

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred Senate Bill No. 281
3 entitled “An act relating to the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in
4 Vermont” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends
5 that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and
6 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. WORKING GROUP ON THE STATUS OF LIBRARIES IN
8 VERMONT; REPORT

9 (a) Creation. There is created the Working Group on the Status of
10 Libraries in Vermont to study and report on the statewide status of Vermont’s
11 libraries. The Working Group is formed with the intent of strengthening and
12 supporting libraries of all sizes and improving library services for the public.

13 (b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following
14 members:

15 (1) the State Librarian;

16 (2) the President of the Vermont Library Association or designee;

17 (3) the Executive Director of the Vermont Humanities Council or
18 designee;

19 (4) three representatives of public libraries, who shall be from libraries
20 of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by the State
21 Librarian;

1 (5) two representatives of public school libraries, who shall be from
2 schools of different sizes and from different regions of the State, appointed by
3 the Secretary of Education;

4 (6) two representatives of college and university libraries, appointed by
5 the President of the College and Special Libraries Section of the Vermont
6 Library Association; and

7 (7) one public library trustee, appointed by the President of the Friends
8 and Trustees Section of the Vermont Library Association.

9 (c) Powers and Duties. The Working Group shall study:

10 (1) library services for specific segments of the Vermont population,
11 including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, youths and children,
12 immigrant and migrant communities, and people living in poverty;

13 (2) the role that libraries play in emergency preparedness, cultural
14 diversity and inclusion, public health and safety, community identity and
15 resiliency, economic development, and access to public programs and services;

16 and

17 (3) the current overall status of Vermont libraries, which may include
18 information related to programming, collections, facilities, technology, and
19 staffing.

20 (A) Programming. The Working Group may study the types and
21 frequency of library programs, attendance at library programs, and whether

1 library programs are meeting community needs. The study of programming
2 may include an assessment of public engagement and outreach surrounding
3 library programming, as well as the opportunities for nonlibrary programs and
4 groups to access Vermont libraries.

5 (B) Collections. The Working Group may study the size and
6 diversity of library holdings and assess the strengths and gaps in materials
7 available to Vermonters. The study of collections may include an assessment
8 of how libraries may best share resources across differing libraries and
9 communities, whether libraries offer community-specific resources, and
10 whether libraries maintain special collections or historical artifacts.

11 (C) Facilities. The Working Group may study whether library
12 facilities and buildings could be improved with regard to energy efficiency,
13 accessibility, flexibility, human health and safety, historic preservation, and
14 intergenerational needs.

15 (D) Technology. The Working Group may study whether Vermont
16 libraries have sufficient access to basic technological resources, cyber-security
17 resources, high-speed Internet, electronic catalogs, interlibrary loan and other
18 interoperable systems, and appropriate hardware and software.

19 (E) Staff. The Working Group may study staffing levels at Vermont
20 libraries, whether staffing levels are sufficient to meet community needs,
21 whether library staff compensation and benefits are sufficient, how libraries

1 rely on volunteers, and what resources are available for workforce
2 development and training of library staff.

3 (d) Public Input. As part of the study and report, the Working Group shall
4 solicit feedback from the general public and library users around the State.
5 The Working Group may examine models for library management and
6 organization in other states, including the formation of statewide service
7 networks.

8 (e) Consultation with the Board of Libraries. The Working Group may
9 solicit feedback from the Board of Libraries.

10 (f) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative,
11 technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Libraries. For purposes of
12 scheduling meetings and preparing recommended legislation, the Working
13 Group shall have the assistance of the Office of Legislative Council.

14 (g) Report. On or before November 1, 2021, the Working Group shall
15 submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Education. The report
16 shall contain:

17 (1) specific and detailed findings and proposals concerning the issues set
18 forth in subsection (c) of this section;

19 (2) recommendations for updating the statutes, rules, standards, and the
20 governance structures of Vermont libraries to ensure equitable access for

1 Vermont residents, efficient use of resources, and quality in the provision of
2 services;

3 (3) recommendations related to the funding needs of Vermont libraries,
4 including capital, ongoing, and special funding, and an assessment of whether
5 there is a need for State aid and, if so, the amounts that may be distributed; and

6 (4) any other information or recommendations that the Working Group
7 may deem necessary.

8 (h) Meetings.

9 (1) The State Librarian shall be the Chair of the Working Group.

10 (2) The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur
11 within 45 days after the effective date of this act.

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

13 (4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on December 1, 2021.

14 (i) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Working Group
15 shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
16 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 12 meetings. These
17 payments shall be made from the General Fund.

18 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19 This act shall take effect on passage.

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3 (Committee vote: _____)

4

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE