Journal of the House

Tuesday, March 29, 2016

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

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Anna Van Dine, 2016 Vermont Poetry Out Loud runner-up from Harwood Union High School.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Ryan McSweeney of Montpelier led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Senate No. 34

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

Mr. Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 107. An act relating to the Agency of Health Care Administration.

S. 245. An act relating to notice to patients of new health care provider affiliations.

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

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

H. 565. An act relating to United Methodist Church property.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

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

S.C.R. 40. Senate concurrent resolution designating July 2016 as Park and Recreation Month in Vermont.

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

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

**H. 880**

By Rep. Smith of New Haven,

House bill, entitled

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

To the committee on Government Operations.

**H. 881**

By Rep. Yantachka of Charlotte,

House bill, entitled

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

To the committee on Government Operations.

**H. 882**


House bill, entitled

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

To the committee on Government Operations.

**Senate Bills Referred**

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time and referred as follows:

**S. 107**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Agency of Health Care Administration;

To the committee on Human Services.
S. 245

Senate bill, entitled
An act relating to notice to patients of new health care provider affiliations;
To the committee on Health Care.

Bills Referred to Committee on Appropriations

House bills of the following titles, appearing on the Calendar, carrying appropriations, under the rule, were referred to the committee on Appropriations:

H. 865

House bill, entitled
An act relating to promoting workforce housing

H. 870

House bill, entitled
An act relating to telecommunications

Message from the Senate No. 35

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

Mr. Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:
The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:
S. 220. An act relating to the public financing of campaigns.
In the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.
The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:
J.R.S. 49. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment.
In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Consideration Interrupted by Recess

H. 853

Rep. Greshin of Warren spoke for the committee on Ways and Means

Rep. Sharpe of Bristol, for the committee on Education, to which had been referred House bill, entitled
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

Reported in favor of its passage when amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 4, in the second sentence before the words “direct cost” by striking out the word “associated” and inserting in lieu thereof the word “related”

Second: In Sec. 5, in subsection (e), in the first sentence before the words “direct cost” by striking out the word “associated” and inserting in lieu thereof the word “related”

Third: In Sec. 6, in subsection (d), in the first sentence before the words “direct cost” by striking out the word “associated” and inserting in lieu thereof the word “related”

Fourth: By inserting a Sec. 6a to read as follows:

Sec. 6a. 32 V.S.A. § 5402b is amended to read:

§ 5402b. STATEWIDE EDUCATION TAX YIELDS;

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMISSIONER

(a) Annually, no later than December 1, the Commissioner of Taxes, after consultation with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Administration, and the Joint Fiscal Office, shall calculate and recommend a property dollar equivalent yield, an income dollar equivalent yield, and a nonresidential property tax rate for the following fiscal year. In making these calculations, the Commissioner shall reference the Education Fund Outlook, described in subsection (c) of this section, and shall assume:

(1) the homestead base tax rate in subdivision 5402(a)(2) of this title is $1.00 per $100.00 of equalized education property value;

(2) the applicable percentage in subdivision 6066(a)(2) of this title is 2.0;

(3) the statutory reserves under 16 V.S.A. § 4026 and this section were maintained at five percent; and

(4) the percentage change in the median education tax bill applied to nonresidential property, the percentage change in the median education tax bill of homestead property, and the percentage change in the median education tax bill for taxpayers who claim an adjustment under subsection 6066(a) of this title are equal.
(b) For each fiscal year, the General Assembly shall set a property dollar equivalent yield and an income dollar equivalent yield, consistent with the definitions in this chapter.

(c) Annually, on or before December 1, the Joint Fiscal Office shall prepare and publish an official, annotated copy of the Education Fund Outlook. The Emergency Board shall review the Outlook at its meetings. As used in this section, “Education Fund Outlook” means the projected revenues and expenses associated with the Education Fund for the following fiscal year, including projections of the unfunded education mandate amount, both as estimated in section 305b of this title, and as appropriated under section 4025 of this title.

Fifth: By striking out Sec. 7 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 7. TRANSFER OF DEBT OF MERGED DISTRICTS

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the process of forming a union school district under 16 V.S.A. chapter 11, a study committee report under 16 V.S.A. § 706b may provide terms for transferring, either in whole or part, the liability for any indebtedness held by a merging district, from the merging district to the town or towns within the merging district.

