip for each cause, provided a separate trip for such cause has been made; but if a separate trip has not been made, then at \$0.05 a mile one way for each cause;
- (6) No grand juror shall receive in fees more than \$400.00 in any one year.

Sec. 210. 32 V.S.A. § 1551 is amended to read:

§ 1551. ATTENDANCE FEES

There shall be allowed to witnesses the following fees:

- (1) For attendance before a ~~district or superior court or court of jail delivery~~, or to give a deposition before a notary public, \$30.00 a day;
- (2) For attendance before an appraiser appointed by the commissioner of taxes, \$30.00 a day; such fees to be apportioned as the appraiser may direct;
- (3) For attendance on other courts or tribunals, \$30.00 a day;
- (4) For travel in the state, all witnesses shall receive mileage at the rate of reimbursement allowed state employees for travel under the terms of the prevailing collective bargaining agreement.

Sec. 211. 32 V.S.A. § 1596 is amended to read:

§ 1596. FEES FORBIDDEN

Fees shall not be allowed to an officer for the service of a capias, bench warrant, or other writ for the arrest of a person who is under a recognizance taken before a ~~district court judge or other~~ an officer authorized by law to take such recognizance, requiring the appearance of such person before the superior court.

Sec. 212. 32 V.S.A. § 1631 is amended to read:

§ 1631. TRUSTEES' FEES

The person summoned as trustee shall be allowed \$0.06 a mile for his or her travel, and \$1.50 for each day's attendance before the superior court, the same for travel and \$0.75 for each day's attendance before a commissioner ~~or district~~

court.

Sec. 213. 32 V.S.A. § 1751 is amended to read:

§ 1751. FEES WHEN NOT OTHERWISE PROVIDED

(a)(1) Officers and persons whose duty it is to record deeds, proceedings, depositions, or make copies of records, proceedings, docket entries, or minutes in their offices, when no other provision is made, shall be allowed:

~~(1)~~(A) The sum of \$0.60 a folio therefor with a minimum fee of \$1.00;

~~(2)~~(B) The sum of \$2.00 for each official certificate;

~~(3)~~(C) For the authentication of documents, \$2.00;

~~(4)~~(D) For other services such sum as is in proportion to the fees established by law.

(2) Provided, however, that no fees shall be charged to honorably discharged veterans of the armed forces of the United States, or to their dependents or beneficiaries, for copies of records required in the prosecution of any claim for benefits from the United States government, or any state agency, and fees for copies of records so furnished at the rates provided by law shall be paid such officers by the town or city wherein such record is maintained.

(b)(1) Whenever ~~probate, district, environmental, family, or superior~~ court officers and employees or officers and employees of the judicial bureau furnish copies or certified copies of records, the following fees shall be collected for the benefit of the state:

~~(1)~~(A) The sum of \$0.60 a folio with a minimum fee of \$1.00 when a copy is reproduced by typewriter or hand;

~~(2)~~(B) The sum of \$0.25 a page with a minimum fee of \$1.00 when a copy is reproduced photographically;

~~(3)~~(C) For each official certificate, \$5.00; however, one conformed copy of any document issued by a court shall be furnished without charge to a party of record to the action;

~~(4)~~(D) For the authentication of documents, \$5.00;

~~(5)~~(E) For a response to a request for a record of criminal history of a person based upon name and date of birth, \$30.00.

~~(6)~~(F) For appointment as an acting judge pursuant to 4 V.S.A § 22(b) for the purpose of performing a civil marriage, \$100.00.

(2) However, the fees provided for in this subsection shall not be assessed by these officers and employees in furnishing copies or certified

copies of records to any agency of any municipality, state, or federal government or to veterans honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States, their dependents or beneficiaries, in the prosecution of any claim for benefits from the United States government, or any state agency.

Sec. 214. 32 V.S.A. § 1753 is amended to read:

§ 1753. INQUESTS

The fees and expenses of inquests on the dead, and buildings burned shall be the same as in criminal causes before a ~~district~~ court.

Sec. 215. 32 V.S.A. § 1760 is amended to read:

§ 1760. FEES OF COUNTY CLERKS FOR INDEX OF DEEDS AND INDEX OF RECORDS

The county clerks shall receive from the county, for making the general index of existing land records under ~~section 27 V.S.A. § 401 of Title 27~~, \$1.00 for each 100 entries upon such index; and for making an index as provided in ~~section 4 V.S.A. § 656 of Title 4~~, such sum as the assistant judges of the superior court certify to be reasonable, to be allowed by the commissioner of finance and management in the accounts of the clerks.

Sec. 216. 32 V.S.A. § 5932 is amended to read:

§ 5932. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(8) "Court" means a superior court, ~~a district court~~, or the judicial bureau.

* * *

Sec. 217. 32 V.S.A. § 5936(b) is amended to read:

(b) The final determination of any claimant agency regarding the validity and amount of any debt may be appealed within 30 days to the civil division of the superior court of the county unit in which the taxpayer resides, except that if the claimant agency is the office of child support the appeal shall be to the family division of the superior court. Upon appeal, the provisions of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure or the Vermont Rules for Family Proceedings, as appropriate, shall apply, and the court shall proceed de novo to determine the debt owed.

Sec. 218. DELETED

Sec. 219. 32 V.S.A. § 8171 is amended to read:

§ 8171. RECOVERY OF TAXES AND PENALTIES

Taxes imposed by this chapter may be recovered in the name of the state in a civil action, on the statute imposing them, returnable to any superior ~~or district~~ court. The penalties so imposed may be so recovered in a civil action on the statute imposing them. The amount of taxes assessed or penalties accrued up to the time of trial may be recovered in such suit; but a court wherein an action is pending to recover a forfeiture, in its discretion, may remit such part thereof as it shall deem just and equitable in the circumstances. The state shall not be required in any proceeding under this chapter to furnish recognizance or bond for costs, nor injunction bonds. Upon final judgment, the court may make such order relating to the payment of costs, by the state or the defendant, as it shall deem just and equitable.

Sec. 220. 32 V.S.A. § 10102(a) is amended to read:

(a) In addition to any other powers granted to the commissioner and the secretary in this chapter, they may:

* * *

(5) require the attendance of, the giving of testimony by, and the production of any books and records of any person believed to be liable for the payment of tax or to have information pertinent to any matter under investigation by the commissioner or the secretary. The fees of witnesses required to attend any hearing shall be the same as those allowed witnesses appearing in the superior court, but no fees shall be payable to a person charged with a tax liability under this chapter. Any superior ~~or district~~ judge may, upon application of the commissioner or the secretary, compel the attendance of witnesses, the giving of testimony, and the production of books and records before the commissioner or the secretary in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same penalties as if before a superior ~~or district~~ court.

Sec. 221. 33 V.S.A. § 4916a(c)(2) is amended to read:

(2) The administrative review may be stayed upon request of the person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect if there is a related ~~criminal or family court~~ case pending in the criminal or family division of the superior court which arose out of the same incident of abuse or neglect for which the person was substantiated. During the period the review is stayed, the person's name shall be placed on the registry. Upon resolution of the superior court ~~criminal or family court~~ case, the person may exercise his or her right to review under this section.

Sec. 222. 33 V.S.A. § 4916b(c) is amended to read:

(c) A hearing may be stayed upon request of the petitioner if there is a related ~~criminal or family court~~ case pending in the criminal or family division of the superior court which arose out of the same incident of abuse or neglect for which the person was substantiated.

Sec. 223. 33 V.S.A. § 5102 is amended to read:

§ 5102. DEFINITIONS AND PROVISIONS OF GENERAL APPLICATION

As used in the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters, unless the context otherwise requires:

* * *

(8) “Custodian” means a person other than a parent or legal guardian to whom legal custody of the child has been given by order of a Vermont ~~family or probate~~ superior court or a similar court in another jurisdiction.

* * *

(12) “Guardian” means a person who, at the time of the commencement of the juvenile judicial proceeding, has legally established rights to a child pursuant to an order of a Vermont ~~probate~~ court or a ~~similar~~ court in another jurisdiction.

Sec. 224. 33 V.S.A. § 5103(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) The family division of the superior court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over all proceedings concerning a child who is or who is alleged to be a delinquent child or a child in need of care or supervision brought under the authority of the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters, except as otherwise provided in such chapters.

(b) Orders issued under the authority of the juvenile judicial proceedings chapters shall take precedence over orders in other family ~~court~~ division proceedings and any order of another court of this state, to the extent they are inconsistent. This section shall not apply to child support orders in a divorce, parentage, or relief from abuse proceedings until a child support order has been issued in the juvenile proceeding.

Sec. 225. 33 V.S.A. § 5104(a) is amended to read:

(a) The family division of the superior court may retain jurisdiction over a youthful offender up to the age of 22.

Sec. 226. 33 V.S.A. § 5203(e) is amended to read:

(e) Motions to transfer a case to the family division of the superior court for youthful offender treatment shall be made under section 5281 of this title.

Sec. 227. 33 V.S.A. § 5281 is amended to read:

§ 5281. MOTION IN ~~DISTRICT~~ CRIMINAL DIVISION OF SUPERIOR COURT

(a) A motion may be filed in the ~~district~~ criminal division of the superior court requesting that a defendant under 18 years of age in a criminal proceeding who had attained the age of 10 but not the age of 18 at the time the offense is alleged to have been committed be treated as a youthful offender. The motion may be filed by the state's attorney, the defendant, or the court on its own motion.

(b) Upon the filing of a motion under this section and the entering of a conditional plea of guilty by the youth, the ~~district court~~ criminal division shall enter an order deferring the sentence and transferring the case to the family ~~court~~ division for a hearing on the motion. Copies of all records relating to the case shall be forwarded to the family ~~court~~ division. Conditions of release and any department of corrections supervision or custody shall remain in effect until the family ~~court~~ division approves the motion for treatment as a youthful offender and orders conditions of juvenile probation pursuant to section 5284 of this title.

(c) A plea of guilty entered by the youth pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be conditional upon the family ~~court~~ division granting the motion for youthful offender status.

(d)(1) If the family ~~court~~ division denies the motion for youthful offender treatment pursuant to subsection 5284 of this title, the case shall be returned to the ~~district court~~ criminal division, and the youth shall be permitted to withdraw the plea. The conditions of release imposed by the ~~district court~~ criminal division shall remain in effect, and the case shall proceed as though the motion for youthful offender treatment had not been made.

(2) Subject to Rule 11 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal Procedure and Rule 410 of the Vermont Rules of Evidence, the family ~~court's~~ division's denial of the motion for youthful offender treatment and any information related to the youthful offender proceeding shall be inadmissible against the youth for any purpose in the subsequent criminal division proceeding ~~in district court~~.

Sec. 228. 33 V.S.A. § 5282 is amended to read:

§ 5282. REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT

(a) Within 30 days after the case is transferred to the family court division, unless the court extends the period for good cause shown, the department shall file a report with the family division of the superior court.

(b) A report filed pursuant to this section shall include the following elements:

(1) A recommendation as to whether youthful offender status is appropriate for the youth.

(2) A disposition case plan including proposed services and proposed conditions of juvenile probation in the event youthful offender status is approved.

(3) A description of the services that may be available for the youth when he or she reaches 18 years of age.

(c) A report filed pursuant to this section is privileged and shall not be disclosed to any person other than the department, the court, the state's attorney, the youth, the youth's attorney, the youth's guardian ad litem, the department of corrections, or any other person when the court determines that the best interests of the youth would make such a disclosure desirable or helpful.

Sec. 229. 33 V.S.A. § 5283 is amended to read:

§ 5283. HEARING IN FAMILY ~~COURT~~ DIVISION

(a) Timeline. A hearing on the motion for youthful offender status shall be held no later than 35 days after the transfer of the case from ~~district court~~ the criminal division.

(b) Notice. Notice of the hearing shall be provided to the state's attorney; the youth; the youth's parent, guardian, or custodian; the department; and the department of corrections.

(c) Hearing procedure.

(1) If the motion is contested, all parties shall have the right to present evidence and examine witnesses. Hearsay may be admitted and may be relied on to the extent of its probative value. If reports are admitted, the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to examine those persons making the reports, but sources of confidential information need not be disclosed.

(2) Hearings under subsection 5284(a) of this title shall be open to the public. All other youthful offender proceedings shall be confidential.

(d) The burden of proof shall be on the moving party to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that a child should be granted youthful offender status. If the court makes the motion, the burden shall be on the youth.

(e) Further hearing. On its own motion or the motion of a party, the court may schedule a further hearing to obtain reports or other information necessary

for the appropriate disposition of the case.

Sec. 230. 33 V.S.A. § 5285 is amended to read:

§ 5285. MODIFICATION OR REVOCATION OF DISPOSITION

(a) If it appears that the youth has violated the terms of juvenile probation ordered by the court pursuant to subdivision 5284(c)(1) of this title, a motion for modification or revocation of youthful offender status may be filed in the family division of the superior court. The court shall set the motion for hearing as soon as practicable. The hearing may be joined with a hearing on a violation of conditions of probation under section 5265 of this title. A supervising juvenile or adult probation officer may detain in an adult facility a youthful offender who has attained the age of 18 for violating conditions of probation.

(b) A hearing under this section shall be held in accordance with section 5268 of this title.

(c) If the court finds after the hearing that the youth has violated the terms of his or her probation, the court may:

(1) maintain the youth's status as a youthful offender, with modified conditions of juvenile probation if the court deems it appropriate;

(2) revoke the youth's status as a youthful offender status and return the case to the ~~district court~~ criminal division for sentencing; or

(3) transfer supervision of the youth to the department of corrections.

(d) If a youth's status as a youthful offender is revoked and the case is returned to the ~~district court~~ criminal division under subdivision (c)(2) of this section, the ~~district~~ court shall hold a sentencing hearing and impose sentence. When determining an appropriate sentence, the ~~district~~ court may take into consideration the youth's degree of progress toward rehabilitation while on youthful offender status. The ~~district court~~ criminal division shall have access to all family ~~court~~ division records of the proceeding.

Sec. 231. 33 V.S.A. § 5286(a) and (c) are amended to read:

(a) The family ~~court~~ division shall review the youth's case before he or she reaches the age of 18 and set a hearing to determine whether the court's jurisdiction over the youth should be continued past the age of 18. The hearing may be joined with a motion to terminate youthful offender status under section 5285 of this title. The court shall provide notice and an opportunity to be heard at the hearing to the state's attorney, the youth, the department, and the department of corrections.

(c) The following reports shall be filed with the court prior to the hearing:

(1) The department shall report its recommendations, with supporting justifications, as to whether the family ~~court~~ division should continue jurisdiction over the youth past the age of 18 and, if continued jurisdiction is recommended, whether the department or the department of corrections should be responsible for supervision of the youth.

* * *

Sec. 232. 33 V.S.A. § 5287(a) and (c) are amended to read:

(a) A motion may be filed at any time in the family ~~court~~ division requesting that the court terminate the youth's status as a youthful offender and discharge him or her from probation. The motion may be filed by the state's attorney, the youth, the department, or the court on its own motion. The court shall set the motion for hearing and provide notice and an opportunity to be heard at the hearing to the state's attorney, the youth, and the department.

(c) If the court finds that the youth has successfully completed the terms of the probation order, it shall terminate youthful offender status, discharge the youth from probation, and file a written order dismissing the family ~~court~~ division case. The family ~~court~~ division shall provide notice of the dismissal to the ~~district court~~ criminal division, which shall dismiss the ~~district court~~ criminal case.

Sec. 233. 33 V.S.A. § 6932(a) and (b) are amended to read:

(a) The family division of the superior court shall have jurisdiction over proceedings under this subchapter.

(b) Emergency orders under section 6936 of this title may be issued by a judge of the ~~district~~, criminal, civil, or family division of the superior or family court.

Sec. 234. 33 V.S.A. § 6938(a) and (c) are amended to read:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, proceedings commenced under this subchapter shall be in accordance with the Rules for Family Court Rules Proceedings and shall be in addition to any other available civil or criminal remedies.

(c) The court administrator shall establish procedures to insure access to relief after regular court hours, or on weekends and holidays. The court administrator is authorized to contract with public or private agencies to assist persons to seek relief and to gain access to ~~district~~, superior and family court judges. Law enforcement agencies shall assist in carrying out the intent of this section.

Sec. 235. Sec. 121(a) of No. 4 of the Acts of 2009 is amended to read:

(a) The probate courts of the probate districts of Bennington and Manchester are consolidated as of the effective date of this act to form the probate court of the probate district of Bennington, which is deemed to be a continuation of the probate courts of the probate districts of Bennington and Manchester. The current probate judge for the probate court of the probate district of Manchester shall become the probate judge for the probate court of the probate district of Bennington. The current probate registers of the probate districts of Bennington and Manchester shall become the registers for the probate district of Bennington and shall be allowed to maintain their employment status that was in effect on January 31, 2009 until January 31, 2011, ~~at which time the probate judge taking office February 1, 2011 shall appoint a single probate register for the district.~~ The records of the probate courts of the probate districts of Bennington and Manchester shall become the records of the probate court of the probate district of Bennington. The newly consolidated probate court of the probate district of Bennington shall have jurisdiction over all proceedings, records, orders, decrees, judgments and other acts of the probate courts of the probate districts of Bennington and Manchester, including all pending matters and appeals. The probate court of the probate district of Bennington shall have full authority to do all acts concerning all such proceedings and other matters as if they had originated in that court. The assistant judges of Bennington County shall maintain offices for the newly formed district in the former districts which may be used by the probate court full or part time to provide access to probate services. The judge of the newly formed district with the approval of the court administrator shall establish the hours of operation and staffing for each office.

Sec. 235a. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT; COURT FACILITIES; REPORT

The commissioner of the department of buildings and general services and the court administrator shall study the county courthouses to evaluate whether the courthouses comply with ADA accessibility standards and shall report the results of the study to the general assembly, along with any recommendations and estimates of the costs of bringing courthouses into compliance, on or before December 15, 2010. Where it is necessary that expenses be incurred in order to bring a courthouse into compliance with the ADA, the judiciary shall submit a capital budget request to the commissioner of buildings and general services for consideration in the capital budget request process.

Sec. 235b. WEIGHTED CASELOAD STUDY

The court administrator shall conduct a weighted caseload study and analysis or equivalent study within the superior court and judicial bureau every three years. The results of the study shall be reported to the senate and house

committees on judiciary and government operations. The study may be used to review and consider adjustments to the compensation of probate judges.

Sec. 236. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STATUTORY REVISION AUTHORITY

The staff of the legislative council, in its statutory revision capacity, is authorized and directed to make such amendments to the Vermont Statutes Annotated as are necessary to effect the purpose of this act, including, where applicable, substituting the words “superior court,” “civil division,” “criminal division,” “family division,” “environmental division,” or “probate division,” as appropriate, for the words “district court,” “family court,” “probate court,” and “environmental court.” These amendments shall be made when new legislation is proposed or where there is a republication of a volume of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Sec. 237. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

(a) The judicial office of district judge is eliminated. On the effective date of Sec. 9 of this act, each district judge shall become a superior judge and have all of the powers and duties of a superior judge. The term of each superior judge who reached the office by virtue of this subsection shall be the same as if the person had remained a district judge.

(b) On July 1, 2010:

(1) the superior court as it formerly existed shall be redesignated as the civil division of the superior court, and all cases and files of the former superior court shall be transferred to the civil division of the superior court;

(2) the family court as it formerly existed shall be redesignated as the family division of the superior court, and all cases and files of the former family court shall be transferred to the family division of the superior court;

(3) the district court as it formerly existed shall be redesignated as the criminal division of the superior court, and all cases and files of the former district court shall be transferred to the criminal division of the superior court; and

(4) the environmental court as it formerly existed shall be redesignated as the environmental division of the superior court, and all cases and files of the former environmental court shall be transferred to the environmental division of the superior court.

(c) On February 1, 2011, the probate court shall be redesignated as the probate division of the superior court, and all cases and files of the former probate court shall be transferred to the probate division of the superior court.

(d) Until February 1, 2011, each county clerk shall provide each superior clerk with deputies to work in the superior court. The number of deputies provided shall be equal to the number of deputies working in the superior court on July 1, 2009.

(e)(1) The court administrator shall assign, from the positions currently authorized for the judicial branch, the positions that will provide staff support to the divisions of the superior court. The court administrator shall establish the organizational structure of the positions assigned to the units of the court. In the transition from the existing courts to the superior court, hiring preference shall be given to current state and county judiciary employees. Any county employee hired in connection with the transition shall be credited, for purposes of determining eligible judicial branch service, with all continuous past service to a superior court as if that service had been provided while the person was a state judiciary employee, shall accrue future leave based on that seniority, and shall be able to transfer accrued sick leave and annual leave up to the state cap for that seniority, provided that this subsection shall not be construed to create any state liability for any act or omission that occurred while the person was a county employee. Where the position of an incumbent permanent state judiciary employee is reassigned to the superior court, the employee may choose to continue in the position or exercise reduction in force rights.

(2) Upon passage of this act and until February 1, 2011, the salaries of county employees working as chief deputy clerks, deputy clerks, assistant clerks, office clerks, docket clerks, office assistants, assistant deputy clerks, senior deputy clerks, senior accounting clerks, or court recorders for the superior court shall be frozen at the employee's current level, unless a collective bargaining agreement in effect on the date of passage of this act requires otherwise. Also upon passage, no change may be made to leave policies covering the county positions described in this subdivision except if a collective bargaining agreement in effect on that date requires otherwise.

(3) Upon passage of this act and until February 1, 2011, vacancies that occur in positions listed in subdivision (2) of this subsection may not be filled without the authorization of the court administrator.

(4) By December 31, 2010, the county shall report to the court administrator the current employees of the county who serve the superior court, each employee's hire date with the county, hourly rate, and leave balances, and a description of the employee's benefits.

(5) Any county employee who becomes a state employee pursuant to this act shall be immediately eligible to enroll in the state health plan.

(f) Sec. 17 of this act shall establish probate districts for the

November 2, 2010 probate judge election, and for all probate judge elections thereafter. Probate judges in office upon passage of this act shall continue to serve, and probate districts in effect upon passage of this act shall continue to exist, until February 1, 2011.

(g) On the effective date of this subsection, the newly consolidated probate court district within each county is deemed to be a continuation of the prior probate court districts within the county. The newly consolidated court shall have jurisdiction over all proceedings, records, orders, decrees, judgments and other acts of the probate courts of the prior probate districts within the county, including all pending matters and appeals. The records of the prior probate court districts shall become the records of the probate court of the newly consolidated probate district. The newly consolidated probate court district shall have full authority to do all acts concerning all such proceedings and other matters as if they had originated in that court. The current probate registers of the prior probate districts shall be allowed to maintain their employment status that was in effect on January 31, 2011 for six months, at which time the probate judge, in consultation with the court administrator, shall appoint a single probate register for the district. The assistant judges of these counties shall maintain offices for the newly formed district in the former districts which may be used by the probate court full- or part-time to provide access to probate services. The judge of the newly formed district with the approval of the court administrator shall establish the hours of operation and staffing for each office.

(h) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a probate judge who, on January 31, 2011, is in office, has completed 12 years of service as a probate judge, and is a member of group D of the Vermont state employees' retirement system shall receive a group D retirement benefit based upon the judge's salary at retirement or upon the highest salary earned in a fiscal year during the judge's employment as a probate judge, whichever provides the greater benefit.

(i) The establishment of six new exempt positions for the superior court with position titles to be assigned by the court administrator is authorized in FY 2011.

Sec. 238. REPEALS AND REPLACEMENTS

(a) The following sections are hereby repealed:

(1) 4 V.S.A. §§ 24 (designation and special assignment of district or superior judge to hear child support enforcement actions), 111a (designation and jurisdiction of superior court), 113 (jurisdiction of superior court), 114 (criminal jurisdiction of superior court), 116 (special sessions of superior

court), 117 (special hearings of superior court), 119 (completion of cases commenced in superior court), 151 (opening and adjournment of court by judge or sheriff), 152 (adjournment of court to another day), 153 (change in time of holding sessions), 154 (designation of time of commencement of term), 436 (district court created), 437 (civil jurisdiction of district court), 439 (jurisdiction of district court in felony cases), 440 (jurisdiction of district court in misdemeanor cases), 441 (jurisdiction of district court with respect to violations of bylaws or ordinances), 442 (powers of the district court), 443 (appeals from district court), 444 (number, appointment, and assignment of district judges), 446 (court officer in district court), 451 (family court created), 452 (composition of family court), 453 (powers of family court), 454 (jurisdiction of family court), 456 (appeals from family court), 4 V.S.A. § 461b (powers of assistant judges in Essex and Orleans Counties in parentage proceedings), 604 (district judge declaration of intent to continue office), 651a (county clerk to be superior court clerk), 693 (district court docket and records), 694 (filing of process with judge or clerk in district court), and 951 (office of jury commission established).

(2) 12 V.S.A. §§ 1949 (district court jury), 5805 (contents of juror’s oath for civil cases in district court), and 5809 (contents of jury officer’s oath in district court);

(3) 24 V.S.A. §§ 174 (superior court seal may be used as county seal), 182 (county clerk’s return of fees to commissioner of finance and management), 401 (superior court judges to appoint commissioners of jail delivery), 402 (vacancy in office of commissioner of jail delivery), 403 (quorum for transaction of business by commission of jail delivery), and 404 (procedure when commissioners of jail delivery disqualified); and

(4) 32 V.S.A. §§ 526 (fees disallowed when justice has not filed return with county clerk), 527 (bill of costs disallowed when justice has not filed returns with county clerk), 528 (penalty when justice fails to make returns), 1146 (expenses and fees for district judges), 1181 (salaries of county clerks), and 1474 (costs and fees allowed in district courts); and

(5) the following sections of No. 4 of the Acts of 2009: Secs. 122 (single probate districts in each county); 123 (salaries of probate judges); 124 (repeal of multiple probate district counties); 125 (transitional provisions); and 130(c) (February 1, 2011 effective date of Secs. 122–125).

(b) In the following sections, the phrase “district court,” wherever it appears, is replaced with “criminal division of the superior court”:

(1) 3 V.S.A. §§ 965 and 1030;

(2) 4 V.S.A. §§ 23, 1107, 1109, and 1110;

- (3) 7 V.S.A. §§ 563, 572, and 657;
- (4) 9 V.S.A. § 2575;
- (5) 10 V.S.A. §§ 2671, 2674, 4552, and 4555;
- (6) 12 V.S.A. §§ 5717 and 5854;
- (7) 13 V.S.A. §§ 353, 354, 1460, 4822, 4823, 5132, 5411, 5411d, 6504, 6606, 7002, and 7573;
- (8) 17 V.S.A. § 2616;
- (9) 18 V.S.A. §§ 1060, 7312, 7510, 7612, 7615, 7801, 7802, 8403, and 8840;
- (10) 19 V.S.A. §§ 5, 7a, and 726;
- (11) 20 V.S.A. §§ 2056c and 2864;
- (12) 21 V.S.A. §§ 1352, 1622, and 1727;
- (13) 23 V.S.A. §§ 105, 304a, 1209a, 1215, 2202, 2205, and 3318;
- (14) 24 V.S.A. §§ 299, 1311, 1932, 1936a, 1981, 1983, and 3109;
- (15) 28 V.S.A. §§ 373, 374, 504, and 705;
- (16) 32 V.S.A. §§ 542, 543, 544, and 7781; and
- (17) 33 V.S.A. §§ 5203, 5204, and 5293.

(c) In the following sections, the phrase “family court,” wherever it appears, is replaced with “family division of the superior court”:

- (1) 3 V.S.A. § 476a;
- (2) 4 V.S.A. §§ 458, 465, and 466;
- (3) 14 V.S.A. §§ 2663 and 2667;
- (4) 15 V.S.A. §§ 293, 303, 606, 653, 668a, 782, 787, 798, 799, 1108, and 1206;
- (5) 15A V.S.A. §§ 1-112, 2-407, 3-101, and 3-207;
- (6) 15B V.S.A. § 102;
- (7) 16 V.S.A. § 1946b;
- (8) 18 V.S.A. §§ 5004, 7624, 9305, 9306, 9309, 9314, and 9315;
- (9) 24 V.S.A. § 5066a; and
- (10) 33 V.S.A. §§ 3901, 4102, 4103, 4105, 4108, 4916, 5102, 5117, 5118, 5252, 5301, and 6940.

Sec. 238a. REPEALS AND REPLACEMENTS

(a) The following sections are hereby repealed:

(1) 4 V.S.A. §§ 271 (probate districts), 275 (Fair Haven and Rutland probate districts), 276 (Marlboro and Westminster probate districts), 277 (Hartford and Windsor probate districts), § 311 (probate court jurisdiction), 314 (probate court retention of jurisdiction over estate once taken), 315 (contest of probate court jurisdiction), 351 (record and seal of probate court), 352 (impression of probate court seal to be kept by governor), 353 (probate court always open), 358 (duties of probate court register), 359 (judge may perform probate court register's duties), 360 (card index required in probate court), 361 (maintenance of ledger in probate court), 363 (powers of probate court), 366 (costs taxed to witnesses in probate court), and 367 (security for costs taxed to witnesses in probate court);

(2) 12 V.S.A. §§ 2553 (appellate jurisdiction of superior court in probate matters) and 2555 (standing to appeal probate matter to superior court);

(3) 14 V.S.A. § 905 (appeal to superior court of probate court order appointing administrator);

(4) 24 V.S.A. § 71b (assistant judge and sheriff responsible for county courthouse security); and

(5) 32 V.S.A. § 1558 (costs for witnesses in probate court).

(b) In the following sections, the phrase "probate court," wherever it appears, is replaced with "probate division of the superior court":

(1) 3 V.S.A. §§ 465 and 468;

(2) 8 V.S.A. §§ 2201, 2407, 12602, 14205, and 14405;

(3) 9 V.S.A. §§ 2480n and 4359;

(4) 12 V.S.A. §§ 2358, 5136(c), 7154, and 7159;

(5) 14 V.S.A. §§ 2, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 113, 114, 116, 202, 312, 313, 314, 315, 681, 684, 902, 903, 904, 906, 907, 909, 917, 917a, 919, 921, 922, 923, 924, 928, 929, 931, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1059, 1065, 1066, 1068, 1201, 1204, 1206, 1210, 1410, 1416, 1455, 1492, 1551, 1554, 1557, 1558, 1559, 1611, 1612, 1613, 1614, 1615, 1651, 1652, 1653, 1655, 1656, 1657, 1658, 1659, 1660, 1661, 1662, 1665, 1721, 1729, 1730, 1731, 1736, 1737, 1739, 1741, 1742, 1743, 1801, 1804, 1952, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2303, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2318, 2327, 2402, 2403, 2501, 2502, 2602, 2603, 2645, 2650, 2653, 2654, 2656, 2658, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2671, 2684, 2687, 2711, 2712, 2751, 2752, 2753, 2754, 2791, 2792, 2794, 2795, 2800, 2802, 2803, 2804, 2841,

2843, 2846, 2881, 2882, 2886, 2887, 2890, 2921, 2923, 2924, 2925, 2928, 2961, 2963, 2964, 3001, 3004, 3011, 3063, 3064, 3069, 3075, 3076, 3076, 3081, 3091, 3093, 3094, 3095, 3101, 3201, and 3509;

(6) 15 V.S.A. §§ 811, 812, 813, and 816;

(7) 15A V.S.A. §§ 1-101, 1-105, 1-110, 1-113, 2-105, 2-206, 3-101, 3-102, 5-104, 6-102, 6-103, and 6-105;

(8) 16 V.S.A. §§ 1940 and 1941;

(9) 18 V.S.A. §§ 5075, 5076, 5077, 5150, 5151, 5168, 5169, 5202a, 5212, 5212a, 5219, 5227, 5228, 5230, 5232, 5308, 5438, 5534, 5537, 5576, 7401, 9701, 9703, 9707, 9711, 9714, and 9718;

(10) 24 V.S.A. §§ 5059 and 5061;

(11) 27 V.S.A. §§ 105, 106, 143, 145, 184, 185, 465, 466, and 1270;

(12) 28 V.S.A. § 814;

(13) 32 V.S.A. §§ 7109, 7303, 7304, 7450, 7451, and 745; and

(14) 33 V.S.A. §§ 102, 123, 302, and 4921.

Sec. 238b. LEGISLATIVE INTENT; FORENSIC LABORATORY OVERSIGHT

The general assembly finds that at this time, there is not sufficient need for a forensic laboratory oversight commission, provided the Vermont crime laboratory continues to be properly accredited.

Sec. 238c. PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

(a)(1) The general assembly finds that it is in the interest of justice that Vermont establish a system for the preservation of any item of physical evidence containing biological material that is secured in connection with a criminal case or investigation by the government entity having custody of the evidence for the period of time that:

(A) the statute of limitations has not expired for a crime that remains unsolved; and

(B) a person remains incarcerated, on probation or parole, or subject to registration as a sex offender in connection with a criminal case.

