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H.961

Representatives Webb of Shelburne, Austin of Colchester, Batchelor of Derby, Conlon of Cornwall, Cupoli of Rutland City, Giambatista of Essex, Hooper of Randolph, James of Manchester, Mattos of Milton, and Toof of St. Albans Town move that the bill be amended as follows:

First: by striking out Sec. A.9, [RESERVED], in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. A.9. SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC HIGHER  
EDUCATION IN VERMONT; REPORTS

(a) Creation. There is created the Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont (Committee) to assist the State of Vermont in developing a vision and plan for a high-quality, affordable, and workforce-connected future for public higher education in the State.

(b) Membership.

(1) The Committee shall be composed of up to the following 22 members:

(A) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(B) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

1           (C) the Interim Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) or  
2           designee, and a representative of each of the VSC Board of Trustees, VSC  
3           campus administration, VSC faculty, and VSC students, each appointed by the  
4           Interim Chancellor;

5           (D) the President of the University of Vermont or designee and a  
6           representative of the UVM Board of Trustees, appointed by the President;

7           (E) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or  
8           designee;

9           (F) the Secretary of Education or designee;

10          (G) the Commissioner of Labor or designee;

11          (H) three representatives of the business community, appointed by  
12          the Steering Group created under subsection (c) of this section;

13          (I) two community members representing regions of the State that are  
14          not otherwise represented, appointed by the Steering Group created under  
15          subsection (c) of this section;

16          (J) the President of the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation or  
17          designee;

18          (K) two representatives from Vermont organizations dedicated to  
19          higher education or workforce development, such as Advance Vermont, VSC  
20          Forward, or the Vermont Talent Management Pipeline, appointed by the  
21          Steering Group created under subsection (c) of this section;

1           (L) up to two members appointed at the discretion of the Steering  
2           Group created under subsection (c) of this section.

3           (2) A Committee member may be appointed to fill more than one role as  
4           identified in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

5           (c) Steering Group. On or before June 29, 2020, the Speaker of the House  
6           and the President Pro Tempore shall jointly appoint three members of the  
7           Committee, and the Governor shall appoint two members of the Committee, to  
8           serve as members of a Steering Group. The Steering Group shall provide  
9           leadership to the Committee and shall work with a consulting firm to analyze  
10           the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont’s postsecondary  
11           institutions, as well as create a formal action plan to drive change and  
12           innovation in the State’s postsecondary institutions. The Steering Group may  
13           form one or more subcommittees of the Committee to address key topic areas  
14           in greater depth.

15           (d) Collaboration. The Committee shall seek input from and collaborate  
16           with key stakeholders, as directed by the Steering Group.

17           (e) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study the structure of public  
18           higher education in Vermont, build on previous studies in this area, and offer  
19           recommendations on how to increase affordability, access, retention,  
20           attainment, relevance, and fiscal sustainability, including the following issues:

1           (1) the financial sustainability of the public higher education structure  
2           and its impact on institutional capacity to innovate and meet State goals and  
3           learners’ needs, including a comparison of higher education programs, delivery  
4           models, and structures in other states;

5           (2) the current organizational structure of public higher education in  
6           Vermont and its ability to promote student success; and

7           (3) the alignment of higher education and workforce development goals,  
8           policy frameworks, and partnerships between businesses and institutions of  
9           higher education that are designed to meet the needs of employers and promote  
10           the public value of education.

11           (f) Consultant. The Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, in  
12           collaboration with the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE),  
13           shall issue a request for proposal to hire a consultant to assist the Committee  
14           with responses due from interested parties on or before July 17, 2020. On or  
15           before July 31, 2020, the Steering Group shall select the consultant.

16           (g) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative and technical  
17           assistance of the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office. NEBHE shall  
18           provide project management support to the Committee.

19           (h) Reports. Recognizing the need for near-term action on system  
20           structure, governance, funding, and sustainability, the Committee, through its  
21           Steering Group, shall use a phased approach to reporting. The first interim

1 report shall be due on or before December 20, 2020 and shall focus on the  
2 topics described in subdivision (e)(1) of this section; the second interim report  
3 shall be due on or before June 15, 2021 and shall focus on the topics described  
4 in subdivisions (e)(2) and (3) of this section; and the final report, which shall  
5 collate findings relative to subsection (e) of this section and include the action  
6 plan, shall be due on or before December 15, 2021. All reports shall be in  
7 writing and be delivered to the General Assembly and the Governor.

8 (i) Meetings.

9 (1) The Secretary of Education or designee shall call the first meeting of  
10 the Committee to occur on or before August 28, 2020.

11 (2) The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore shall  
12 jointly select the Committee chair.

13 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

14 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 31, 2022.

15 (j) Compensation and reimbursement.

16 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General  
17 Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee serving in his or her  
18 capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and  
19 reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406.

1           (2) Other members of the Committee, who are not employees of the  
2           State of Vermont, shall be entitled to per diem compensation and  
3           reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

4           (3) Compensation and reimbursement under this subsection shall be, in  
5           each fiscal year 2021 and 2022, for a maximum of:

6                   (A) six in-person meetings of the Committee;

7                   (B) eight in-person meetings of the Steering Group; and

8                   (C) four remote meetings of up to four subcommittees, assuming  
9           compensation and reimbursement for up to five members of each  
10           subcommittee.

11           (4) Payments authorized under this subsection shall be made from  
12           monies appropriated to the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office.

13           (k) Appropriations.

14           (1) The sum of \$40,250.00 is appropriated to the Secretary of Education  
15           in fiscal year 2021 for per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses  
16           for members of the Committee, Steering Group, and subcommittees.

17           (2) The Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office is authorized to transfer  
18           funds identified in Sec. A.3(b) of this act to carry out the actions required  
19           under this section.

20           Second: in Sec. A.40, effective dates, by striking out subsection (a) in its  
21           entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

1        (a) This section and Secs. A.7 (pilot position sunset extension), A.8 (sunset  
2        extension), A.9 (Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in  
3        Vermont), A.18 (military reclassification), A.20 (repurposing one-time  
4        appropriation), A.22 (education fund appropriation technical correction), and  
5        A.26 (Bennington waterline loan subsidy increase) shall take effect upon  
6        passage.