

By Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,
Senate resolution disapproving of Executive Order 05-17.

Whereas, on January 15, 2017, the Governor signed Executive Order 05-17 providing for the creation of an “Agency of Economic Opportunity by reorganizing the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Department of Labor,” and

Whereas, according to the Executive Order, effective April 17, 2017, “the Agency of Economic Opportunity shall administer” many of the “programs formerly administered by the Department of Labor,” including training and inspection, and oversight over enforcement of wage and hour laws, employment practices, the workers’ compensation program, and the unemployment compensation law, and

Whereas, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs has taken testimony and public comment concerning this Executive Order, and

Whereas, the Senate agrees with the Governor that “the goals of greater affordability, economic growth and optimal government efficacy require a stronger and more direct alignment of State government workforce training, recruitment and service programs with economic and community development activities,” and

Whereas, the Senate supports reorganizing State government to improve efficiency, to create a coherent and complete system of workforce training and development, to meet employer demands better where there are workforce shortages, to promote employment opportunities for Vermonters at all skill and education levels, and to increase economic opportunity, and

Whereas, the Senate also wishes to ensure that the Governor's reorganization achieves these goals without leading to unintended consequences, and

Whereas, the Senate is concerned that having one agency fulfill the dual roles of both promoting and regulating business will introduce a conflict between these two missions, and

Whereas, the fair adjudication of employees' rights, in both real and perceived terms, must be safeguarded so that any reorganization cannot weaken the Department of Labor's regulatory and adjudicatory functions, and

Whereas, the best mechanism to explore a merger of the appropriate functions and responsibilities of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and of the Department of Labor is to use the standing committee process, with the resulting opportunity for enhanced research, analysis, and public participation, and

Whereas, as part of this process, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs looks forward to reviewing, and

taking testimony on, the Administration’s complete compilation of all job training and workforce education programs, and

Whereas, the Senate is fully committed to working cooperatively and promptly with the Administration to produce legislation that will achieve our shared goals and that will increase economic opportunities for all Vermonters while also safeguarding workers’ rights, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate:

That the Senate, pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2002, disapproves of Executive Order 05-17, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate looks forward to working with the Administration through the standing committee process to develop legislation that will achieve our shared objectives, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate invites the Administration to bring forward draft legislation to foster a more coherent workforce development “system” in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Philip B. Scott.