(2) For purposes of this section, criminal case or investigation shall include only the following offenses:

(A) arson causing death as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 501;

(B) assault and robbery with a dangerous weapon as defined in

13 V.S.A. § 608(b);

(C) assault and robbery causing bodily injury as defined in 13 V.S.A. 608(c);

(D) aggravated assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1024;

(E) aggravated murder as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2311 and murder as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2301;

(F) manslaughter as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2304;

(G) kidnapping as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2405;

(H) unlawful restraint as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2406 or 2407;

(I) maiming as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2701;

(J) sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3252(a)(1) or (a)(2);

(K) aggravated sexual assault as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 3253.

(L) burglary into an occupied dwelling as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 1201(c); and

(M) lewd and lascivious conduct with a child as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2602.

(3) For purposes of this section, “biological evidence” means:

(A) a sexual assault forensic examination kit; or

(B) semen, blood, saliva, hair, skin tissue, or other identified biological material.

(b) The Vermont law enforcement advisory board shall develop a proposal for implementation of this section and present it to the senate and house committees on judiciary no later than January 15, 2011.

(c) The department of public safety, the department of buildings and general services, the police chiefs’ association, and the sheriffs’ association shall develop a proposal for establishing one or more facilities for retention of items of physical evidence containing biological material that is secured in connection with a criminal case or investigation. Such facilities would be available for use by all Vermont law enforcement agencies. The proposal shall be presented to the senate and house committees on judiciary, the house committee on corrections and institutions, and the senate committee on institutions no later than January 15, 2011.

Sec. 238d. RECORDING CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS;
ADMISSIBILITY OF DEFENDANT’S STATEMENT

(a) It is the intent of the general assembly that on and after July 1, 2012, a law enforcement agency shall make an audio or an audio and visual recording of any custodial interrogation of a person when it is conducted in a place of detention after the person is arrested in relation to the investigation or prosecution of a felony.

(b) The Vermont law enforcement advisory board shall develop a proposal for implementation of this section and present it to the senate and house committees on judiciary, the house committee on corrections and institutions, and the senate committee on institutions no later than January 15, 2011. The proposal shall address the costs associated with purchasing, installing, and maintaining audio and visual recording as required by this section.

(c) In the first year of the 2011–2012 biennium, the senate and house committees on judiciary shall consider the proposal required by subsection (b) of this section for the purpose of enacting statutes by the date of adjournment in 2012 to implement a plan for audio and visual recording of any custodial interrogation of a person when it is conducted in a place of detention after the person is arrested in relation to the investigation or prosecution of a felony.

Sec. 238e. EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION BEST PRACTICES

(a) The general assembly finds that eyewitness misidentification remains the single largest contributing factor to wrongful conviction. According to the Innocence Project, there are currently 249 DNA exonerations across the nation, and in nearly 80 percent of them, there was at least one misidentification.

(b) A statewide study committee created by No. 60 of the Acts of 2007 reported that the Vermont police academy currently teaches best practices regarding eyewitness identification.

(c) To ensure that law enforcement agencies statewide are employing best practices with regard to eyewitness identification, the Vermont law enforcement advisory board shall develop a proposal to establish best practices that are well suited for Vermont and its many small rural law enforcement agencies, including consideration of conditions for the use and administration of show-ups, use of blind administrators for lineups, proper filler selection in live or photo lineups, instructions for eyewitnesses prior to a live or photo lineup, and confidence statements from eyewitnesses. The Vermont law enforcement advisory board shall present its proposal to the senate and house committees on judiciary, the house committee on corrections and institutions, and the senate committee on institutions no later than January 15, 2011. The proposal shall address the costs associated with purchasing, installing, and maintaining audio and visual recording as required by this section.

Sec. 238f. 13 V.S.A. § 4010 is amended to read:

§ 4010. GUN SILENCERS

A person who manufactures, sells ~~or~~ uses, or possesses with intent to sell or use, an appliance known as or used for a gun silencer shall be fined \$25.00 for each offense. The provisions of this section shall not prevent the use or possession of gun silencers ~~for military purposes when so used or possessed under proper military authority and restriction by:~~

(1) a certified, full-time law enforcement officer or department of fish and wildlife employee in connection with his or her duties and responsibilities and in accordance with the policies and procedures of that officer's or employee's agency or department; or

(2) the Vermont National Guard in connection with its duties and responsibilities.

Sec. 239. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, this act shall take effect on July 1, 2010.

(b) Sec. 42 of this act shall take effect on July 1, 2010, except that the power to hire and remove staff, which is currently performed by county employees, as set forth in 4 V.S.A. § 491 as amended by Sec. 42 of this act, shall take effect on February 1, 2011.

(c) The following sections of this act shall take effect on February 1, 2011: Secs. 7a, 7f, 18, 18a, 19, 20, 21, 23, 23a, 24, 25, 28a, 44a, 73, 74a, 75, 76, 81, 91, 92, 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126a, 148, 149, 154a, 155a, 163a, 165, 197, 199, 200, 201, 203b, 204, and 238a.

(d) Secs. 17a, 237(f), 238b, 238c, 238d, 238e, and 238f of this act and this subsection shall take effect on passage.

(For text see House Journal 3/23/ - 3/24/10)

Action Postponed Until May 7, 2010

Third Reading

S. 297

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to education law

Amendment to be offered by Rep. McAllister of Highgate to S. 297

Rep. McAllister of Highgate moves to amend the House proposal of amendment by striking sec. 11 and inserting in lieu thereof:

Sec. 11. DRIVER EDUCATION: CONDITIONAL REPEAL

If the budget bill, H.789, as enacted, does not include appropriations for fiscal year 2011 sufficient to provide 100 percent funding to local school districts for driver education for fiscal year 2011, then 16 V.S.A. §§ 1045, 1046, 1047, 1047a and 1048 shall be repealed as of July 1, 2010.

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Wright of Burlington, Brennan of Colchester, Condon of Colchester and Scheuermann of Stowe to S. 297

Move that the House proposal of amendment be amended by adding an internal caption and three new sections to be Secs. 21a through 21c to read:

* * * Employment History * * *

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 4 is redesignated to read:

Subchapter 4. Access to Criminal Records and to Employment History

* * *

Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 255 is redesignated to read:

§ 255. PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL EMPLOYEES;
CONTRACTORS; CRIMINAL RECORDS

* * *

Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 255a is added to read:

§ 255a. PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL EMPLOYEES;
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

(a) For any person a superintendent or a headmaster of a recognized or approved independent school is prepared to recommend for any full-time, part-time, or temporary employment, the superintendent or headmaster shall:

(1) require the person to:

(A) provide a list of all employers, as defined in this section; and

(B) sign a written statement, to be developed by the commissioner, that acknowledges the immunity from liability conferred in this section; and

(2) request that the three most recent employers provide all written documentation prepared and maintained by the employer concerning the person's job performance and reasons for separation, including:

(A) evaluations conducted during the person's employment;

(B) notes concerning specific events or an aspect of the person's performance; and

(C) separation agreements and other documents concerning the termination of employment.

(b) An employer shall respond to a request made under this section by providing accurate and complete information about a current or former employee's job performance and reasons for separation.

(c) A prospective employer that, when making hiring or retention decisions, reasonably relies on the information provided to it under this section shall be immune from civil liability in connection with that reliance.

(d) An employer shall be immune from civil liability in connection with the disclosure required by this section, unless it has acted in bad faith. The employer shall be considered to have acted in bad faith only if it is shown by a preponderance of the evidence that the employer disclosed information that it knew was false or that was deliberately misleading.

(e) As used in this section:

(1) "Employer" means all Vermont supervisory unions, school districts, and recognized and independent schools by which a person is or has been employed.

(2) "Job performance" includes a current or former employee's attendance, attitude, awards, demotions, duties, effort, evaluations, knowledge, skills, promotions, and disciplinary actions.

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Haas of Rochester and Davis of Washington to S. 297

First: By striking Secs. 3-4 (special education provided at the supervisory union level) in their entirety

Second: By striking Secs. 11-12 (driver education) in their entirety

Third: By striking Secs. 13-16 (food programs administered by supervisory unions) in their entirety

Fourth: By striking Sec. 17 (NEASC approval of technical education programs) in its entirety

Fifth: By striking Sec. 21 (Blue Ribbon Tax Commission) in its entirety

Sixth: In Sec. 22 (effective dates), by striking subsections (a) and (c) in their entirety and by re-designating subsections (b) and (d) to be subsection (a) and (b) respectively

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Scheuermann of Stowe to S. 297

First: By adding three new sections to be Secs. 21a through 21c to read:

Sec. 21a. 16 V.S.A. § 2028 is added to read:

§ 2028. MANDATORY DETERMINATION BY THE VERMONT LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

(a) If the parties' dispute remains unresolved as to any issue on the 15th day after delivery of the fact-finding commission's report under section 2007 of this title or if the parties otherwise agree that they have reached an impasse, each party shall submit to the state labor relations board its last best offer on all undisputed issues which shall be reviewed and decided upon as a single package. The labor relations board may hold hearings and may consider the recommendations of the fact-finding committee, if one has been activated.

(b) In reaching a decision, the labor relations board shall give weight to all relevant evidence presented by the parties, including:

(1) The lawful authority of the school board.

(2) Stipulations of the parties.

(3) The interest and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the school board to pay for increased costs of public services, including the cost of labor.

(4) Comparisons of the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of the employees involved in the dispute with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of other employees performing similar services in public schools in comparable communities or in private employment in comparable communities.

(5) The average consumer prices for goods and services commonly known as the cost of living.

(6) The overall compensation currently received by the employees, including direct wages, fringe benefits, and continuity conditions and stability of employment, and all other benefits received.

(7) Prior negotiations and existing conditions of other school and municipal employees.

(c) Within 30 days of receiving the last best offers of the parties, the labor relations board shall select between these offers, considered in their entirety without amendment, and shall determine its cost. The labor relations board shall not issue an order under this subsection that is in conflict with any law or rule or that relates to an issue that is not negotiable. The labor relations board shall file one copy of the decision with each city or town clerk within the supervisory union or supervisory district. Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the decision of the labor relations board shall be final and binding on the parties.

(d) If the contract selected by the labor relations board in subsection (c) of this section includes a dollar amount, which represents the salary plus individual benefits for any step and column on the pay scale, that exceeds the dollar amount for the salary plus individual benefits for that step and column in the parties' most recently approved contract by more than the state of Vermont's most recent total rate of salary adjustment available to classified employees under the collective bargaining agreement plus two percent, then the selected contract shall be presented to the voters of each district within the supervisory union or supervisory district at a meeting warned and held in the same manner in which each district budget meeting is warned and held, and the selected contract may be rejected by a majority of the combined votes. If rejected by the voters, the other party's last best offer, as submitted to the labor relations board pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, shall be final and binding on the parties.

(e) The parties shall share equally all mutually incurred costs incidental to this section.

(f) Upon application of a party, a superior court shall vacate an award on the same grounds as set forth in 21 V.S.A. § 1733(d) and according to the same procedures as set forth in 21 V.S.A. § 1733(e).

Sec. 21b. 3 V.S.A. § 924(e) is amended to read:

(e) In addition to its responsibilities under this chapter, the board shall carry out the responsibilities given to it under chapter 57 of Title 16, chapters 19 and 22 of Title 21, and chapter 28 of this title and when so doing shall exercise the powers and follow the procedures set out in that chapter.

