



*Making Vermont the Best Place in America to do Business, be Educated and Live Life*

## A HISTORY OF EFFECTIVE POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Vermont has a long tradition of business leaders who contribute their energy and expertise to civic life. The Vermont Business Roundtable (VBR) is squarely in that tradition. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of CEOs from Vermont's top private and nonprofit employers, representing geographic diversity and all major sectors of the Vermont economy, and our work is aimed at broad public benefit. Our mission is to enhance Vermont's quality of life and economic prosperity for all Vermonters in all parts of our state. Since our founding in 1987, we have tackled some of Vermont's most pressing public policy issues, having issued over 60 policy papers on such diverse topics as population and employment forecasts, new models for commercial and industrial development, managing Vermont's fiscal condition, telecommunications infrastructure, and most importantly, educating our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Since our founding in 1987 we have tackled some of Vermont's most pressing public policy issues.*

Elected and appointed officials at all levels of state and local government welcome and respect VBR's analysis, counsel, and advocacy on such topics as public finance, economic development, early childcare and learning, PreK-12 public education, workforce development, and health care and community health.

## HOW WE ADDRESS POLICY ISSUES

VBR work is organized around specific policies or programmatic initiatives. Members typically take part directly or oversee them through VBR working groups and task forces. Our current initiatives are Vermont Talent Pipeline Management, Public Pension Reform, and Early Childcare and Learning. Members help inform the state's policy agenda through our VBR-EPR Business Conditions Survey, Executive Leadership Series, Nordic Education Scholarships, and New Medallion Award. All are described on the next page.

## HOW WE ENGAGE WITH PARTNERS

Collaboration is vital to our efforts. In addition to preeminent executive networking among members, VBR has meaningful partnerships with other business associations, independent business leaders, elected officials, government agencies, and leaders from nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

Charitable foundations have been especially important to

our work for more than a decade. While member dues pay for VBR's operating costs, grants and other contributions through our VBR Research and Education Foundation, a 501 (c) (3), help fund special research projects, initiatives, and educational events.

Recent funders have included J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation, a supporting organization of the Vermont Community Foundation; Nellie Mae Educational Foundation; the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children; PEW Charitable Trusts; the Vermont Community Foundation; and the Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation.

## VBR ROLES AND STRENGTHS IN PUBLIC POLICY WORK

**Research and Analysis.** Whenever we are involved in a public policy issue, we take the care to go deep and understand the history, potential solutions, and economic and human impacts involved. We often frame this work in reports, white papers, and briefings. Issues that we've tackled include birth to 5 education, K - 12 public education delivery system, underfunding of public pension and OPEB liabilities, and government effectiveness.

*Whenever we are involved in a public policy issue, we take the care to go deep and understand the history, potential solutions, and economic and human impacts involved.*

**Communication.** We make access to our policy analysis and recommendations readily available in a variety of formats. These include reports, policy recommendations, testimony transcripts, public radio commentaries, Opinion Editorials, email newsletters, and social media. Many are archived on VBR's website, under the Library and News sections.

*Our most significant convenings have focused on early childhood initiatives, public education reform, and issues affecting executive leadership.*

**Convening.** VBR has a long history of convening policy makers and stakeholders to gather their thoughts, share what we know, and discuss or advocate potential solutions to key policy issues. Our most significant convenings have focused on early childhood initiatives, public education reform, and issues affecting executive leadership.

**Advocacy.** VBR has been effective over the years in advocating for broadly beneficial public policies of a nonpartisan nature, often through presentation of policy positions to elected officials and thought leaders, and through testimony in legislative hearings.

In addition, VBR members exert policy influence by serving on public and nonprofit boards and commissions. When requested, we also provide informal advice on public policy to elected leaders.

## VBR INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATIONS

**Business Conditions Survey.** The VBR-EPR Business Conditions Survey is a joint project with Economic & Policy Resources. Conducted quarterly since 2004, the survey is a tool for tracking business conditions and forecasting the future of Vermont's economy, and providing insights into business sentiments and trends.

**Early Care and Learning.** Investing in early childhood is the smartest investment Vermont can choose to make as a society. Research has consistently shown that brain development and learning begin not in kindergarten or PreK, but in the cradle, with a child's early experiences laying a foundation for all future learning and development. High-quality, affordable early care and learning programs also serve as an economic driver, ensuring that parents can continue to work, and they foster the healthy development of our future workforce, leaders, and innovators.

**Executive Leadership Series.** The Executive Leadership Series breakfast events annually showcase current and emerging trends within the world of work, and create a forum to network, learn and become inspired toward positive action. The event also benefits the region's high school and college students with leadership sessions geared toward them.

**New Medallion Award.** The New Medallion Award was created to annually communicate the importance that the business community places on excellence in educational experience, leadership, and achievement. Each recipient receives a monetary prize, framed certificate and trophy. The 2018 recipient is Ken Cadow, Director of Career Pathways and Workforce Development at Randolph Union High School.

**Nordic Education Scholarships.** Annually the Roundtable addresses the state's skills gaps by awarding scholarships to Vermont students seeking two-year technical degrees.

**Pension Reform Task Force.** The Pension Reform Task Force is an ad hoc working group formed to examine the long-term consequences of unfunded and underfunded pension and health care liabilities of Vermont state employees and preK-12 teachers, including a review of the many policy options available to policy makers, and to champion reforms that may minimize negative outcomes for pension plan participants and taxpayers alike.

**Vermont Talent Pipeline Management (VTPM).** The Vermont Talent Pipeline Management (VTPM) is a unique, employer-led systems model that employs strategies that

leverage lessons learned from supply-chain management and expand the role of employers as end-customers of education and workforce systems. Our efforts seek to improve the employability of Vermont students, to improve alignment of employer needs with education and workforce programs, and to grow Vermont's economy.

The VTPM model integrates alignment of training programs to meet employer demands for jobs, and includes educators, government agencies, regional workforce partners, industry associations, and policy makers.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Mark Foley, Jr., Chair**  
Foley Services, Inc. / MKF Properties

**Judith O'Connell, Vice Chair**  
Champlain Investment Partners

**Scott Giles, Treasurer**  
Vermont Student Assistance Corporation

**Stephanie Mapes, Secretary**  
Paul Frank + Collins P.C.

**Michael Seaver, Immediate Past Chair**  
People's United Bank

**David Bradbury,** Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies

**John Brumsted,** The University of Vermont Health Network

**Sara Byers,** Leonardo's Pizza

**Mark Crow,** Tenth Crow Creative

**Thomas Dee,** Southwestern Vermont Health Care

**Thomas Dunn,** Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc.

**Meg Fleming,** SymQuest Group

**Walter Frame, III,** Trapp Family Lodge

**Dimitri Garder,** Gloabl-Z International, Inc.

**Don George,** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont

**Holly Groschner,** Vermont PBS

**William Shouldice, IV,** Vermont Teddy Bear Company

**Michael Walsh,** NFP

**Larry Williams,** Redstone

## STAFF

**Lisa Ventriss,** President

**Sherra Bourget,** Operations & Communication Director

**Mary Anne Sheahan,** Executive Director, VTPM

Visit [www.vtroundtable.org](http://www.vtroundtable.org) for full body of work



30 Kimball Ave, Suite 300  
South Burlington, VT 05403  
p: 802.865.0410