

House Calendar

Thursday, March 24, 2016

80th DAY OF THE ADJOURNED SESSION

House Convenes at 1:00 PM

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

Action Postponed Until March 24, 2016

Favorable with Amendment

H. 206

An act relating to regulating notaries public

Rep. Cole of Burlington, for the Committee on **Government Operations**, recommends the bill be amended by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 26 V.S.A. chapter 101 is added to read:

CHAPTER 101. NOTARIES PUBLIC

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

§ 5201. SHORT TITLE

This chapter may be cited as the Uniform Law on Notarial Acts.

§ 5202. UNIFORMITY OF APPLICATION AND CONSTRUCTION

In applying and construing this uniform act, consideration shall be given to the need to promote uniformity of the law with respect to its subject matter among states that enact it.

§ 5203. RELATION TO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES IN GLOBAL AND NATIONAL COMMERCE ACT

This act modifies, limits, and supersedes the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001 et seq., but does not modify, limit, or supersede Section 101(c) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7001(c), or authorize electronic delivery of any of the notices described in Section 103(b) of that act, 15 U.S.C. § 7003(b).

§ 5204. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Acknowledgment” means a declaration by an individual before a notarial officer that the individual has signed a record for the purpose stated in the record and, if the record is signed in a representative capacity, that the individual signed the record with proper authority and signed it as the act of the individual or entity identified in the record.

(2) “Electronic” means relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.

(3) “Electronic signature” means an electronic symbol, sound, or process attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by an individual with the intent to sign the record.

(4) “In a representative capacity” means acting as:

(A) an authorized officer, agent, partner, trustee, or other representative for a person other than an individual;

(B) a public officer, personal representative, guardian, or other representative, in the capacity stated in a record;

(C) an agent or attorney-in-fact for a principal; or

(D) an authorized representative of another in any other capacity.

(5) “Notarial act” means an act, whether performed with respect to a tangible or electronic record, that a notarial officer may perform under the law of this State. The term includes taking an acknowledgment, administering an oath or affirmation, taking a verification on oath or affirmation, witnessing or attesting a signature, certifying or attesting a copy, and noting a protest of a negotiable instrument.

(6) “Notarial officer” means a notary public or other individual authorized to perform a notarial act.

(7) “Notary public” means an individual commissioned to perform a notarial act by the Office.

(8) “Office” means the Office of the Secretary of State.

(9) “Official stamp” means a physical image affixed to or embossed on a tangible record or an electronic image attached to or logically associated with an electronic record.

(10) “Person” means an individual, corporation, business trust, statutory trust, estate, trust, partnership, limited liability company, association, joint venture, public corporation, government or governmental subdivision, agency, or instrumentality, or any other legal or commercial entity.

(11) “Record” means information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.

(12) “Sign” means, with present intent to authenticate or adopt a record:

(A) to execute or adopt a tangible symbol; or

(B) to attach to or logically associate with the record an electronic symbol, sound, or process.

(13) “Signature” means a tangible symbol or an electronic signature that evidences the signing of a record.

(14) “Stamping device” means:

(A) a physical device capable of affixing to or embossing on a tangible record an official stamp; or

(B) an electronic device or process capable of attaching to or logically associating with an electronic record an official stamp.

(15) “State” means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or any territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(16) “Verification on oath or affirmation” means a declaration, made by an individual on oath or affirmation before a notarial officer, that a statement in a record is true.

§ 5205. EXEMPTIONS

(a) Generally.

(1) The persons set forth in subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be exempt from the following requirements of this chapter:

(A) the examination set forth in § 5241(b);

(B) continuing education set forth in § 5243;

(C) the penalties set forth in § 5242;

(D) the certificate and official stamp described in § 5267, if acting within the scope of his or her official duties; and

(E) maintaining the journal described in § 5271, if acting within the scope of his or her official duties.

(2)(A) Notaries public employed by the Judiciary, including judges, Superior Court clerks, court operations managers, Probate registers, case managers, docket clerks, and after-hours relief from abuse contract employees.

(B) Notaries public employed as law enforcement officers certified under 20 V.S.A. chapter 151, who are noncertified constables, or who are employed by Vermont law enforcement agencies; the Departments of Public Safety, of Fish and Wildlife, of Motor Vehicles, of Liquor Control, or for Children and Families; the Office of the Defender General; the Attorney General; or a State’s Attorney or Sheriff.

(b) Attorneys. Attorneys licensed and in good standing in this State are exempt from the following requirements of this chapter:

(1) the examination requirement set forth in § 5241(b); and

(2) the continuing education requirement set forth in § 5243.

(c) Fees. The following persons are exempt from the fee required under section 5225 of this chapter:

(1) a judge, clerk, or other court staff, as designated by the Court Administrator;

(2) State's Attorneys and their deputies;

(3) justices of the peace and town clerks and their assistants; and

(4) State Police officers, municipal police officers, fish and game wardens, sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, motor vehicle inspectors, employees of the Department of Corrections, and employees of the Department for Children and Families.

Subchapter 2. Administration

§ 5221. SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE DUTIES

The Office shall:

(1) provide general information to applicants for commissioning as a notary public;

(2) administer fees as provided under section 5225 of this chapter;

(3) explain appeal procedures to notaries public and applicants and explain complaint procedures to the public;

(4) receive applications for commissioning, review applications, refer applications for commissioning to the Assistant Judges in the county of jurisdiction, and renew commissions;

(5) refer all disciplinary matters to the Assistant Judges in the county of jurisdiction; and

(6) impose administrative penalties, issue warnings or reprimands, or revoke, suspend, reinstate, or condition commissions, as ordered by the Assistant Judges.