Sec. 21c. REPEAL

The following sections of Title 16 are repealed:

- (1) § 2008 (finality of school board decisions).
- (2) § 2010 (injunctions granted only if action poses clear and present danger).
- (3) § 2021 (negotiated binding interest arbitration).
- (4) § 2022 (selection and decision of arbitrator).
- (5) § 2023 (jurisdiction of arbitrator).
- (6) § 2024 (judicial appeal).
- (7) § 2025 (factors to be considered by the arbitrator).
- (8) § 2026 (notice of award).

(9) § 2027 (fees and expenses of arbitration).

Second: In Sec. 22, by adding a new subdivision to be subdivision (e) to read:

(e) Secs. 21a through 21c of this act shall take effect on passage and shall apply to negotiations beginning on or after July 1, 2010 for a new collective bargaining agreement.

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Lippert of Hinesburg, Donaghy of Poultney, French of Shrewsbury, Jewett of Ripton, Koch of Barre Town, Marek of Newfane, Martin of Springfield, Pellett of Chester, and Scheuermann of Stowe to S. 297

Move that the House proposal of amendment be amended by adding an internal caption and three new sections to be Secs. 21a through 21c to read:

* * * Employee History; Misconduct * * *

Sec. 21a. 16 V.S.A. § 1699(d) is added to read:

(d) If the commissioner for children and families receives a report of suspected child abuse pursuant to subchapter 2 of chapter 49 of Title 33 concerning an employee of a school district, a supervisory union, or an approved or recognized independent school, then the commissioner for children and families shall forward a copy of the report to the commissioner of education.

Sec. 21b. 21 V.S.A. §§ 306 and 307 are added to read:

§ 306. PUBLIC POLICY OF THE STATE OF VERMONT; EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION AGREEMENTS

In support of the state's fundamental interest in protecting the safety of minors and vulnerable adults, as defined in 33 V.S.A. § 6902, it is the policy of the state of Vermont that no confidential employment separation agreement

shall inhibit the disclosure to prospective employers of factual information about a prospective employee's background that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the prospective employee has engaged in conduct jeopardizing the safety of a minor or vulnerable adult. Any provision in an agreement entered into on or after the effective date of this section that attempts to do so is void and unenforceable.

§ 307. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION; WAIVER

(a) Each prospective employee whose duties may place that person in a position of power, authority, or supervision over or permit unsupervised

contact with a minor or vulnerable adult shall sign a waiver prior to employment authorizing:

(1) the prospective employer to request information about the prospective employee from current employers and former employers who employed the person within the previous ten years regarding conduct jeopardizing the safety of a minor or vulnerable adult; and

(2) the current and former employers to disclose the requested information as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

(b) The prospective employer of a prospective employee described in subsection (a) of this section shall request in writing that the current and former employers disclose all factual information that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the prospective employee engaged in conduct jeopardizing the safety of a minor or vulnerable adult.

(c) Upon receiving an inquiry from a prospective employer pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, a current or former employer promptly shall disclose in writing all factual information in its possession that is responsive to that inquiry; provided that the affected employee shall have had the opportunity to review and respond to the information and the employee's response, if any, shall be included with the disclosure. Current and former employers shall provide a copy of the disclosure, or a statement that there is nothing to disclose, to both the prospective employer and the prospective employee.

Sec. 21c. REPORT

Legislative counsel shall review the potential impacts on hiring practices in Vermont if the state were to grant civil immunity for prospective, current, and former employers in connection with the disclosure of information concerning conduct jeopardizing the safety of a minor or vulnerable adult contained in a prospective employee's personnel file from the previous ten years, including the manner in which these matters are addressed in other jurisdictions. On or before January 15, 2011, the legislative counsel shall submit a report regarding the review to the general assembly.

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Komline of Dorset to S. 297

By striking Sec. 9 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 9 to read:

Sec. 9. 16 V.S.A. § 827 is amended to read:

§ 827. DESIGNATION OF A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL OR AN APPROVED INDEPENDENT HIGH SCHOOL AS THE SOLE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT

* * *

(c) A parent or legal guardian who is dissatisfied with ~~the instruction provided at the designated school or who cannot obtain for his or her child the kind of course or instruction desired there, or whose child can be better accommodated in an approved independent or public high school nearer his or her home during the next academic year,~~ may request on or before April 15 that , on or before April 15 may direct the school board to pay tuition to another approved independent or public high school selected by the parent or guardian.

(d) The school board ~~may pay tuition to another approved high school as requested by the parent or legal guardian if in its judgment that will best serve the interests of the pupil. Its decision shall be final in regard to the institution the pupil may attend. If the board approves the parent's request, the board shall pay tuition for the pupil in an amount not to exceed the least of:~~

(1) The statewide average announced tuition of Vermont union high schools, provided the parent shall pay the balance of the tuition charged by the nondesignated school.

(2) The per-pupil tuition the district pays to the designated school in the year in which the pupil is enrolled in the nondesignated school, provided the parent shall pay the balance of the tuition charged by the nondesignated school.

(3) The tuition charged by the approved nondesignated school in the year in which the pupil is enrolled.

(d) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the school districts of Pawlet, Rupert, and Wells may designate a public high school located in New York as the public high school of the district pursuant to the provisions of this section.

Senate Proposal of Amendment

H. 213

An act to provide fairness to tenants in cases of contested housing security deposit withholding

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by adding a new section to be Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. § 4467 is amended to read:

§ 4467. TERMINATION OF TENANCY; NOTICE

(a) Termination for nonpayment of rent. The landlord may terminate a tenancy for nonpayment of rent by providing actual notice to the tenant of the

date on which the tenancy will terminate which shall be at least 14 days after the date of the actual notice. The rental agreement shall not terminate if the tenant pays or tenders rent due through the end of the rental period in which payment is made or tendered. Acceptance of partial payment of rent shall not constitute a waiver of the landlord's remedies for nonpayment of rent or an accord and satisfaction for nonpayment of rent.

* * *

(For text see House Journal 3/26 - 4/1/10)

H. 485

An act relating to the use value appraisal program

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. USE VALUE APPRAISAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

For property tax bills prepared in 2010 only, there is imposed on each owner of land enrolled in the use value appraisal program pursuant to chapter 124 of Title 32 a one-time assessment of \$128.00. The assessment shall be collected as part of property tax bills prepared for the 2010 tax year, and the assessment shall show as a separate amount on all towns' bills. For the purpose of assessment and collection, the one-time assessment shall be a lien upon the real estate in the same manner and to the same effect as taxes are a lien upon real estate under 32 V.S.A. § 5061, and collection of the assessment shall be subject to all other provisions of chapter 133 of Title 32. The director of property valuation and review shall provide all towns with electronic notice of the parcels within each town that shall be subject to the one-time assessment. Using a form provided by the director, towns shall remit to the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund on May 1, 2011, the full amount collected as of that date. At the time of the May 1 payment, towns also will indicate the full amount that should have been collected and any amount that remains delinquent. Payment of any amount outstanding due to delinquencies shall be payable in full to the state treasurer on December 1, 2011.

* * * Method and Calculation of Land Use Change Tax * * *

Sec. 2. 32 V.S.A. § 3757 is amended to read:

§ 3757. LAND USE CHANGE TAX

(a) Land which has been classified as agricultural land or managed ~~forest~~ land forestland pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to a land use change tax upon the development of that land, as defined in section 3752 of this chapter. ~~Said~~ The tax shall be at the rate of ~~20~~ 10 percent of the full fair

~~market value of the changed land determined without regard to the use value appraisal; or the tax shall be at the rate of 10 percent if the owner demonstrates to the satisfaction of the director that the parcel has been enrolled continuously more than 10 years. If changed land is a portion of a parcel, the fair market value of the changed land shall be the fair market value of the changed land prorated on the basis of acreage, divided by the common level of appraisal. Such~~ For purposes of the land use change tax, fair market value shall be determined as of the date the land is no longer eligible for use value appraisal developed or at an earlier date, if the owner petitions for the determination pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and pays the tax within 30 days of notification from the local assessing officials. This tax shall be in addition to the annual property tax imposed upon such property. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require payment of an additional land use change tax upon the subsequent development of the same land, nor shall it be construed to require payment of a land use change tax merely because previously eligible land becomes ineligible, provided no development of the land has occurred.

(b) Any owner of eligible land who wishes to withdraw land from use value appraisal shall petition ~~the director~~ the director for a determination of the fair market value of the land at the time of the withdrawal. Thereafter land which has been withdrawn shall be appraised and listed at its full fair market value in accordance with the provisions of chapter 121 of this title. Said determination of the fair market value shall be used in calculating the amount of the land use change tax that shall be due when and if the development of the land occurs.

(c) ~~The determination of the fair market value of the land as of the date the land is no longer eligible for a use value appraisal, or as of the time of the withdrawal of the land from use value appraisal, shall be made by the director~~ local assessing officials in accordance with the land schedule and the appraisal model used to list property of similar size to the withdrawn parcel in their municipality divided by the municipality's most recent common level of appraisal as determined by the director; provided, however, that if the land use change tax becomes payable as a result of a transfer of title pursuant to a bona fide arms' length transaction, the purchase price shall be deemed the fair market value of the property for the purpose of calculating the land use change tax. ~~The determination shall be made within 30 days after the date that the owner or assessing officials petition~~ petitions for the determination and shall be effective on the date of dispatch the notice is sent to the owner. The director may initiate a determination on his or her own initiative following written notice to the owner and a period of not less than 30 days for the owner to respond. The director shall also send a copy of the notice to the local assessing officials, the secretary of the agency of agriculture, food and markets if the land is agricultural land, and the commissioner of forests, parks and recreation

if the land is managed forestland.

(d) The land use change tax shall be due and payable by the owner 30 days after the tax notice is mailed to the taxpayer. The tax shall be paid to the ~~commissioner for deposit into the general fund~~ municipality in which the land is located. The ~~commissioner~~ local assessing officials shall issue a form to the ~~assessing officials~~ commissioner which shall provide for a description of the land ~~developed~~ for which the tax is due, the amount of tax payable, and the fair market value ~~of the land at the time of development or withdrawal from use~~ value appraisal used to calculate the tax. The owner shall fill out the form and shall sign it under the penalty of perjury. After receipt of payment, the ~~commissioner~~ local assessing officials shall furnish the owner with one copy, ~~shall retain one copy and shall~~ forward one copy to the ~~local assessing officials and~~ commissioner along with one-half of the tax collected, forward one copy to the register of deeds of the municipality in which the land is located, forward one copy to the secretary of the agency of agriculture, food and markets if the land is agricultural land, and forward one copy to the commissioner of forests, parks and recreation if the land is managed forestland. Thereafter, the land which has been withdrawn or developed shall be appraised and listed at its full fair market value in accordance with the provisions of chapter 121 of this title.

(e) The owner of any classified land receiving use value appraisal under this subchapter shall immediately notify the director, local assessing officials, the secretary of the agency of agriculture, food and markets if the land is agricultural land, and the commissioner of forests, parks and recreation if the land is managed forestland of:

* * *

Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 3758(a) is amended to read:

(a) Whenever the director denies in whole or in part any application for classification as agricultural land or managed ~~forest land~~ 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 director within 30 days of the decision. The aggrieved owner may appeal the director's final decision to the commissioner within 30 days, and from there to the superior court in the same manner and under the same procedures as an appeal from a decision of a board of civil authority, as set forth in subchapter 2 of chapter 131 of this title; ~~and may appeal the decision of the assessing officials in the same manner as an appeal of a grand list valuation.~~

* * * Remove Preferential Property Transfer Tax Rate for Enrolled Land * * *

Sec. 4. REPEAL

32 V.S.A. § 9602(2) (providing preferential property transfer tax for land enrolled in the use value appraisal program) is repealed effective July 1, 2010.

* * * Electronic Administration of Use Value Appraisal Program * * *

Sec. 5. APPROPRIATION

(a) For fiscal year 2011, there is appropriated \$300,000.00 from the general fund to the use value appraisal program special fund created pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3756(e) for the purpose of administering the program electronically.

(b) It is the intent of the general assembly to appropriate \$300,000.00 from the general fund to the use value appraisal program special fund to continue administering the program electronically in each of fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

Sec. 6. NOTICE

(a) The director of property valuation and review shall timely provide written notice to each owner of land enrolled in the use value appraisal program of the changes provided for in this act and the options the owner has with respect to any enrolled land.

(b) The director shall timely provide written notice to all applicants to the use value appraisal program who applied to enroll land for the September 1, 2009, deadline of the changes provided for in this act and the options the applicant has with respect to the enrollment of land. Each applicant shall have the opportunity to do one of the following:

(1) Enroll all of the land as provided for in the original application; or

(2) Withdraw the application in its entirety by filing a notice of withdrawal with the director on or before July 1, 2010.

(c) Any applicant who does not provide notice to the director by July 1, 2010, pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be deemed to have elected to enroll all of the land as provided for in the original application pursuant to subdivision (b)(1) of this section. The director shall refund the application fee of any applicant who elects to withdraw the application in its entirety pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section.

Sec. 7. WAIVER OF ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

For April 1, 2010, grand list only, the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 4261, requiring selectboard approval before listers may correct errors on the grand list, are waived with respect to making changes to the grand list that are the result of withdrawal of applications for enrollment pursuant to Sec. 6(b)(2) of

this act.

Sec. 8. THE FUTURE OF THE USE VALUE APPRAISAL PROGRAM

(a) Given the critical importance of Vermont's use value appraisal program to the state's agricultural and forest industries as well as to the state's rural character and quality of life and in response to continuing fiscal challenges, the general assembly should consider multiple strategies to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the use value appraisal program and seek ways to find additional revenue generation or cost savings consistent with the program's policy objectives.

(b) There is created a current use committee to study issues relating to the use value appraisal program and to report to the house committees on agriculture, on natural resources and energy, on fish, wildlife and water resources, and on ways and means and to the senate committees on agriculture, on natural resources and energy, and on finance. The committee shall provide an interim report no later than January 15, 2011, and a final report no later than January 15, 2012. The members of the study committee shall be:

(1) The director of property valuation and review, who shall serve as the chair of the committee and shall call the first meeting of the committee on or before July 1, 2010;

(2) The secretary of the agency of agriculture, food and markets or designee;

(3) The commissioner of forests, parks and recreation or designee;

(4) A representative of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, appointed by its board of directors;

(5) A representative of the Vermont Assessors and Listers Association, appointed by its board of directors;

(6) A member of the public appointed by the speaker of the house;

(7) A member of the public appointed by the committee on committees;

(8) A member of the public appointed by the governor;

(9) A member of the current use advisory board established pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 3753, appointed by the chair.

(c) The committee report shall address the following issues in detail:

(1) The state's formula for municipal reimbursement payments ("hold harmless payments").

(2) The extent and degree of over-assessment of enrolled land;

(3) Whether there is a need to create incentives for landowners who keep enrolled land open for public recreation, and if so, what incentives.

(4) The feasibility of allowing enrollees to omit on an initial application or withdraw from the program an undesignated two-acre housesite that would be assessed at the highest value.

(5) Deferral of the land use change tax payment for development of on-farm housing.

(6) Eligibility requirements for agricultural parcels smaller than 25 acres.

(d) Members of the committee who are not state employees shall be entitled to compensation as provided under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES AND TRANSITION RULES

(a) Any withdrawal of an application for use value appraisal pursuant to Sec. 6(b)(2) of this act after the date of passage of this act and before July 1, 2010, shall be deemed to affect the enrollment status of the withdrawn property for the grand list of April 1, 2010.

(b) Property withdrawn from the use value appraisal program before the effective date of Secs. 2 and 3 of this act, but not developed before that date, shall be subject to the land use change tax under the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 3757 that were in effect at the time of withdrawal; and revenues from land use change tax paid on any such property shall be paid to the commissioner for deposit into the general fund.

(c) This section and Secs. 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of this act shall take effect upon passage.

(d) Secs. 2 and 3 of this act shall take effect on November 1, 2010.

(e) Sec. 4 of this act shall apply to all property transfers on or after July 1, 2010.

(For text see House Journal 1/26 - 1/27/10)

ACTION CALENDAR

Senate Proposal of Amendment

H. 709

An act relating to creating a prekindergarten–16 council

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. POLICY

It is the policy of the state of Vermont to encourage and enable all Vermonters to acquire the postsecondary education and training necessary for the state to develop and maintain a skilled, highly educated, and engaged citizenry and a competitive workforce.

Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 2905 is added to read:

§ 2905. PREKINDERGARTEN–16 COUNCIL

(a) A prekindergarten–16 council (the “council”) is created to help coordinate and better align the efforts of the prekindergarten–12 educational system with the higher education community in order to increase:

- (1) postsecondary aspirations;
- (2) the enrollment of Vermont high school graduates in higher education programs;
- (3) the postsecondary degree completion rates of Vermonters; and
- (4) public awareness of the economic, intellectual, and societal benefits of higher education.

(b) The council shall be composed of:

- (1) the commissioner of education or designee;
- (2) the commissioner of labor or designee;
- (3) the president of the University of Vermont or designee;
- (4) the chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges or designee;
- (5) the president of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation or designee;
- (6) the president of the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges or designee;
- (7) a principal of a secondary school selected by the Vermont Principals’ Association;
- (8) a superintendent selected by the Vermont Superintendents Association;
- (9) a teacher selected by the Vermont-National Education Association;
- (10) a member of the Building Bright Futures Council or designee;
- (11) a technical education director selected by the Vermont Association of Career and Technical Center Directors;

(12) a representative from the business and industry community selected by the Vermont Business Roundtable;

(13) an advocate for low income children selected by Voices for Vermont's Children;

(14) a member of the house of representatives, who shall be selected by the speaker and shall serve until the beginning of the biennium immediately after the one in which the member is appointed;

(15) a member of the senate, who shall be selected by the committee on committees and shall serve until the beginning of the biennium immediately after the one in which the member is appointed; and

(16) A member of the faculty of the Vermont State Colleges, the University of Vermont, or a Vermont independent college selected by United Professions AFT Vermont, Inc.

(c) The council shall develop and regularly update a statewide plan to increase aspirations for and the successful completion of postsecondary education among students of all ages and otherwise advance the purposes for which the council is created, which shall include strategies to:

(1) ensure that every high school graduate in Vermont is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education without remedial assistance;

(2) increase the percentage of Vermonters who earn an associate's or higher level degree or a postsecondary certification;

(3) identify and address areas of educator preparation that could benefit from improved collaboration between the prekindergarten–12 educational system and the higher education community;

(4) promote early career awareness and nurture postsecondary aspirations;

(5) develop programs that guarantee college admission and financial aid for low income students who successfully complete early commitment requirements;

(6) enhance student engagement in secondary school, ensuring that learning opportunities are relevant, rigorous, and personalized and that all students aspire to and prepare for success in postsecondary learning opportunities;

(7) expand access to dual enrollment programs in order to serve students of varying interests and abilities, including those who are likely to attend college, those who are from groups that attend college at disproportionately

low rates, and those who are prepared for a postsecondary curriculum prior to graduation from secondary school;

(8) develop proposals for statewide college and career readiness standards and assessments;

(9) create incentives for adults to begin or continue their postsecondary education; and

(10) ensure implementation of a prekindergarten–16 longitudinal data system, which it shall use to assess the success of the plan required by this subsection.

(d) Together with the secretary of administration or the secretary’s designee, a higher education subcommittee of the council shall perform any statutory or other duties required of it, including duties in connection with the higher education endowment trust fund. The following members of the council shall be the members of the higher education subcommittee: the president of the University of Vermont, the chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges, the president of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the president of the Association of Vermont Independent Colleges, the representative from the business and industry community, the member of the house of representatives, and the member of the senate.

(e) The legislative and higher education staff shall provide support to the council as appropriate to accomplish its tasks. Primary administrative support shall be provided by the legislative council.

(f) The council shall annually elect one of its members to be chair.

(g) The council shall meet at least quarterly.

(h) The council shall report on its activities to the house and senate committees on education and to the state board of education each year in January.

Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 2885 is amended to read:

§ 2885. VERMONT HIGHER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT TRUST FUND

* * *

(d) During the first quarter of each fiscal year, ~~beginning in the year 2000,~~ the ~~commission on higher education funding~~ secretary of administration or the secretary’s designee and the higher education subcommittee of the prekindergarten–16 council created in section 2905 of this title may authorize the state treasurer to make an amount equal to up to two percent of the assets available to Vermont public institutions for the purpose of creating or increasing a permanent endowment. In this subsection, “assets” means the average of the fund’s market values at the end of each quarter for the most

recent 12 quarters, or all quarters of operation, whichever is less. Therefore, up to two percent of the fund assets are hereby annually allocated pursuant to this section, provided that the amount allocated shall not exceed an amount which would bring the fund balance below the initial funding made in fiscal year 2000 plus any additional contributions to the principal. One-half of the amount allocated shall be available to the University of Vermont and one-half shall be available to the Vermont ~~state colleges~~ State Colleges. The University of Vermont or Vermont ~~state colleges~~ State Colleges may withdraw funds upon certification by the withdrawing institution to the commissioner of finance and management that it has received private donations which are double the amount it plans to withdraw.

(e) Annually, by September 30, the state treasurer shall render a financial report on the receipts, disbursements and earnings of the fund for the preceding fiscal year to the ~~commission on higher education funding~~ secretary of administration or the secretary's designee and the higher education subcommittee.

(f) All balances in the fund at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried forward and used only for the purposes set forth in this section. Earnings of the fund which are not withdrawn pursuant to this section shall remain in the fund.

(g) The University of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall review expenditures made from the fund, evaluate the impact of the expenditures on higher education in Vermont, and report this information to the state treasurer each year in January.

Sec. 4. REPEAL

16 V.S.A. § 2886 (commission on higher education funding) is repealed, and the commission shall cease to exist on the effective date of this act.

Sec. 5. IMPLEMENTATION

(a) All members of the prekindergarten–16 council created in Sec. 2 of this act shall be selected before August 1, 2010.

(b) The commissioner of education shall convene the first meeting of the prekindergarten–16 council before September 1, 2010.

(c) The strategies developed by the prekindergarten–16 council pursuant to subdivision 2(c)(1) of this act shall include the goal of ensuring that at least 60 percent of the adult population will have earned an associate's or higher-level degree by 2020.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2010.

(For text see House Journal 3/19 - 3/23/10)

Action Under Rule 52

H.R. 33

House resolution supporting the importance of general aviation

(For text see House Journal 5/6/10)

Action Postponed Until May 28, 2010

Governors Veto

H. 436

An act relating to decommissioning funds of nuclear energy generation plants.

Pending Question: Shall the House sustain the Governor's veto?

NOTICE CALENDAR

Favorable

S. 182

An act relating to determining unemployment compensation experience rating for successor businesses

Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans Town, for the Committee on **Commerce and Economic Development**, recommends that the bill ought to pass in concurrence.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

(For text see Senate Journal 3/18 - 3/19/10)

J.R.S. 47

Joint resolution strongly urging the Republic of Turkey to recognize the right to religious freedom for all its residents and to end all discriminatory policies directed against the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church

Rep. Kitzmiller of Montpelier, for the Committee on **General, Housing and Military Affairs**, recommends that the bill ought to pass in concurrence.

(Committee Vote: 9-1-1)

(For text see Senate Journal 4/14/10)

Committee of Conference Report

S. 103

An act relating to the study and recommendation of ignition interlock device legislation

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Committee of Conference to which were referred the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon Senate Bill entitled:

S. 103 An act relating to the study and recommendation of ignition interlock device legislation

Respectfully report that they have met and considered the same and recommend that the bill be amended by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following::

Sec. 1. 23 V.S.A. § 674 is amended to read:

§ 674. OPERATING AFTER SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE;

PENALTY; REMOVAL OF REGISTRATION PLATES; TOWING

* * *

(b) ~~Except as authorized in section 1213 of this title, a person whose license or privilege to operate a motor vehicle has been suspended or revoked for a violation of section 1201 of this title or has been suspended under section 1205 of this title and who operates or attempts to operate a motor vehicle upon a public highway before reinstatement of the license shall be imprisoned not more than two years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both. The sentence shall be subject to the following mandatory minimum terms:~~

* * *

Sec. 2. 23 V.S.A. § 1130 is amended to read:

§ 1130. ~~PERMITTING EMPLOYING AN UNLICENSED PERSON TO OPERATE;~~

PERMITTING UNAUTHORIZED OPERATION

No person shall knowingly employ, as operator of a motor vehicle, a person not licensed as provided in this title. No person shall knowingly permit a motor vehicle owned by him or her or under his or her control to be operated by a person who has no legal right to do so, or in violation of a provision of this title.

Sec. 3. 23 V.S.A. § 1200 is amended to read:

§ 1200. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

* * *

(8) “Ignition interlock device” means a device that is capable of measuring a person’s alcohol concentration and that prevents a motor vehicle from being started by a person whose alcohol concentration is 0.02 or greater.

(9) “Ignition interlock restricted driver’s license” or “ignition interlock RDL” or “RDL” means a restricted license or privilege to operate a motor vehicle issued by the commissioner allowing a person whose license or privilege to operate has been suspended or revoked for operating under the influence of intoxicating liquor or in excess of legal limits of alcohol concentration to operate a motor vehicle, other than a commercial motor vehicle as defined in section 4103 of this title, installed with an approved ignition interlock device.

Sec. 4. 23 V.S.A. § 1205 is amended to read:

§ 1205. CIVIL SUSPENSION; SUMMARY PROCEDURE

(a) Refusal; alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more; suspension periods.

For a first suspension under this subchapter:

(1) 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 refused to submit to a test, 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 six months and until the person complies with section 1209a of this title.

(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 0.08 or more 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, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title, notwithstanding the 90-day suspension unless the alleged offense involved a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

* * *

(d) Form of notice. The notice of intention to suspend and of suspension shall be in a form prescribed by the supreme court. The notice shall include an explanation of rights, a form to be used to request a hearing, and, if a hearing is requested, the date, time and location of the district court where the person must appear for a preliminary hearing. The notice shall also contain, in boldface print, the following:

(1) You have the right to ask for a hearing to contest the suspension of your operator's license.

(2) This notice shall serve as a temporary operator's license and is valid until 12:01 a.m. of the date of suspension. If this is your first violation of section 1201 of this title and if you do not request a hearing, your license will be suspended as provided in this notice. If this is your second or subsequent violation of section 1201 of this title, your license will be suspended on the 11th day after you receive this notice. It is a crime to drive while your license is suspended unless you have been issued an ignition interlock restricted driver's license.

* * *

(m) Second and subsequent suspensions. For a second suspension under this ~~section~~ subchapter, the period of suspension shall be 18 months and until the person complies with section 1209a of this title. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title after 90 days of this 18-month period unless the alleged offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another. For a third or subsequent suspension under this ~~section~~ subchapter, the period of suspension shall be life. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title after one year of this lifetime suspension unless the alleged offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

* * *

Sec. 5. 23 V.S.A. § 1206 is amended to read:

§ 1206. SUSPENSION OF LICENSE FOR DRIVING WHILE UNDER INFLUENCE, ~~REINSTATEMENT~~, FIRST CONVICTIONS

(a) ~~First conviction~~ First conviction—generally. Except as otherwise provided, upon conviction of a person for violating a provision of section 1201 of this title, or upon final determination of an appeal, the court shall forward

the conviction report forthwith to the commissioner of motor vehicles. The commissioner shall immediately 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 defendant complies with section 1209a of this title. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title, notwithstanding the 90-day suspension unless the offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

(b) ~~Extended suspension~~ Extended suspension—fatality. In cases resulting in a fatality, the period of suspension shall be one year and until the defendant complies with section 1209a of this title.

(c) ~~Extended suspension—refusal; serious bodily injury.~~ Upon conviction of a person for violating a provision of subsection 1201~~(b)~~ ~~or~~ (c) of this title involving a collision in which serious bodily injury resulted, or upon final determination of an appeal, the court shall forward the conviction report forthwith to the commissioner of motor vehicles. The commissioner shall immediately 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 six months, and until the defendant complies with section 1209a of this title.

Sec. 6. 23 V.S.A. § 1208 is amended to read:

§ 1208. SUSPENSIONS FOR SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS

(a) Second conviction. Upon a second conviction of a person violating a provision of section 1201 of this title and upon final determination of an appeal, the court shall forward the conviction report forthwith to the commissioner of motor vehicles. The commissioner shall immediately suspend the person's operating license, or nonresident operating privilege or the privilege of an unlicensed operator to operate a vehicle for 18 months and until the defendant complies with section 1209a of this title. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title after 90 days of this 18-month period unless the offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

(b) Third conviction. Upon a third or subsequent conviction of a person violating a provision of section 1201 of this title and upon final determination of any appeal, the court shall forward the conviction report forthwith to the commissioner of motor vehicles. The commissioner shall immediately revoke

the person's operating license, or nonresident operating privilege or the privilege of an unlicensed operator to operate a motor vehicle for life. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title after one year of this lifetime suspension unless the offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

Sec. 7. 23 V.S.A. § 1209a is amended to read:

§ 1209a. CONDITIONS OF REINSTATEMENT; ALCOHOL AND DRIVING EDUCATION; SCREENING; THERAPY PROGRAMS

(a) Conditions of reinstatement. No license suspended or revoked under this subchapter, except a license suspended under section 1216 of this title, shall be reinstated except as follows:

(1) In the case of a first suspension, a license shall ~~not~~ be reinstated ~~until~~ the person has only:

(A) after the person has successfully completed an alcohol and driving education program, at the person's own expense, followed by an assessment of the need for further treatment by a state designated counselor, at the person's own expense, to determine whether reinstatement should be further conditioned on satisfactory completion of a therapy program agreed to by the person and the drinking driver rehabilitation program director; ~~and~~

(B) if the screening indicates that therapy is needed, after the person has satisfactorily completed or shown substantial progress in completing a therapy program at the person's own expense agreed to by the person and the driver rehabilitation program director;

(C) if electing to operate under an ignition interlock RDL, after the person has operated under a valid RDL for a period of six months, or if the RDL is permanently revoked, after one year from the date of suspension; and

(D) if the person has no pending criminal charges, civil citations, or unpaid civil penalties for a violation under this chapter.

(2) In the case of a second suspension, a license shall not be reinstated until the person has successfully completed an alcohol and driving rehabilitation program ~~and~~; has completed or shown substantial progress in completing a therapy program at the person's own expense agreed to by the person and the driver rehabilitation program director; if electing to operate under an ignition interlock RDL, has operated under the terms of a valid ignition interlock RDL for 18 months; and has no pending criminal charges,

civil citations, or unpaid civil penalties for a violation under this chapter. However, if the RDL is permanently revoked, the person shall not be eligible for license reinstatement until two years from the date of suspension.

(3) In the case of a third or subsequent suspension or a revocation, a license shall not be reinstated until the person has successfully completed an alcohol and driving rehabilitation program; has completed or shown substantial progress in completing a therapy program at the person's own expense agreed to by the person and the driver rehabilitation program director; has satisfied the requirements of subsection (b) of this section; if electing to operate under an ignition interlock RDL, has operated under the terms of a valid ignition interlock RDL for a period of three years; and has no pending criminal charges, civil citations, or unpaid civil penalties for a violation under this chapter. However, if the RDL is permanently revoked, the person shall not be eligible for license reinstatement until four years from the date of suspension.

* * *

Sec. 8. 23 V.S.A. § 1212 is amended to read:

§ 1212. CONDITIONS OF RELEASE; ARREST UPON VIOLATION

(a) At the first appearance before a judicial officer of a person charged with violation of section 1201 of this title, the court, upon a plea of not guilty, shall consider whether to establish conditions of release. Those conditions may include a requirement that the defendant not operate a motor vehicle if there is a likelihood that the defendant will operate a motor vehicle in violation of section 1201 or section 1213 of this title. The court may consider all relevant evidence, including whether the defendant has a motor vehicle or criminal record indicating prior convictions for one or more alcohol-related offenses. Prior convictions may be established for this purpose by a noncertified photocopy of a motor vehicle record, a computer printout or an affidavit. Nothing in this section limits the authority of a judicial officer to impose other conditions of release, nor does it limit or modify other statutory provisions concerning license suspension or revocation or the right of a person to operate a motor vehicle.

* * *

Sec. 9. 23 V.S.A. § 1213 is amended to read:

§ 1213. ~~[RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE.]~~ IGNITION INTERLOCK RESTRICTED

DRIVER'S LICENSE; PENALTIES

(a) First offense. A person whose license or privilege to operate is suspended for a first offense under this subchapter shall be permitted to operate

a motor vehicle, other than a commercial motor vehicle as defined in section 4103 of this title, if issued a valid ignition interlock RDL. The commissioner shall issue an ignition interlock RDL to a person eligible under sections 1205(a)(2), 1206(a), or 1216(a)(1) of this title and upon receipt of satisfactory proof of installation of an approved ignition interlock device in any motor vehicle to be operated, financial responsibility as provided in section 801 of this title, and enrollment in an alcohol and driving education program. An ignition interlock RDL shall expire upon reinstatement of a person's regular license or privilege to operate or shall expire unless renewed yearly. The commissioner shall send by first class mail an application for renewal of the RDL at least 30 days prior to the day renewal is required and shall impose the same conditions for renewal as are required for initial issuance of an ignition interlock RDL.

(b) Second offense. A person whose license or privilege to operate is suspended for a second offense under this subchapter shall be permitted to operate a motor vehicle, other than a commercial motor vehicle as defined in section 4103 of this title, if issued a valid ignition interlock RDL. The commissioner shall issue an ignition interlock RDL to a person eligible under subsections 1205(m), 1208(a), or 1216(a)(2) of this title and upon receipt of satisfactory proof of installation of an approved ignition interlock device in any motor vehicle to be operated, financial responsibility as provided in section 801 of this title, and enrollment in an alcohol and driving rehabilitation program. The RDL shall be valid after expiration of the applicable shortened period specified in subsections 1205(m), 1208(a), or 1216(a)(2) of this title. An ignition interlock RDL shall expire upon reinstatement of a person's regular license or privilege to operate or shall expire unless renewed yearly. The commissioner shall send by first class mail an application for renewal of the RDL at least 30 days prior to the day renewal is required and shall impose the same conditions for renewal as are required for initial issuance of an ignition interlock RDL.

(c) Third or subsequent offense. A person whose license or privilege to operate is suspended or revoked for a third or subsequent offense under this subchapter shall be permitted to operate a motor vehicle, other than a commercial motor vehicle as defined in section 4103 of this title, if issued a valid ignition interlock RDL. The commissioner shall issue an ignition interlock RDL to a person eligible under subsections 1205(m), 1208(b), or 1216(a)(2) of this title and upon receipt of satisfactory proof of installation of an approved ignition interlock device in any motor vehicle to be operated, financial responsibility as provided in section 801 of this title, and enrollment in an alcohol and driving rehabilitation program. The RDL shall be valid after expiration of the applicable shortened period specified in subsections 1205(m),

1208(b), or 1216(a)(2) of this title. An ignition interlock RDL shall expire upon reinstatement of a person's regular license or privilege to operate or shall expire unless renewed yearly. The commissioner shall send by first class mail an application for renewal of the RDL at least 30 days prior to the day renewal is required and shall impose the same conditions for renewal as are required for initial issuance of an ignition interlock RDL.

(d) If a fine is to be imposed for a conviction of a violation of section 1201 of this title, upon receipt of proof of installation of an approved ignition interlock device the court shall order that the fine conditionally be reduced by one-half to defray the costs of the ignition interlock device, subject to the person's ongoing operation under, and compliance with the terms of, a valid ignition interlock RDL as set forth in this section.

(e) The holder of an ignition interlock RDL shall pay the costs of installing, purchasing or leasing, and removing the ignition interlock device as well as calibrating the device and retrieving data from it periodically as may be specified by the commissioner. The holder of an ignition interlock RDL shall notify the commissioner and the department of corrections in writing if the device is removed or if the vehicle in which the device is installed is sold, repossessed, or otherwise conveyed. Notice shall be provided within 10 days of such removal or conveyance, and the commissioner shall cancel the person's ignition interlock RDL upon receipt of notice under this subsection.

(f) The holder of an ignition interlock RDL shall operate only motor vehicles equipped with an ignition interlock device until his or her license or privilege to operate is reinstated, shall not attempt or take any action to tamper with or otherwise circumvent the holder's ignition interlock device, and shall not continue to drive after failing a retest.

(g) A person who violates any provision of subsection (f) of this section before reinstatement of a license or privilege to operate suspended under this subchapter commits a criminal offense, shall be subject to the sanctions and procedures provided for in subsections 674(b)-(i) of this title, and upon conviction shall have his or her ignition interlock RDL permanently revoked. A person convicted of a separate criminal offense under this title also shall have his or her ignition interlock RDL permanently revoked.

(h) A person who violates a rule adopted by the commissioner pursuant to subsection (l) of this section commits a civil traffic violation subject to the jurisdiction of the judicial bureau and shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$500.00 and up to a one-year recall of the person's ignition interlock RDL.

(i) Upon receipt of notice that the holder of an ignition interlock RDL has been adjudicated of a separate civil offense under this title that would result in

suspension, revocation, or recall of a license or privilege to operate, the commissioner shall recall the person's ignition interlock RDL for the same period that the license or privilege to operate would have been suspended, revoked, or recalled.

(j) Upon expiration of a recall imposed under subsection (h) or (i) of this section and receipt of satisfactory proof of installation of an approved ignition interlock device, financial responsibility as provided in section 801 of this title, and enrollment in or completion of an alcohol and driving education or rehabilitation program, the commissioner shall reinstate the ignition interlock RDL. The commissioner may charge a fee for reinstatement in the amount specified in section 675 of this title.

(k) A person shall not knowingly and voluntarily tamper with an ignition interlock device on behalf of another person or otherwise assist another person to circumvent an ignition interlock device. A person adjudicated of a violation of this subsection shall be subject to a civil penalty of \$500.00.

(l)(1) The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of corrections and any individuals or entities the commissioner deems appropriate, shall adopt rules and may enter into agreements to implement the provisions of this section.

(2) The commissioner shall establish uniform performance standards for ignition interlock devices including required levels of accuracy in measuring blood alcohol concentration, efficacy in distinguishing valid breath samples, the occurrence of random retests while the vehicle is running, and automatic signaling by the vehicle if the operator fails such a retest. The commissioner shall certify devices that meet these standards, specify any periodic calibration that may be required to ensure accuracy of the devices, and specify the means and frequency of the retrieval and sharing of data collected by ignition interlock devices.

Sec. 10. 23 V.S.A. § 1216 is amended to read:

§ 1216. PERSONS UNDER 21; ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION OF 0.02 OR MORE

(a) A person under the age of 21 who operates, attempts to operate or is in actual physical control of a vehicle on a highway when the person's alcohol concentration is 0.02 or more, commits a civil traffic violation subject to the jurisdiction of the judicial bureau and subject to the following sanctions:

(1) For a first violation, the person's license or privilege to operate shall be suspended for six months and until the person complies with subdivision 1209a(a)(1) of this title. However, a person may operate under the terms of an

ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title, notwithstanding the six-month suspension unless the offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

(2) For a second or subsequent violation, the person's license or privilege to operate shall be suspended until the person reaches the age of 21 or for one year, whichever is longer, and complies with ~~section~~ subdivision 1209a(a)(2) of this title. However, a person may operate under the terms of an ignition interlock RDL issued pursuant to section 1213 of this title after 90 days of the applicable suspension period unless the offense involved a refusal to consent to a law enforcement officer's reasonable request for an evidentiary test or a collision resulting in serious bodily injury or death to another.

~~(b) Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (a) of this section to the contrary,~~ A person's license or privilege to operate that has been suspended under this section shall not be reinstated until:

(1) the commissioner has received satisfactory evidence that the person has complied with section 1209a of this title and the provider of the therapy program has been paid in full;

(2) the person has no pending criminal charges, civil citations, or unpaid civil penalties for a violation under this chapter; and

(3)(A) a person operating under an ignition interlock RDL for a first offense has operated under a valid RDL for a period of nine months or, if the RDL is permanently revoked, after one year from the date of suspension; or

(B) a person operating under an ignition interlock RDL for a second or subsequent offense has operated under a valid RDL for a period of 18 months or until the person is 21, whichever is longer, or if the RDL is permanently revoked, after two years from the date of suspension or until the person is 21, whichever is longer.

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Sec. 11. TRANSITION RULE

On July 1, 2011, ignition interlock restricted driver's licenses shall be available to persons suspended for a violation of 23 V.S.A. §§ 1201 or 1216 or pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 1205 prior to July 1, 2011, if such persons otherwise would be eligible for an ignition interlock RDL under this act. Persons who elect to obtain an ignition interlock RDL pursuant to this section shall be subject to all of the provisions of this act but shall not be eligible for the reduced fine specified in subsection (d) of Sec. 9, and shall be so notified by the commissioner in advance of obtaining an ignition interlock RDL.

Sec. 12. INDIGENT FUND AND DMV FEE STUDY

(a) The commissioner of motor vehicles, in consultation with any individuals or entities the commissioner deems appropriate, shall study whether creation of a fund to assist indigent persons in defraying the costs associated with ignition interlock devices is likely to promote the use of ignition interlock devices, as well as potential funding sources and mechanisms. In conducting this study, the commissioner shall review ignition interlock laws and practices and usage of ignition interlock devices in other states.

(b) The commissioner also shall study the costs associated with issuing and renewing ignition interlock RDLs and the minimum fees that will be required to defray the costs of issuing and renewing ignition interlock RDLs.

(c) The commissioner shall report the findings of these studies and any recommendations concerning creation of an ignition interlock indigent fund or minimum fees to the senate and house committees on judiciary and transportation by January 15, 2011.

Sec. 13. EFFECTIVENESS STUDY

The commissioner of motor vehicles shall monitor and calculate the rate of use of ignition interlock devices in Vermont by those suspended for a violation of 23 V.S.A. §§ 1201 or 1216 or pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 1205 on or after July 1, 2011. The commissioner, in consultation with any individuals or entities the commissioner deems appropriate, shall study whether changes to this act, including mandating installation of ignition interlock devices, are likely to promote usage. The commissioner shall report the findings of this study and any recommendations to the senate and house committees on judiciary and transportation by January 15, 2013.

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section, Sec. 12, and subsection 1213(l) of Sec. 9 (ignition interlock rulemaking) shall take effect on passage.

(b) All other sections of this act shall take effect on July 1, 2011.

and that after passage, the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to ignition interlock restricted drivers’ licenses”

Rep. Maxine Grad

Rep. Eldred French

Rep. Richard Marek

Committee on the part of the House

Sen. M. Jane Kitchel

Sen. Philip B. Scott

Sen. Richard Sears

Committee on the part of the Senate

Ordered to Lie

H.R. 19

House resolution urging the agency of natural resources to retain delegated authority to administer the federal Clean Water Act in Vermont.

Pending Question: Shall the House adopt the resolution?

Consent Calendar

Concurrent Resolutions

The following concurrent resolutions have been introduced for approval by the Senate and House and will be adopted automatically unless a Senator or Representative requests floor consideration before the end of the session of the next legislative day. Requests for floor consideration in either chamber should be communicated to the Secretary’s office and/or the House Clerk’s office, respectively. For text of resolutions, see Addendum to House Calendar and Senate Calendar.

H.C.R. 356

House concurrent resolution congratulating Alice Jersey on her 101st birthday

H.C.R. 357

House concurrent resolution congratulating Donna Smith on her receipt of the 2010 Patricia Cummings Pierce Excellence in Teaching Award

H.C.R. 358

House concurrent resolution in memory of Stratton Mountain Ski Resort skiing legend Emo Henrich

H.C.R. 359

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Milton High School and Thetford Academy 2010 Vermont Drama Festival cochampions

H.C.R. 360

House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont Association for Mental Health Executive Director Ken Libertoff for his exemplary work as a mental health care advocate

H.C.R. 361

House concurrent resolution honoring the Reverend Kathryn Hult of Bellows Falls for her compassionate community leadership

H.C.R. 362

House concurrent resolution honoring Richard Slusky's career and civic service in Windsor County

H.C.R. 363

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Peacham Library on its bicentennial anniversary

H.C.R. 364

House concurrent resolution honoring Dr. Peter M. Wright for his leadership in public education

S.C.R. 52

Senate concurrent resolution honoring Green Up Day on its 40th anniversary