

Journal of the Senate

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2015

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Yunki Kim of Montpelier.

Committee Relieved of Further Consideration; Bill Committed

S. 14.

On motion of Senator Ayer, the Committee on Health & Welfare was relieved of further consideration of Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to single dose, child-resistant packaging and labeling of marijuana-infused edible or potable products sold by a registered dispensary, and the bill was committed to the Committee on Government Operations.

Joint Resolution Referred

J.R.S. 10.

Joint Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read the first time and is as follows:

By Senators Pollina, Sirotkin, and Zuckerman,

J.R.S. 10. Joint resolution expressing deep concern over growing wealth and income inequality and the decline of family income in Vermont.

Whereas, the Constitution of the State of Vermont, including the common benefits clause, highlights the State's commitment to human rights and equal opportunity, and the Vermont Statutes direct that "The state budget should be designed to address the needs of the people of Vermont in a way that advances human dignity and equity," and

Whereas, high levels of income inequality undermine that commitment, and

Whereas, in a January 2013 *New York Times* op-ed, Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz observed that income and wealth inequality in America is now greater than any time since the 1920s, that it "is squelching our recovery," and "that our middle class is too weak to support consumer spending that has historically driven our economic growth," and

Whereas, in the same newspaper commentary, Stiglitz noted middle-class household income, when adjusted for inflation, is lower than in 1996, and consequently causing service cuts to low- and middle-income Americans, and

Whereas, in a January 2012 issue brief, the Vermont Public Assets Institute found that over the past 24 years the share of income going to Vermont's wealthiest one percent more than tripled, and

Whereas, in November 2014, the Congressional Budget Office reported that for American households in the top one percent for income distribution their inflation-adjusted after-tax income grew 200 percent between 1979 and 2011, and

Whereas, Vermont Department of Taxes' data show that between 2009 and 2012 those Vermonters with incomes above \$500,000.00 had adjusted gross income increases ranging from 51 to 73 percent, while the lowest income Vermonters experienced a decline in adjusted gross income, and

Whereas, U.S. Census Bureau figures show Vermonters' income continues to decline, and they are earning less in real dollars than a decade ago, and

Whereas, in a November 2014 community assessment, Capstone Community Action reported that the aftermath of the recent recession has resulted in more Vermonters on public assistance, and

Whereas, income inequality has a devastating impact on the neediest Vermonters, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses its deep concern over the growing wealth and income inequality in Vermont and its impact on the State's families and economy, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the General Assembly is committed to reducing inequality and raising incomes by rejecting policies that foster inequality and supporting policies that close the income gap and increase income and economic opportunities for all Vermonters.

Thereupon, the President, in his discretion, treated the joint resolution as a bill and referred it to the Committee on Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs.

Bills Introduced

Senate bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time and referred:

S. 36.

By Senators Flory, Ayer, Campbell, Mullin and Sears,
An act relating to postadoption contact agreements.
To the Committee on Judiciary.

S. 37.

By Senators Sirotkin and Doyle,
An act relating to requiring that lobbyists disclose conflicts of interest, to encouraging lobbyists to wear identification, and to creating a pilot project to livestream the proceedings of two committees.
To the Committee on Government Operations.

S. 38.

By Senators Sirotkin and Lyons,
An act relating to the Long-Term Care Evaluation Task Force.
To the Committee on Health & Welfare.

S. 39.

By Senator Rodgers,
An act relating to solid waste management.
To the Committee on Natural Resources & Energy.

**Rules Suspended; Third Reading Ordered; Rules Suspended; Bill Passed
in Concurrence; Bill Messaged**

H. 15.

Appearing on the Calendar for notice, on motion of Senator White, the rules were suspended and House bill entitled:

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the Town of Colchester.

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

Senator White, for the Committee on Government Operations, to which the bill was referred, reported that the bill ought to pass in concurrence.

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time by title only pursuant to Rule 43, and third reading of the bill was ordered.

Thereupon, on motion of Senator White, the rules were suspended and the bill was placed on all remaining stages of its passage in concurrence forthwith.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed in concurrence.

Thereupon, on motion of Senator Campbell, the rules were suspended and the bill was ordered messaged to the House forthwith.

Message from the House No. 9

A message was received from the House of Representatives by Ms. Melissa Kucserik, its Second Assistant Clerk, as follows:

Mr. President:

I am directed to inform the Senate that:

The House has adopted joint resolutions of the following titles:

J.R.H. 1. Joint resolution expressing support for the Public Service Board's establishment of FairPoint Communications service investigation docket and urging the management of FairPoint Communications to settle the current employee strike in order to restore reliable telecommunications services in Vermont.

J.R.H. 2. Joint resolution supporting a woman's right to decide her own reproductive choices, commemorating the 42nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, and the 50th anniversary of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the Senate is requested.

The House has adopted House concurrent resolutions of the following titles:

H.C.R. 7. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Wendy's High School Heisman Awards' Vermont State winners Abigail Schmidt and John Winslow.

H.C.R. 8. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Essex Union High School Hornets State championship boys' volleyball team.

H.C.R. 9. House concurrent resolution congratulating Dr. Delores Barbeau on being named by the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians as the 2014 Physician of the Year.

H.C.R. 10. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Essex Union High School Hornets 2014 Division I championship field hockey team.

H.C.R. 11. House concurrent resolution House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Black River High School Presidents' Division IV championship softball team.

H.C.R. 12. House concurrent resolution designating January 2015 as National Mentoring Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 13. House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative Marion Milne of Washington.

H.C.R. 14. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Dolloff Acres Farm in Springfield on its winning the 2014 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year Award.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the Senate is requested.

House Concurrent Resolutions

The following joint concurrent resolutions having been placed on the consent calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no Senator having requested floor consideration as provided by the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, were severally adopted in concurrence:

By Representative Devereux and others,

By Senators Campbell, Collamore, Flory, McCormack, Mullin and Nitka,

H.C.R. 7.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Wendy's High School Heisman Awards' Vermont State winners Abigail Schmidt and John Winslow.

By Representative Myers and others,

H.C.R. 8.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Essex Union High School Hornets State championship boys' volleyball team.

By Representative Partridge and others,

H.C.R. 9.

House concurrent resolution congratulating Dr. Delores Barbeau on being named by the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians as the 2014 Physician of the Year.

By Representative Myers and others,

H.C.R. 10.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Essex Union High School Hornets 2014 Division I championship field hockey team.

By Representative Devereux,

By Senators Nitka, Campbell and McCormack,

H.C.R. 11.

House concurrent resolution House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2014 Black River High School Presidents' Division IV championship softball team.

By Representative Dakin and others,

By Senators Bray, Campion, MacDonald and White,

H.C.R. 12.

House concurrent resolution designating January 2015 as National Mentoring Month in Vermont.

By All Members of the House,

By All Members of the Senate,

H.C.R. 13.

House concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative Marion Milne of Washington.

By Representative Emmons and others,

H.C.R. 14.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the Dolloff Acres Farm in Springfield on its winning the 2014 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year Award.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Campbell, the Senate adjourned, to reconvene on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon pursuant to J.R.S. 8.