§ 5222. ASSISTANT JUDGE'S DUTIES

The Assistant Judges in a county of jurisdiction shall:

(1) receive applications for commissioning from the Secretary of State's office and commission applicants;

(2) receive disciplinary matters referred by the Secretary of State's office; and

(3) impose administrative penalties, issue warnings or reprimands, or revoke, suspend, reinstate, or condition commissions after notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

§ 5223. ADVISOR APPOINTEES

(a) The Secretary of State shall appoint two notaries public to serve as advisors in matters relating to notarial acts. The advisors shall be appointed for staggered five-year terms and serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. One of the initial appointments shall be for less than a five-year term.

(b) Each appointee shall have at least three years of experience as a notary public during the period immediately preceding appointment and shall be actively commissioned in Vermont and remain in good standing during incumbency.

(c) The Office shall seek the advice of the advisor appointees in carrying out the provisions of this chapter. The appointees shall be entitled to compensation and reimbursement of expenses as set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for attendance at any meeting called by the Office for this purpose.

§ 5224. RULES

(a) The Office, with the advice of the advisor appointees and the Assistant Judges, may adopt rules to implement this chapter. The rules may:

(1) prescribe the manner of performing notarial acts regarding tangible and electronic records;

(2) include provisions to ensure that any change to or tampering with a record bearing a certificate of a notarial act is self-evident;

(3) include provisions to ensure integrity in the creation, transmittal, storage, or authentication of electronic records or signatures;

(4) prescribe the process of granting, renewing, conditioning, denying, suspending, or revoking or otherwise disciplining a notary public commission and assuring the trustworthiness of an individual holding a commission as notary public; and

(5) include provisions to prevent fraud or mistake in the performance of notarial acts.

(b) Rules adopted regarding the performance of notarial acts with respect to electronic records may not require, or accord greater legal status or effect to, the implementation or application of a specific technology or technical specification. In adopting, amending, or repealing rules regarding notarial acts with respect to electronic records, the Office shall consider, as far as is consistent with this chapter:

(1) the most recent standards regarding electronic records promulgated by national bodies, such as the National Association of Secretaries of State;

(2) standards, practices, and customs of other jurisdictions that substantially enact this chapter; and

(3) the views of governmental officials and entities and other interested persons.

§ 5225. FEES

For the issuance of a commission as a notary public, the Secretary of State shall collect a fee of \$30.00, of which \$9.00 shall accrue to the State, \$9.00 shall accrue to the county, and \$12.00 shall accrue to the Secretary of State.

Subchapter 3. Commissions

§ 5241. COMMISSION AS NOTARY PUBLIC; QUALIFICATIONS; NO IMMUNITY OR BENEFIT

(a) An individual qualified under subsection (b) of this section may apply to the Office for a commission as a notary public. The applicant shall comply with and provide the information required by rules adopted by the Office and pay the application fee set forth in section 5225 of this chapter.

(b) An applicant for a commission as a notary public shall:

(1) be at least 18 years of age;

(2) be a citizen or permanent legal resident of the United States;

(3) be a resident of or have a place of employment or practice in this State;

(4) not be disqualified to receive a commission under section 5242 of this chapter; and

(5) pass an examination approved by the Office based on the statutes, rules, and ethics relevant to notarial acts.

(c) Before issuance of a commission as a notary public, an applicant for the commission shall execute an oath of office and submit it to the Office.

(d) Upon compliance with this section, the Office, with the approval of the Assistant Judges in the county of jurisdiction, shall issue a commission as a notary public to an applicant for a term of two years.

(e) A commission to act as a notary public authorizes the notary public to perform notarial acts. The commission does not provide the notary public any immunity or benefit conferred by law of this State on public officials or employees.

§ 5242. GROUNDS TO DENY, REFUSE TO RENEW, REVOKE, SUSPEND, OR CONDITION COMMISSION OF NOTARY PUBLIC

(a) The Office, with the approval of the Assistant Judges in the county of jurisdiction, may deny, refuse to renew, revoke, suspend, or impose a condition on a commission as notary public for any act or omission that demonstrates the individual lacks the honesty, integrity, competence, or reliability to act as a notary public, including:

(1) failure to comply with this chapter;

(2) a fraudulent, dishonest, or deceitful misstatement or omission in the application for a commission as a notary public submitted to the Office;

(3) a conviction of the applicant or notary public of any felony or a crime involving fraud, dishonesty, or deceit;

(4) a finding against, or admission of liability by, the applicant or notary public in any legal proceeding or disciplinary action based on the applicant's or notary public's fraud, dishonesty, or deceit;

(5) failure by the notary public to discharge any duty required of a notary public, whether by this chapter, rules of the Office, or any federal or State law;

(6) use of false or misleading advertising or representation by the notary public representing that the notary has a duty, right, or privilege that the notary does not have;

(7) violation by the notary public of a rule of the Office regarding a notary public;

(8) denial, refusal to renew, revocation, suspension, or conditioning of a notary public commission in another state; or

(9) committing any of the conduct set forth in 3 V.S.A. § 129a(a).

(b) If the Office, with the approval of the Assistant Judges in the county of jurisdiction, denies, refuses to renew, revokes, suspends, or imposes conditions on a commission as a notary public, the applicant or notary public is entitled to timely notice and hearing in accordance with 3 V.S.A. chapter 25.

§ 5243. RENEWALS; CONTINUING EDUCATION

(a) Commissions shall be renewed every two years upon payment of the fee set forth in section 5225 of this chapter, provided the person applying for renewal completes continuing education approved by the Office, which shall not be required to exceed more than two hours, during the preceding two-year period.

(b) The Office, with the advice of the advisor appointees, shall establish by rule guidelines and criteria for continuing education credit.

(c) Biennially, the Office shall provide a renewal notice to each licensee. Upon receipt of a licensee's completed renewal, fee, and evidence of eligibility, the Office shall issue to him or her a new commission.

§ 5244. DATABASE OF NOTARIES PUBLIC

The Office shall maintain an electronic database of notaries public:

(1) through which a person may verify the authority of a notary public to perform notarial acts; and

(2) that indicates whether a notary public has notified the Office that the notary public will be performing notarial acts on electronic records.

§ 5245. PROHIBITIONS; OFFENSES

(a) A person shall not perform or attempt to perform a notarial act or hold himself or herself out as being able to do so in this State without first having been commissioned.

(b) A person shall not use in connection with the person's name any letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a notary public unless commissioned in accordance with this chapter.

(c) A person shall not perform or attempt to perform a notarial act while his or her commission has been revoked or suspended.

(d) A person who violates a provision of this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Prosecution may occur upon the complaint of the Attorney General or a State's Attorney and shall not act as a bar to civil or administrative proceedings involving the same conduct.

(e) A commission as a notary public shall not authorize an individual to:

(1) assist a person in drafting legal records, give legal advice, or otherwise practice law;

(2) act as an immigration consultant or an expert on immigration matters;

(3) represent a person in a judicial or administrative proceeding relating to immigration to the United States, U.S. citizenship, or related matters; or

(4) receive compensation for performing any of the activities listed in this subsection.

(f) A notary public, other than an attorney licensed to practice law in this State, shall not use the term "notario" or "notario publico."

(g)(1) A notary public, other than an attorney licensed to practice law in this State, shall not advertise or represent that the notary public may assist persons in drafting legal records, give legal advice, or otherwise practice law.

(2) If a notary public who is not an attorney licensed to practice law in this State in any manner advertises or represents that the notary public offers notarial services, whether orally or in a record, including broadcast media, print media, and the Internet, the notary public shall include the following statement, or an alternate statement authorized or required by Office, in the advertisement or representation, prominently and in each language used in the advertisement or representation: "I am not an attorney licensed to practice law in this State. I am not allowed to draft legal records, give advice on legal matters, including immigration, or charge a fee for those activities." If the form of advertisement or representation is not broadcast media, print media, or the Internet and does not permit inclusion of the statement required by this subsection because of size, it shall be displayed prominently or provided at the place of performance of the notarial act before the notarial act is performed.

(h) Except as otherwise allowed by law, a notary public shall not withhold access to or possession of an original record provided by a person that seeks performance of a notarial act by the notary public.

Subchapter 4. Notarial Acts

§ 5261. NOTARIAL ACTS IN THIS STATE; AUTHORITY TO PERFORM

(a) A notarial act may only be performed in this State by a notary public commissioned under this chapter.

(b) The signature and title of an individual performing a notarial act in this State are prima facie evidence that the signature is genuine and that the individual holds the designated title.

§ 5262. AUTHORIZED NOTARIAL ACTS

(a) A notarial officer may perform a notarial act authorized by this chapter or otherwise by law of this State.

(b) A notarial officer shall not perform a notarial act with respect to a record to which the officer or the officer's spouse is a party, or in which either of them has a direct beneficial interest. A notarial act performed in violation of this subsection is voidable.

§ 5263. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN NOTARIAL ACTS

(a) Acknowledgments. A notarial officer who takes an acknowledgment of a record shall determine, from personal knowledge or satisfactory evidence of the identity of the individual, that the individual appearing before the officer

and making the acknowledgment has the identity claimed and that the signature on the record is the signature of the individual.

(b) Verifications. A notarial officer who takes a verification of a statement on oath or affirmation shall determine, from personal knowledge or satisfactory evidence of the identity of the individual, that the individual appearing before the officer and making the verification has the identity claimed and that the signature on the statement verified is the signature of the individual.

(c) Signatures. A notarial officer who witnesses or attests to a signature shall determine, from personal knowledge or satisfactory evidence of the identity of the individual, that the individual appearing before the officer and signing the record has the identity claimed.

(d) Copies. A notarial officer who certifies or attests a copy of a record or an item that was copied shall determine that the copy is a full, true, and accurate transcription or reproduction of the record or item.

(e) Protests. A notarial officer who makes or notes a protest of a negotiable instrument shall determine the matters set forth in 9A V.S.A. § 3-505(b) (protest; certificate of dishonor).

§ 5264. PERSONAL APPEARANCE REQUIRED

If a notarial act relates to a statement made in or a signature executed on a record, the individual making the statement or executing the signature shall appear personally before the notarial officer.

§ 5265. IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL

(a) Personal knowledge. A notarial officer has personal knowledge of the identity of an individual appearing before the officer if the individual is personally known to the officer through dealings sufficient to provide reasonable certainty that the individual has the identity claimed.

(b) Satisfactory evidence. A notarial officer has satisfactory evidence of the identity of an individual appearing before the officer if the officer can identify the individual:

(1) by means of:

(A) a passport, driver's license, or government issued non-driver identification card, which is current or expired not more than three years before performance of the notarial act; or

(B) another form of government identification issued to an individual, which is current or expired not more than three years before performance of the notarial act, contains the signature or a photograph of the individual, and is satisfactory to the officer; or

(2) by a verification on oath or affirmation of a credible witness personally appearing before the officer and known to the officer or whom the officer can identify on the basis of a passport, driver's license, or government issued non-driver identification card, which is current or expired not more than three years before performance of the notarial act.

(c) Additional information. A notarial officer may require an individual to provide additional information or identification credentials necessary to assure the officer of the identity of the individual.

§ 5266. SIGNATURE IF INDIVIDUAL UNABLE TO SIGN

If an individual is physically unable to sign a record, the individual may direct an individual other than the notarial officer to sign the individual's name on the record. The notarial officer shall insert "Signature affixed by (name of other individual) at the direction of (name of individual)" or words of similar import.

§ 5267. CERTIFICATE OF NOTARIAL ACT

(a) A notarial act shall be evidenced by a certificate. The certificate shall:

(1) be executed contemporaneously with the performance of the notarial act;

(2) be signed and dated by the notarial officer and be signed in the same manner as on file with the Office;

(3) identify the jurisdiction in which the notarial act is performed;

(4) contain the title of office of the notarial officer; and

(5) indicate the date of expiration of the officer's commission.

(b)(1) If a notarial act regarding a tangible record is performed by a notary public, an official stamp shall be affixed to or embossed on the certificate.

(2) If a notarial act regarding an electronic record is performed by a notarial officer and the certificate contains the information specified in subdivisions (a)(2)–(4) of this section, an official stamp may be attached to or logically associated with the certificate.

(c) A certificate of a notarial act is sufficient if it meets the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section and:

(1) is in a short form as set forth in section 5068 of this chapter;

(2) is in a form otherwise permitted by the law of this State;

(3) is in a form permitted by the law applicable in the jurisdiction in which the notarial act was performed; or

(4) sets forth the actions of the notarial officer and the actions are sufficient to meet the requirements of the notarial act as provided in sections 5262–5264 of this chapter or a law of this State other than this chapter.

(d) By executing a certificate of a notarial act, a notarial officer certifies that the officer has complied with the requirements and made the determinations specified in sections 5263–5265 of this chapter.

(e) A notarial officer shall not affix the officer’s signature to, or logically associate it with, a certificate until the notarial act has been performed.

(f)(1) If a notarial act is performed regarding a tangible record, a certificate shall be part of, or securely attached to, the record.

(2) If a notarial act is performed regarding an electronic record, the certificate shall be affixed to, or logically associated with, the electronic record.

(3) If the Office has established standards by rule pursuant to section 5224 of this chapter for attaching, affixing, or logically associating the certificate, the process shall conform to those standards.

§ 5268. SHORT FORM CERTIFICATES

The following short form certificates of notarial acts shall be sufficient for the purposes indicated, if completed with the information required by subsections 5267(a) and (b) of this chapter:

(1) For an acknowledgment in an individual capacity:

State of _____ [County] of _____
This record was acknowledged before me on _____ by _____
Date _____ Name(s) of individual(s) _____
Signature of notarial officer
Stamp [_____]
Title of office _____ [My commission expires: _____]

(2) For an acknowledgment in a representative capacity:

State of _____ [County] of _____
This record was acknowledged before me on _____ by _____
Date _____ Name(s) of individual(s) _____
as _____ (type of authority, such as officer or trustee) of _____ (name of party on behalf of whom _____ record was _____ executed).
Signature of notarial officer

Stamp [_____]

Title of office _____ [My commission expires: _____]

(3) For a verification on oath or affirmation:

State of _____ [County] of _____

Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on _____
by _____

Date _____

Name(s) of individual(s) making statement _____

Signature of notarial officer _____

Stamp [_____]

Title of office _____ [My commission expires: _____]

(4) For witnessing or attesting a signature:

State of _____ [County] of _____

Signed [or attested] before me on _____ by _____

Date _____ Name(s) of individual(s) _____

Signature of notarial officer _____

Stamp [_____]

Title of office _____ [My commission expires: _____]

(5) For certifying a copy of a record:

State of _____ [County] of _____

I certify that this is a true and correct copy of a record in the possession
of _____.

Dated _____

Signature of notarial officer _____

Stamp [_____]

Title of office _____ [My commission expires: _____]

§ 5269. OFFICIAL STAMP

The official stamp of a notary public shall:

(1) include the notary public's name, jurisdiction, and other information
required by the Office; and

(2) be capable of being copied together with the record to which it is
affixed or attached or with which it is logically associated.

§ 5270. STAMPING DEVICE

(a) A notary public is responsible for the security of the notary public's stamping device and shall not allow another individual to use the device to perform a notarial act.

(b) If a notary public's stamping device is lost or stolen, the notary public or the notary public's personal representative or guardian shall notify promptly the Office on discovering that the device is lost or stolen.

§ 5271. JOURNAL

(a) A notary public shall maintain a journal in which the notary public chronicles all notarial acts that the notary public performs. The notary public shall retain the journal for 10 years after the performance of the last notarial act chronicled in the journal.

(b) A journal may be created on a tangible medium or in an electronic format. A notary public shall maintain only one journal at a time to chronicle all notarial acts, whether those notarial acts are performed regarding tangible or electronic records.

(1) If the journal is maintained on a tangible medium, it shall be a permanent, bound register with numbered pages.

(2) If the journal is maintained in an electronic format, it shall be in a permanent, tamper-evident electronic format complying with the rules of the Office.

(c) An entry in a journal shall be made contemporaneously with the performance of the notarial act and contain the following information:

(1) the date and time of the notarial act;

(2) a description of the record, if any, and type of notarial act;

(3) the full name and address of each individual for whom the notarial act is performed;

(4) if identity of the individual is based on personal knowledge, a statement to that effect;

(5) if identity of the individual is based on satisfactory evidence, a brief description of the method of identification and the identification credential presented, if any, including the date of issuance and expiration of any identification credential; and

(6) the fee, if any, charged by the notary public.

(d) If a notary public's journal is lost or stolen, the notary public promptly shall notify the Office on discovering that the journal is lost or stolen.

(e) On resignation from, or the revocation or suspension of, a notary public's commission, the notary public shall retain the notary public's journal in accordance with subsection (a) of this section and inform the Office where the journal is located.

(f) Instead of retaining a journal as provided in subsection (e) of this section, a current or former notary public may transmit the journal to the Office or a repository approved by the Office.

(g) On the death or adjudication of incompetency of a current or former notary public, the notary public's personal representative or guardian or any other person knowingly in possession of the journal shall transmit it to the Office or a repository approved by the Office.

§ 5272. NOTIFICATION REGARDING PERFORMANCE OF NOTARIAL ACT ON ELECTRONIC RECORD; SELECTION OF TECHNOLOGY.

(a) A notary public may select one or more tamper-evident technologies to perform notarial acts with respect to electronic records. A person shall not require a notary public to perform a notarial act with respect to an electronic record with a technology that the notary public has not selected.

(b) Before a notary public performs the notary public's initial notarial act with respect to an electronic record, the notary public shall notify the Office that the notary public will be performing notarial acts with respect to electronic records and identify the technology the notary public intends to use. If the Office has established standards by rule for approval of technology pursuant to section 5223 of this chapter, the technology shall conform to the standards. If the technology conforms to the standards, the Office shall approve the use of the technology.

§ 5273. AUTHORITY TO REFUSE TO PERFORM NOTARIAL ACT

(a) A notarial officer shall refuse to perform a notarial act if the officer is not satisfied that:

(1) the individual executing the record is competent or has the capacity to execute the record; or

(2) the individual's signature is knowingly and voluntarily made.

(b) A notarial officer may refuse to perform a notarial act unless refusal is prohibited by law other than this chapter.

§ 5274. VALIDITY OF NOTARIAL ACTS

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 5273(b) of this chapter, the failure of a notarial officer to perform a duty or meet a requirement specified in this chapter shall not invalidate a notarial act performed by the notarial officer.

(b) The validity of a notarial act under this chapter shall not prevent an aggrieved person from seeking to invalidate the record or transaction that is the subject of the notarial act or from seeking other remedies based on law of this State other than this chapter or law of the United States.

(c) This section does not validate a purported notarial act performed by an individual who does not have the authority to perform notarial acts.

§ 5275. NOTARIAL ACT IN ANOTHER STATE

(a) A notarial act performed in another state has the same effect under the law of this State as if performed by a notarial officer of this State, if the act performed in that state is performed by:

(1) a notary public of that state;

(2) a judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a court of that state; or

(3) any other individual authorized by the law of that state to perform the notarial act.

(b) The signature and title of an individual performing a notarial act in another state are prima facie evidence that the signature is genuine and that the individual holds the designated title.

(c) The signature and title of a notarial officer described in subdivision (a)(1) or (2) of this section conclusively establish the authority of the officer to perform the notarial act.

§ 5276. NOTARIAL ACT UNDER AUTHORITY OF FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBE

(a) A notarial act performed under the authority and in the jurisdiction of a federally recognized Indian tribe has the same effect as if performed by a notarial officer of this State, if the act performed in the jurisdiction of the tribe is performed by:

(1) a notary public of the tribe;

(2) a judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a court of the tribe; or

(3) any other individual authorized by the law of the tribe to perform the notarial act.

(b) The signature and title of an individual performing a notarial act under the authority of and in the jurisdiction of a federally recognized Indian tribe are prima facie evidence that the signature is genuine and that the individual holds the designated title.

(c) The signature and title of a notarial officer described in subdivision (a)(1) or (2) of this section conclusively establish the authority of the officer to perform the notarial act.

§ 5277. NOTARIAL ACT UNDER FEDERAL AUTHORITY

(a) A notarial act performed under federal law has the same effect under the law of this State as if performed by a notarial officer of this State, if the act performed under federal law is performed by:

(1) a judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a court;

(2) an individual in military service or performing duties under the authority of military service who is authorized to perform notarial acts under federal law;

(3) an individual designated a notarizing officer by the U.S. Department of State for performing notarial acts overseas; or

(4) any other individual authorized by federal law to perform the notarial act.

(b) The signature and title of an individual acting under federal authority and performing a notarial act are prima facie evidence that the signature is genuine and that the individual holds the designated title.

(c) The signature and title of an officer described in subdivision (a)(1), (2), or (3) of this section shall conclusively establish the authority of the officer to perform the notarial act.

§ 5278. FOREIGN NOTARIAL ACT

(a) In this section, “foreign state” means a government other than the United States, a state, or a federally recognized Indian tribe.

(b) If a notarial act is performed under authority and in the jurisdiction of a foreign state or constituent unit of the foreign state or is performed under the authority of a multinational or international governmental organization, the act has the same effect under the law of this State as if performed by a notarial officer of this State.

(c) If the title of office and indication of authority to perform notarial acts in a foreign state appears in a digest of foreign law or in a list customarily used as a source for that information, the authority of an officer with that title to perform notarial acts is conclusively established.

(d) The signature and official stamp of an individual holding an office described in subsection (c) of this section are prima facie evidence that the signature is genuine and the individual holds the designated title.

(e) An apostille in the form prescribed by the Hague Convention of October 5, 1961, and issued by a foreign state party to the Convention conclusively establishes that the signature of the notarial officer is genuine and that the officer holds the indicated office.

(f) A consular authentication issued by an individual designated by the U.S. Department of State as a notarizing officer for performing notarial acts overseas and attached to the record with respect to which the notarial act is performed conclusively establishes that the signature of the notarial officer is genuine and that the officer holds the indicated office.