(b) As used in this section, a union school district established under 16 V.S.A. chapter 11 includes a school district voluntarily created pursuant to 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, Sec. 6 or 7, or a regional education district, or any other district eligible to receive incentives pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156 and 2013 Acts and Resolves No. 56.

Sixth: By adding a Sec. 9a to read as follows:

Sec. 9a. REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF H.846 OF 2016

(a) On or before November 15, 2016, the Joint Fiscal Office, with the assistance of the Office of Legislative Council and the Department of Taxes, shall issue a report analyzing the impact of H.846 of 2016, an act related to making changes to the calculation of the statewide education property tax. The analysis shall be based on the statutory language presented to the House Committee on Education on March 11, 2016. The report shall be delivered to the Senate Committees on Finance and on Education and the House Committees on Ways and Means and on Education.

(b) The report shall address:

(1) the impact of the proposed changes on education spending growth, both at the district level and the State level:
(2) the impact of the proposed changes on school districts by spending levels, size, location, and operating structure;

(3) the impact on homestead tax rates, income sensitivity percentages, and nonresidential tax rates across the State;

(4) the impact of the proposed changes on the Education Fund balance;

(5) the funding stability of the proposed changes based on variable economic conditions;

(6) any transition issues created by the proposed changes; and

(7) any related issues identified by the Joint Fiscal Office.

Seventh: By adding a Sec. 9b to read as follows:

Sec. 9b. REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF H.656 OF 2016

(a) On or before November 15, 2016, the Joint Fiscal Office, with the assistance of the Office of Legislative Council and the Department of Taxes, shall issue a report analyzing the impact of H.656 of 2016, an act relating to creating an education tax that is adjusted by income for all taxpayers. The report shall be delivered to the Senate Committees on Finance and on Education and the House Committees on Ways and Means and on Education.

(b) The report shall address:

(1) the impact of the proposed changes on current groups of taxpayers, including taxpayers who pay an education property tax based on property value, those who pay based on income, and renters;

(2) the impact of imposing a cap, of various amounts, on the total amount of taxes paid by a taxpayer under the proposal, but at least including an analysis of a cap of $25,000.00;

(3) the impact of the proposed changes on towns and the State, including administrative issues resulting from the proposed changes;

(4) how the proposed changes to current definition of housesite impact taxpayers at different levels of income and different levels of property values and how the changes would affect property owners with different configurations of property ownership;

(5) any transition issues created by the proposed changes;

(6) the impact of the proposed changes on taxpayer confidentiality; and

(7) any related issues identified by the Joint Fiscal Office.
Eighth: By striking out Sec. 10 (effective dates) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2016, except for:

1. Sec. 3 (excess spending) which shall take effect on July 1, 2019 and apply to excess spending calculations for fiscal year 2020 and after; and
2. Sec. 8 (data collection) which shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

Rep. Fagan of Rutland City for the committee in Appropriations recommended that the bill ought to pass when amended, as recommended, by the committee on Education and when further amended as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 6 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 4028(d) is amended to read:

(d) Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 502(b)(2), the Joint Fiscal Office shall prepare a fiscal note for any legislation that requires a supervisory union or school district to perform any action with an associated direct cost, but does not provide money or a funding mechanism to have a specifically identified appropriation for fulfilling that obligation. Any fiscal note prepared under this subsection shall identify whether or not the estimated costs would be considered part of the “unfunded education mandate amount” under 32 V.S.A. § 305b for the next fiscal year. Any fiscal note prepared under this subsection shall be completed no later than the date that the legislation is considered for a vote in the first committee to which it is referred.

Second: In Sec. 9, by adding a new subsection (g) to read as follows:

(g) Nonlegislative members of the Committee shall be entitled to compensation as provided under 32 V.S.A. § 1010

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended, as recommended by the committee on Education?

Recess

At ten o'clock and forty-seven minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker declared a recess until one o'clock in the afternoon.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.
Consideration Resumed; Bill Amended and Third Reading Ordered

H. 853

Consideration resumed on House bill, entitled

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;

Thereupon, the report of the committee on Education was amended as recommended by the committee on Appropriations.

Thereupon, the recommendation of amendment offered by the committee on Education, as amended, was agreed to.

Pending third reading of the bill, Rep. Sibilia of Dover moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: By adding a Sec. 8a to read as follows:

Sec. 8a. 16 V.S.A. § 212a is added to read:

§ 212a. DATA COLLECTION

In addition to the requirements of subdivision 212(9) of this title, the Secretary shall require school districts to report annually a recommended funding level for any reserve funds held by the district for the upcoming fiscal year.

Second: In Sec 10 (effective dates), in subdivision (2), by striking out “Sec.” and inserting in lieu thereof “Secs.” and after “8 (data collection)” by inserting “and 8a (additional data)”

Thereupon, Rep. Sibilia of Dover asked and was granted leave of the House to withdraw her amendment.

Pending third reading of the bill, Rep. Browning of Arlington moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: By adding a reader assistance heading and Sec. 9c to read as follows:

* * * Tax Incentives * * *

Sec. 9c. VALUE OF MERGER INCENTIVES AND GRANTS

On or before September 1 of each year, the Joint Fiscal Office shall determine the total value of the merger incentives or grants, described in 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, Secs. 6 and 7, received by each eligible school district in the prior fiscal year, and that amount shall be transferred from the
General Fund to the Education Fund in the following fiscal year, in addition to any amount transferred pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 4025(a)(2).

Second: In Sec. 10, by adding a subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. 9c (value of merger incentives and grants) shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2016.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as proposed by Browning of Arlington? Rep. Browning of Arlington demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as proposed by Browning of Arlington? was decided in the negative. Yeas, 45. Nays, 94.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Berry of Manchester  Hebert of Vernon  Morrisey of Bennington
Beyor of Highgate  Higley of Lowell  Myers of Essex
Brennan of Colchester  Hooper of Montpelier  Pearce of Richford
Browning of Arlington  Hubert of Milton  Pearson of Burlington
Burditt of West Rutland  Krebs of South Hero  Quimby of Concord
Condon of Colchester  LaClair of Barre Town  Savage of Swanton
Dakin of Colchester  Lefebvre of Newark  Scheuermann of Stowe
Dame of Essex  Lewis of Berlin  Shaw of Derby
Davis of Washington  Manwaring of Wilmington  Sibilia of Dover
Devereux of Mount Holly  Marcotte of Coventry  Smith of New Haven
Donahue of Northfield  Martel of Waterford  Strong of Albany
Eastman of Orwell  Martin of Wolcott  Tate of Mendon
Fiske of Enosburgh  Masland of Thetford  Terenzini of Rutland Town
Gamache of Swanton  McCoy of Poultony  Viens of Newport City
Graham of Williston  McFaun of Barre Town  Wright of Burlington

Those who voted in the negative are:

Ancel of Calais  Chesnut-Tangeman of  Evans of Essex
Bancroft of Westford  Middletown Springs  Fagan of Rutland City
Bartholomew of Hartland  Clarkson of Woodstock  Feltus of Lyndon
Baser of Bristol  Cole of Burlington  Fields of Bennington
Batchelor of Derby  Conquest of Newbury  Forguites of Springfield
Beck of St. Johnsbury  Copeland-Hanzas of  Frank of Underhill
Bissonnette of Winooski  Bradford  French of Randolph
Botzow of Pownal  Corcoran of Bennington  Gage of Rutland City
Branagan of Georgia  Cupoli of Rutland City  Gonzalez of Winooski
Briglin of Thetford  Dakin of Chester  Greshin of Warren
Burke of Brattleboro  Deen of Westminster  Haas of Rochester
Buxton of Tunbridge  Dickinson of St. Albans  Head of South Burlington
Canfield of Fair Haven  Town  Helm of Fair Haven
Carr of Brandon  Donovan of Burlington  Huntley of Cavendish
Emmons of Springfield  Jerman of Essex
Rep. Browning of Arlington explained her vote as follows:

“Mr. Speaker:

I vote yes to require the State to take responsibility for paying the costs of the merger incentives. It is not right to impose those costs on non-merging districts, so that they pay higher property taxes than they otherwise would.”

Pending third reading of the bill, Rep. Browning of Arlington moved to amend the bill as follows:

By adding a new Sec. 10 to read:

Sec. 10. 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, Sec. 10 is amended to read:

Sec. 10. TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES; PROPOSAL; FINAL PLAN

(a) Secretary of Education’s proposal. In order to provide educational opportunities through sustainable governance structures designed to meet the goals set forth in Sec. 2 of this act pursuant to one of the models described in Sec. 5, the Secretary shall:
1) Review the governance structures of the school districts and supervisory unions of the State as they will exist, or are anticipated to exist, on July 1, 2019. This review shall include consideration of any proposals submitted by districts or groups of districts pursuant to Sec. 9 of this act and conversations with those and other districts.

2) On or before July 1, 2018, shall develop, publish on the Agency of Education’s website, and present to the State Board of Education a proposed plan that, to the extent necessary to promote the purpose stated at the beginning of this subsection (a), would move districts into the more sustainable, preferred model of governance set forth in Sec. 5(b) of this act (Education District). If it is not possible or practicable to develop a proposal that realigns some districts, where necessary, into an Education District in a manner that adheres to the protections of Sec. 4 of this act (protection for tuition-paying and operating districts) or that otherwise meets all aspects of Sec. 5(b), then the proposal may also include alternative governance structures as necessary, such as a supervisory union with member districts or a unified union school district with a smaller average daily membership; provided, however, that any proposed alternative governance structure shall be designed to:

(A) ensure adherence to the protections of Sec. 4 of this act; and

(B) promote the purpose stated at the beginning of this subsection (a).

(b) State Board’s plan. On or before November 30, 2018, the State Board shall review and analyze the Secretary’s proposal under the provisions in subsection (a) of this section, may take testimony or ask for additional information from districts and supervisory unions, shall approve may recommend the proposal either in its original form or in an amended form that adheres to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, and shall publish on the Agency’s website its order recommendations for merging and realigning districts and supervisory unions where necessary. The State Board’s recommendations shall not be binding on any district.

(c) Applicability. This section shall not apply to:

(1) an interstate school district;

(2) a regional career technical center school district formed under 16 V.S.A. chapter 37, subchapter 5A; or

(3) a district that, between June 30, 2013 and July 2, 2019, began to operate as a unified union school district and:
(A) voluntarily merged into the preferred education governance structure, an Education District, as set forth Sec. 5(b) of this act; or

(B) is a regional education district or any other district eligible to receive incentives pursuant to 2010 Acts and Resolves No. 153, as amended by 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 156.

and by renumbering the remaining section sequentially

Thereupon, Rep. Jewett of Ripton raised a Point of Order that the amendment was not germane, which Point of Order the Speaker ruled well taken.

Thereupon, Rep. Browning of Arlington moved to suspend the rules to permit consideration of a non-germane issue.

Pending the question, Shall the rules be suspended to permit consideration of a non-germane amendment? Rep. Browning of Arlington demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the rules be suspended to permit consideration of a non-germane amendment? was decided in the negative. Yeas, 35. Nays, 103. A 3/4 vote of 104 needed.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Bancroft of Westford        Batchelor of Derby        Berry of Manchester        Beyor of Highgate        Browning of Arlington *        Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs        Dakin of Chester        Dame of Essex        Devereux of Mount Holly        Eastman of Orwell        Fields of Bennington
Fiske of Enosburgh        Gage of Rutland City        Gamache of Swanton        Graham of Williamstown        Hebert of Vernon        Helm of Fair Haven        Higley of Lowell        Lefebvre of Newark        Lewis of Berlin        Martel of Waterford        McCoy of Poultney        McFaun of Barre Town
Myers of Essex        Pearce of Richford        Quimby of Concord        Savage of Swanton        Scheuermann of Stowe        Shaw of Derby        Smith of New Haven        Strong of Albany        Tate of Mendon        Terenzini of Rutland Town        Van Wyck of Ferrisburgh        Viens of Newport City

Those who voted in the negative are:

Corcoran of Bennington        Cupoli of Rutland City        Dakin of Colchester        Davis of Washington        Deen of Westminster        Dickinson of St. Albans Town        Donahue of Northfield        Donovan of Burlington        Emmons of Springfield
Rep. Browning of Arlington explained her vote as follows:

“Mr. Speaker:

I vote yes to allow the House to just consider whether or not the State Board of Education should have the power to dissolve local school boards and force mergers without a vote of the community as Act 46 currently allows.”

Pending third reading of the bill, Rep. Olsen of Londonderry moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 3 (excess spending) in its entirety, and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 3. INTENT FOR EXCESS SPENDING PENALTY
It is the intent of the General Assembly to lower the threshold for the excess spending penalty in 32 V.S.A. § 5401(12)(B) from 121 percent of the statewide average district education spending per pupil to 119 percent, but only after a study has been completed, and the General Assembly has evaluated, potential changes to the equalized pupil weighting formulas.

Second: In Sec. 9a, by adding a subsection (c) to read:

(c) In addition to the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the report required by this section shall also analyze the weighting factors that are used to determine equalized pupil counts and the effect of those weighting factors on educational opportunities, and including a specific assessment of how educational opportunities could be further equalized based on economies of scale and population densities.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as proposed by Rep. Olsen of Londonderry? Rep. Sibilia of Dover demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as proposed by Rep. Olsen of Londonderry? was decided in the negative. Yeas, 38. Nays, 100.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Bancroft of Westford
Batchelor of Derby
Browning of Arlington
Burke of Brattleboro
Chesnut-Tangeman of Middletown Springs
Conquest of Newbury
Dakin of Chester
Davis of Washington
Devereux of Mount Holly
Eastman of Orwell
Feltus of Lyndon
Fields of Bennington
Gonzalez of Winooski
Haas of Rochester
Hebert of Vernon
Helm of Fair Haven
Higley of Lowell
Krebs of South Hero
LaClair of Barre Town
Lefebvre of Newark
Lewis of Berlin
Manwaring of Wilmington
Marcotte of Coventry
Martel of Waterford
Martin of Wolcott
McCoy of Poultney
McFaun of Barre Town
Murphy of Fairfax
Olsen of Londonderry
Pearson of Burlington
Quimby of Concord
Sibilia of Dover
Strong of Albany
Toll of Danville
Troiano of Stannard
Viens of Newport City
Wright of Burlington
Zagar of Barnard

Those who voted in the negative are:

Ancel of Calais
Bartholomew of Hartland
Baser of Bristol
Beck of St. Johnsbury
Berry of Manchester
Beyor of Highgate
Bissonnette of Winooski
Botzow of Pownal
Branagan of Georgia
Brennan of Colchester
Briglin of Thetford
Burdit of West Rutland
Buxton of Tunbridge
Canfield of Fair Haven
Carr of Brandon
Clarkson of Woodstock
Cole of Burlington
Condon of Colchester
Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford
Corcoran of Bennington
Cupoli of Rutland City
Dakin of Colchester
Dame of Essex
Deen of Westminster
Dickinson of St. Albans
Town
Donahue of Northfield
Donovan of Burlington
Emmons of Springfield
Rep. Jerman of Essex explained his vote as follows:

“Mr. Speaker:

The House has consistently defended education cost controls to keep pressure in place to lower property taxes for Vermonters, even going past midnight to defend our position for 2017. This amendment would remove all cost controls with no promise of a replacement, so I vote no.”

Rep. Scheuermann of Stowe explained her vote as follows:

“Mr. Speaker:

If only this biennium we had done what Vermonters have begged us to do for so many years – conform comprehensively and meaningfully the education funding system.
For, if we had, maybe – just maybe – we wouldn’t be in the desperate search for equity in outcomes. Which will, undoubtedly, lead to a race to mediocrity.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

**Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**

**H. 93**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to increasing the smoking age from 18 to 21 years of age

Appearing on the Calendar, affecting the revenue of the state, under the rule, was referred to the committee on Ways and Means.

**Action on Bill Postponed**

**H. 863**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making miscellaneous amendments to Vermont’s retirement laws

Was taken up and on motion of Rep. Devereux of Mount Holly, action on the bill was postponed until Friday, April 1, 2016.

**Rules Suspended; Favorable Report; Third Reading Ordered**

**H. 876**

On motion of Rep. Turner of Milton, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to the transportation capital program and miscellaneous changes to transportation-related law

Appearing on the Calendar for notice, was taken up for immediate consideration.


Rep. Helm of Fair Haven, for the committee on Appropriations, to which the bill had been referred reported in favor of its passage.

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time and third reading was ordered.

**Bill Read Second Time; Third Reading Ordered**

**H. 877**

Rep. Masland of Thetford spoke for the committee on Ways & Means.
House bill entitled
An act relating to transportation funding
Having appeared on the Calendar one day for notice, was taken up, read the second time and third reading ordered.

Adjournment

At four o'clock and fourteen minutes in the afternoon, on motion of Rep. Turner of Milton, the House adjourned until tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon.