

# Journal of the House

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Wednesday, April 8, 2009

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

## Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Scott Wheeler of Derby, VT.

### H. 443

By Reps. Pugh of South Burlington, Audette of South Burlington, Geier of South Burlington and Head of South Burlington,

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

To the committee on Government Operations.

### H. 444

By the committee on Health Care,

An act relating to health care reform;

Under the rule, placed on the Calendar for notice.

### H. 445

By the committee on Corrections and Institutions,

An act relating to capital construction and state bonding;

Under the rule, placed on the Calendar for notice.

### S. 51

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to Vermont's motor vehicle franchise laws

Was taken up, read the first time and referred to the committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

### S. 77

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the disposal of electronic waste;

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Was taken up, read the first time and referred to the committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

**S. 129**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to containing health care costs by decreasing variability in health care spending and utilization;

Was taken up, read the first time and referred to the committee on Health Care.

**Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations**

**H. 442**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous tax provisions

Appearing on the Calendar, carrying an appropriation, under rule 35a, was referred to the committee on Appropriations.

**Joint Resolution Placed on Calendar**

**J.R.H. 19**

Joint resolution authorizing the 2009 Boys' State program to use the state house

Offered by: Representatives Koch of Barre Town and Lawrence of Lyndon

Whereas, the American Legion in Vermont sponsors the Green Mountain Boys' State program which provides an opportunity for boys in high school to study the workings of state government in Montpelier, and

Whereas, as part of their visit to the state's capital city, the boys conduct a mock legislative session in the state house, and

Whereas, this is an invaluable educational experience that provides firsthand knowledge about the legislative process, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the Sergeant at Arms shall make available the chambers and committee rooms of the state house for the Green Mountain Boys' State program on Thursday, June 25, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Which was read and, in the Speaker's discretion, placed on the Calendar for action tomorrow under Rule 52.

**Joint Resolution Placed on Calendar****J.R.S. 28**

*Whereas*, the Senate Committee on Judiciary in 2009 focused extensively on the extent and nature of the problem of sexual violence in Vermont communities, and found that this crime is pervasive and deserving of an immediate and intensive legislative response, and

*Whereas*, as a result of its work, the committee introduced S.13, “An Act Relating to Vermont’s Sexual Abuse Response System,” which Governor Douglas signed into law on March 4, 2009, and

*Whereas*, S.13 recognizes that the only way to end the public health epidemic of sexual violence in Vermont communities is through extensive and comprehensive statewide prevention efforts, and

*Whereas*, there are many dedicated organizations, educators and community organizers around the state undertaking excellent work to end sexual violence in different ways, and

*Whereas*, the *Vermont Approach, A Strategic Plan for Comprehensive, Collaborative Sexual Violence Prevention in Vermont* was unveiled in 2006, and the General Assembly has endorsed and funded this proposal, and

*Whereas*, *The Vermont Approach* contains seven strategies for ending sexual violence in Vermont, which include: providing statewide leadership developing community sexual violence prevention efforts and new community allies; changing media representations; contributing to the sexual violence prevention capacity of state and local institutions; educating professionals, families and individuals; learning from and developing *The Vermont Approach*; and generating income and budgeting resources, and

*Whereas*, *The Vermont Approach 2009* report to the General Assembly highlights progress made on each of the seven prevention strategies in the past three years, and

*Whereas*, in 2006, the General Assembly also established the sexual violence prevention task force, a project of *The Vermont Approach*, to examine and enhance statewide sexual violence prevention opportunities in schools, and

*Whereas*, S.13 reinforced the General Assembly’s and the state of Vermont’s commitment to eradicating sexual violence by supporting and furthering the work of *The Vermont Approach* and the sexual violence prevention task force, *now therefore be it*

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***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly designates April as Sexual Violence Awareness Month and encourages all Vermonters of every age to participate in preventing sexual violence by promoting the inclusion of prevention education in school communities, speaking up against sexual violence in media and other arenas, supporting local sexual violence service providers, engaging in healthy choices and behaviors, and encouraging opportunities for dialogue, *and be it further*

**Resolved:** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Network Against D

Which was read and, in the Speaker's discretion, placed on the Calendar for action tomorrow under Rule 52.

**Rules Suspended; Bill Committed****H. 445**

Pending entrance of the bill on the Calendar for notice, on motion of **Rep. Leriche of Hardwick**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to capital construction and state bonding

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

Pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. Leriche of Hardwick**, the bill was committed to the committee on Appropriations.

**Remarks Journalized**

On motion of **Rep. Clark of Vergennes**, the following remarks by **Rep. Wheeler of Derby** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Mister Speaker:

Earlier this year I asked that sometime during the session I be scheduled to provide the morning devotional. Little did I know how timely my words would become.

The discussions and debates of recent weeks, which peaked yesterday, have left some of us with frazzled nerves. This stress has begun to divide some of us – divisions between parties, and divisions within parties. Some of us have forgotten the importance of forgiving and moving on to a new day, that friendships trump the difficulties and soul searching we must make in casting our votes. I worry there are some of us who have begun to fall into the world of dislike, tittering on the world of hate – a world that will not only eat us up from the inside out, it will destroy our relationships. And as legislators, hate

and failure to forgive will prevent us from representing the people of Vermont the way Vermonters expect us too.

As most of you know I record the history of Vermonters, Vermonters who come from every walk of life. Each of the hundreds of people I have interviewed have touched me in different ways, and some have even shaped my way of thinking. A Northeast Kingdom man named George is one of those people. Let me now tell you a little about George and why he left such a profound mark on my life.

“Scott, if I hate, they will have won.”

I have never forgotten those words that George uttered to me as I interviewed him about his life several years ago. He explained that hate serves no useful purpose. All it does is slowly eat at the very soul of the hater but does nothing to the object of the hate.

George’s simple phrase forced me to reexamine my life. When I feel myself giving into the temptation of hate I think about George and his ability to forgive after the horrors that he experienced during an earlier chapter of his life, horrors that most of us couldn’t even imagine.

So what were the horrors that shaped George’s life? Born and raised in Hungary, when German forces swept into his country, he was drafted against his will into the German military. George was not a Nazi, for that matter he was a man of peace, a man who was dragged into a mad man’s war that threatened to encompass the world, a war that left millions of people dead. Because of his resistance to conscription he was sent to the Russian front where Russian forces eventually captured him. He spent six years in a Russian prison camp, watching many of his comrades die of starvation. Others, he felt, died of despair and loss of hope. And yet others resorted to cannibalizing their dead comrades. George, on the other hand, said he remained convinced he’d survive the horrors of the camp, and refused to give up his hope and to give into hate and despair. He also understood the power of positive thinking, realizing if he held onto hope brighter days would come.

George credits his optimism with helping him survive what many of us might see as unlivable conditions. Brighter days did come for George. He was eventually freed. He made his life back in Hungary, married, and became a father. But with the violence of the Hungarian Revolution he again found himself in a world gone mad. In hiding, George, his wife, and five year old daughter, slipped out of the country for a better life in the United States. In time George and his family settled in Vermont where he lives to this day. I often think about George and the horrors he told me about. He has seen horrors that probably none of us can understand. But what I remember most

about George is his reaction to the people who perpetuated such cruelty on him.

“George, you must hate the Russians and the Germans because of what they did to you?” I asked him, referring not to the Russian and German people, but to his actual tormentors.

His words were simple, yet profound.

“Scott, if I hate, they will have won.”

Yes, George’s simple words left a lasting mark on my life. Here is a man of peace dragged into a living hell, but he is unwilling to have his life driven by hate and revenge. Instead he has worked to use that same energy to make the world a better place.

Today is a new day at the State House and in our lives. Let’s all think of people like George and their willingness to forgive. Let’s forgive each other, make peace, and move forward, not only for our own good, but for the people of the great state of Vermont. And to any of the people in this House that I may have offended or disappointed this session, I offer my apologies and extend my hand of forgiveness. I challenge all of you to do the same to one another. And I ask each one of you to forgive yourself for your shortcomings—”

#### **Action on Bill Postponed**

##### **H. 147**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the operation of a motor vehicle by junior operators and primary safety belt enforcement

Was taken up and pending the reading of the report of the committee on Judiciary, on motion of **Rep. Marek of Newfane**, action on the bill was postponed until the next legislative day.

#### **Action on Bill Postponed**

##### **H. 232**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2009 budget adjustment

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House adopt the report of the Committee of Conference, on motion of **Rep. Heath of Westford**, action on the bill was postponed until the next legislative day.

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

**S. 47**

**Rep. Klein of East Montpelier** moved that the committee on Natural Resources and Energy be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to salvage yards

And that the bill be committed to the committee on Fish, Wildlife & Water Resources, which was agreed to.

**Adjournment**

At ten o'clock and fifteen minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. Komline of Dorset**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.