Sec. 2. REPEAL

The following are repealed:

(1) 24 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 9 (notaries public);

(2) 32 V.S.A. § 1403(b) (county clerk; notaries public without charge or fee);

(3) 32 V.S.A. § 1436 (fee for certification of appointment as notary public); and

(4) 32 V.S.A. § 1759 (notaries public fees).

Sec. 3. APPLICABILITY; NOTARY PUBLIC COMMISSION IN EFFECT

(a)(1) This act shall apply to a notarial act performed on or after the effective date of this act.

(2) A notary public, in performing notarial acts on and after the effective date of this act, shall comply with the provisions of this act.

(b)(1) A commission as a notary public in effect on the effective date of this act shall continue until its date of expiration.

(2) A notary public who applies to renew a commission as a notary public on or after the effective date of this act shall comply with the provisions of this act.

Sec. 4. SAVINGS CLAUSE

This act shall not affect the validity or effect of a notarial act performed prior to the effective date of this act.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

(Committee Vote: 9-1-1)

Rep. Young of Glover, for the Committee on **Ways & Means**, recommends the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on **Government Operations**.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Action Postponed Until March 24, 2016

Favorable with Amendment

H. 859

An act relating to special education.

(Rep. Long of Newfane will speak for the Committee on **Education**.)

Rep. O'Brien of Richmond, for the Committee on **Appropriations**, recommends the bill ought to pass when amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 2, Study of Funding for Special Education, by striking out Sec. 2 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read:

Sec. 2. STUDY OF FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

(a) Study. The Agency of Education shall contract for a study of special education funding and practice. The study shall evaluate the feasibility of implementing the census block model of funding, or a variation of this model as the contractor deems appropriate, for special education in Vermont, including the advantages, disadvantages, and policy considerations. The study shall develop a special education funding model recommendation for Vermont, which shall be designed to provide incentives for desirable practices and stimulate innovation in the delivery of services and shall take into account any factors the contractor determines relevant. The contractor shall conduct its evaluation and develop its recommendation in collaboration with the Agency of Education and interested superintendents, special educators, school business and administrative staff, and special education staff from the Vermont State Colleges and other stakeholders. The contractor shall present its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and the Agency of Education by December 15, 2017.

(b) Funding. The Agency of Education shall allocate out of its fiscal year 2017 budget a sum of \$40,000.00 to provide for the purposes set forth in this section. Any application of funds for the purpose of administrative overhead shall be capped at five percent of the total sum allocated pursuant to this section.

Second: In Sec. 3, Appropriation for Consulting Services on the Delivery of Special Education Services, by striking out Sec. 3 and the reader assistance in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 3 to read:

* * * Appropriation for Consulting Services on the Delivery of Special
Education Services * * *

Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION FOR CONSULTING SERVICES ON THE
DELIVERY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

(a) Consulting services. The Agency of Education shall contract with a consulting firm meeting the criteria set forth in subsection (b) of this section for the provision of special education consulting services to up to 10 supervisory unions, supervisory districts, or unified union school districts. The Agency, in consultation with the consulting firm and interested districts and supervisory unions, shall select, as member districts and supervisory unions for the study, at least three existing supervisory unions or supervisory districts with an average daily membership of 1,500 students or more and at least three unified union school districts formed pursuant to 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46. In no event shall the Agency include a district or supervisory union that does not provide an equivalent match equal to 50 percent of the value of the consulting firm's services to the district or supervisory union; the other 50 percent being funded by the appropriation provided in this section. This financial contribution by districts or supervisory unions may be in the form of transition grants or other appropriate grant funding and may, at the discretion of the district's or supervisory union's board of directors, be allocated across the district's or supervisory union's 2017 and 2018 fiscal years. The consulting firm shall present a final report with recommendations on the delivery of special education services to the General Assembly and the Agency of Education on or before October 1, 2017. The consulting firm shall provide to the Agency of Education any and all research and data compiled during the course of its work pursuant to this section.

(b) Selection of consulting firm. The Agency of Education shall contract with a consulting firm which:

(1) has experience working directly with Vermont school districts and with school districts across the country to raise achievement and manage cost in special education;

(2) uses national special education staffing benchmarking from at least 1,000 school districts covering at least 10 million students, and web-based schedule sharing technology that captures how individual staff members use their time, including duration, location, and group size;

(3) has conducted and published primary research on cost-effective strategies for raising achievement of struggling students, both with and without special needs; and

(4) is recognized as a national expert and published author on raising special education achievement in a cost-effective manner.

(c) Appropriation. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in 16 V.S.A. § 4025, the sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the Education Fund for fiscal year 2017 to the Agency of Education. The Agency shall administer the funds in accordance with this section and any unused funds shall revert to the Education Fund.

Third: In Sec. 4, Creation of Agency of Education Staff Position, by deleting Sec. 4 and its reader assistance in their entirety

Fourth: In Sec. 5, Effective Dates, after “Secs. 2, 3,” by striking out “4” and by renumbering Sec. 5 to be Sec. 4

(Committee Vote 9-2-0)

Favorable

H. 519

An act relating to approval of the adoption and codification of the charter of the Town of Brandon

Rep. Lewis of Berlin, for the Committee on **Government Operations**, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Rep. Young of Glover, for the Committee on **Ways & Means**, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 7-3-1)

ACTION CALENDAR

Third Reading

H. 620

An act relating to health insurance and Medicaid coverage for contraceptives

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Willhoit of St. Johnsbury and Strong of Albany to H. 620

That the bill be amended in Sec. 1, 8 V.S.A. § 4099c, by adding a subsection (h) to read as follows:

(h)(1) Upon request by a religious employer, as described in 26 U.S.C. § 6033(a)(3)(A)(i) and (iii) and as certified by the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, a health insurer shall make available a health insurance plan that does not provide coverage for contraceptive services.

(2) The Departments of Financial Regulation and of Vermont Health Access and the Green Mountain Care Board shall adopt rules as needed to effect the purposes of this subsection.

H. 864

An act relating to agricultural exemption from Vermont's sales and use tax

H. 872

An act relating to Executive Branch fees

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Marcotte of Coventry to H. 872

That the bill be amended in Sec. 39 (License education), in subsection (c), by striking out the following: "A licensee may comply with this requirement by ~~conducting its own training program on its premises, using information and materials furnished or~~ approved by the Department of Liquor Control" and inserting in lieu thereof "A licensee may comply with this requirement by conducting its own training program on its premises, using information and materials furnished or approved by the Department of Liquor Control"

H. 873

An act relating to making miscellaneous tax changes

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Olsen of Londonderry to H. 873

First: By adding three new sections to be Secs. 26a–26c to read as follows:

Sec. 26a. 33 V.S.A. § 1951 is amended to read:

§ 1951. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

* * *

(15) "Ambulance agency" means an ambulance agency licensed pursuant to 18 V.S.A. chapter 17.

Sec. 26b. 33 V.S.A. § 1959 is added to read:

§ 1959. AMBULANCE AGENCY ASSESSMENT

(a) The annual assessment for each ambulance agency shall be 3.3 percent of the ambulance agency's annual net patient revenues for services delivered to patients in Vermont during the most recent annual fiscal period. The Department shall determine the appropriate fiscal period as necessary to ensure compliance with federal law. Beginning June 30, 2017, ambulance agencies shall remit the assessment amount to the Department annually by June 30.

(b) The Department shall provide written notification of the assessment amount to each ambulance agency. The assessment amount determined shall be considered final unless the agency requests reconsideration. Requests for reconsideration shall be subject to the provisions of section 1958 of this title.

(c) Each ambulance agency shall remit its assessment to the Department according to a schedule adopted by the Commissioner. The Commissioner may permit variations in the schedule of payment as deemed necessary.

(d) Any ambulance agency that fails to make a payment to the Department on or before the specified schedule, or under any schedule of delayed payments established by the Commissioner, shall be assessed not more than \$1,000.00. The Commissioner may waive the late-payment assessment provided in this subsection for good cause shown by the ambulance agency.

Sec. 26c. AMBULANCE PROVIDER TAX; INTENT

In establishing a provider tax on ambulance agencies, it is the intent of the General Assembly to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to these providers while ensuring full compliance with 42 C.F.R. 433.68.

Second: In Sec. 33, effective dates, in subdivision (2), preceding “27 (fuel gross receipts tax)”, by inserting 26a–26c (ambulance provider tax),

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Eastman of Orwell, Browning of Arlington, Greshin of Warren, and Olsen of Londonderry to H. 873

That the bill be amended by adding a new section to be Sec. 25a to read as follows:

Sec. 25a. 21 V.S.A. § 2002 is amended to read:

§ 2002. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Employee” means ~~an individual~~ a Vermont resident over the age of majority employed full-time or part-time by an employer to perform services in this State.

* * *

(5) “Uncovered employee” means:

(A) an employee ~~of~~ who works for an employer who that does not offer to pay any part of the cost of health care coverage for its employees and who:

(i) is enrolled in Medicaid;

(ii) has no other health care coverage under either a private or public plan except Medicaid; or

(iii) has purchased non-employer sponsored health insurance coverage through the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange;

The Agency of Human Services shall design one or more mechanisms to provide additional reimbursement or compensation to home health agencies that serve a greater percentage of Medicaid patients than other home health agencies in this State. On or before December 1, 2016, the Agency shall provide its designs and any related recommendations to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, and on Finance.

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington to H. 875

That the bill be amended in Sec. E.300.1 (Improving grants management for results-based programs) as follows:

First: In subsection (a), by striking out the word “Secretary” and inserting in lieu thereof the word “Secretaries” and inserting after the words “Human Services” the following “, of Commerce and Community Development, and of Education”

Second: In subdivision (a)(8) by striking out the word “and” after “grant,”, in subdivision (a)(9), by striking out the period and by inserting in lieu thereof a semicolon, and by inserting subdivisions (a)(10)–(11) to read as follows:

(10) the length of time the entity has had the grant and the grant award amount each fiscal year; and

(11) the indirect rate of the entity.

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Dame of Essex to H. 875

That the bill be amended by adding a new section to be Sec. E.307.1 to read as follows:

Sec. E.307.1 MEDICARE SUPPLEMENTAL PLANS FOR DUAL
ELIGIBLE MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES

(a) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall explore the use of State or Global Commitment funds to purchase Medicare supplemental insurance plans for individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, including the feasibility of federal financial participation, the estimated savings to the State with and without federal financial participation, and the benefits both of providing Medicare supplemental plans to the entire population of dual eligible individuals and of providing the plans to only a subset of the highest utilizers of all or a specific set of services.

(b) If the Department determines that savings can be achieved, then as part of its recommendations for fiscal year 2017 budget adjustment, the Department shall propose a plan for implementing the purchase of Medicare supplemental insurance plans for the dual eligibles in a manner that is the most cost-effective

for the State and that provides the greatest benefits for the dual eligible population.

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Dickinson of St. Albans Town and Juskiewicz of Cambridge to H. 875

That the bill be amended by adding a new section to be numbered Sec. E.600.2 to read as follows:

Sec. E.600.2 FISCAL YEAR 2018 FUNDING INTENT

(a) Due to added ongoing receipts for mutual fund license fees, it is the intent of the Legislature to increase appropriations for the Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont in fiscal year 2018. As part of its fiscal year 2018 budget submission to the Legislature, the Administration shall include additional funding totaling \$5,000,000, which shall be allocated \$2,500,000 each in General Funds to the Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont.

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Donovan of Burlington to H. 875

First: In Sec. E.323.1, 33 V.S.A. § 1134(8)(B) by striking “and” at the end of the subdivision.

Second: In Sec. E.323.1, 33 V.S.A. § 1134(9) before the period, by inserting “;and”

Third: In Sec. E.323.1, 33 V.S.A. § 1134 by adding a new subdivision (10) to read:

(10) a description of how the inclusion of \$125.00 of Supplemental Security Income for the purpose of calculating Reach Up eligibility and benefit levels pursuant to subdivision 1103(c)(9) of this title has affected participating families

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Gage of Rutland City to H. 875

That the bill be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. B.1101, fiscal year 2017 one-time General Fund appropriations, by striking out subsection (d) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

(d) The sum of \$140,000 is appropriated to the Green Mountain Care Board to contract with an independent third party for analysis of the current functionality and long-term sustainability of the technology for Vermont Health Connect pursuant to Sec. E.127.1 of this act.

Second: By striking out Sec. C.100, Dr. Dynasaur expansion study; report, in its entirety

Third: By striking out Sec. E.127.1 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. E.127.1. VERMONT HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE
TECHNOLOGY; SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS; REPORT

(a) The Green Mountain Care Board, through a contract with an independent third party, shall provide a report to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2016 with an analysis of the current functionality and long-term sustainability of the technology for Vermont's Health Benefit Exchange, including a review of the deficiencies in Vermont Health Connect functionality and the integration, connectivity, and business logic of each as they pertain to both the back end systems and the user interface of Vermont Health Connect. The analysis shall provide recommendations for improving the function, efficiency, reliability, operations, and customer experience of the technology going forward. The report shall include an evaluation of the investment value of existing components of the Exchange technology and the contractor's assessment of the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of leveraging existing components of the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange as part of the technology for a larger, integrated eligibility system, including reviewing changes other states have made to the Exchange components of their technology infrastructure. The analysis and report shall provide a comparison of the investments required to ensure a sustainable State-based Exchange through further investment in Vermont Health Connect's current technology, including any opportunities to build on other states' Exchange technology, with the estimated investments that would be required to transition to a fully or partially federally facilitated Exchange.

(b) In preparing its request for proposal, the Green Mountain Care Board shall consult with health insurers offering qualified health plans on Vermont Health Connect.

(c) Based on the results of the analysis required by subsection (a) of this section, on or before January 15, 2016, the Green Mountain Care Board shall recommend to the General Assembly whether it would be more advantageous for Vermont residents to maintain the existing Vermont Health Connect, with any modifications identified in the analysis, or to transition to a fully federally facilitated Exchange or a federally facilitated State-based Exchange. If the Board recommends moving to a new Exchange model, the plan shall include a description of the federally facilitated Exchange model selected, estimates of the costs associated with the transition and with ongoing participation in the federally facilitated Exchange, options for financing the transition and participation costs, and a detailed timeline of the steps necessary to ensure that the transition will take place without causing any disruption to Medicaid or private health insurance coverage. The plan shall also include a description of

the steps needed to dismantle unnecessary functions of Vermont Health Connect while minimizing financial exposure to the State.

Favorable

H. 863

An act relating to making miscellaneous amendments to Vermont's retirement laws.

(Rep. Devereux of Mount Holly will speak for the Committee on Government Operations.)

Rep. Lanpher of Vergennes, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Action Postponed Until March 29, 2016

Favorable with Amendment

H. 853

An act relating to setting the nonresidential property tax rate, the property dollar equivalent yield, and the income dollar equivalent yield for fiscal year 2017, and other education changes.

Pending Question; Second Reading

Action Postponed Until March 31, 2016

Committee Bill for Second Reading

H. 867

An act relating to classification of employees and independent contractors.

Pending question; Second Reading

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. 287

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Proctor High School Phantoms Division IV boys' basketball championship team

H.C.R. 288

House concurrent resolution honoring the federal TRIO programs in Vermont

H.C.R. 289

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Enosburg High School Hornets Division III girls' basketball championship team

H.C.R. 290

House concurrent resolution designating April 2016 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont

H.C.R. 291

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Lyndon Institute Vikings Division II championship boys' basketball team

H.C.R. 292

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Lyndon Institute Vikings Division II boys' indoor track and field championship team

H.C.R. 293

House concurrent resolution commemorating the founding of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at Norwich University on its centennial anniversary

H.C.R. 294

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Windsor High School Yellow Jackets State championship bowling team

H.C.R. 295

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice on its 60th anniversary

H.C.R. 296

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Hazen Union High School Wildcats Division III championship boys' basketball team

H.C.R. 297

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2016 Fair Haven Union High School Slaters Division II championship girls' basketball team

H.C.R. 298

House concurrent resolution designating March 23, 2016 as Disability Awareness Day at the State House

H.C.R. 299

House concurrent resolution recognizing the important health care value of the new five-year 2020 Vermont Cancer Plan

H.C.R. 300

House concurrent resolution honoring Griffin MacFadyen of Dover on his outstanding achievements on the slopes, in the classroom, and in the community

H.C.R. 301

House concurrent resolution congratulating Bethany Berger as the runner-up in the 2016 National Best Bagger competition

S.C.R. 40

Senate concurrent resolution designating July 2016 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont