S.106

1 Introduced by Senators Sirotkin and Brock
2 Referred to Committee on:
3 Date:
4 Subject: Legislature; pilot project to livestream legislative proceedings;
   lobbyist identification; lobbyist compliance
5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a pilot
6 project to livestream committee proceedings and floor proceedings of the
7 General Assembly, to encourage lobbyists to wear identification, and to require
8 a report on lobbyist compliance.

An act relating to the livestream of legislative proceedings of the General
Assembly and lobbying regulations

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. PILOT PROJECT TO LIVESTREAM LEGISLATIVE
PROCEEDINGS

The Office of Legislative Information Technology shall facilitate and
coordinate a pilot project with a for-profit or nonprofit entity to assist and
assess the effectiveness and cost of audio or audio and video livestreaming the
legislative proceedings of the General Assembly. The pilot project shall
include the livestream, by audio or audio and video means, of all public
proceedings of standing committees of both chambers and on the floors of the House of Representatives and the Senate during the 2022 legislative session.

Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; LOBBYING REGULATIONS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Lobbyists can fulfill an important part in the legislative process by ensuring that the perspectives of organizations, interest groups, and stakeholders are heard.

(2) However, as the number of lobbyists who work in the State House has increased, it has become more difficult for Representatives and Senators, staff, press, and members of the public to know who is a lobbyist and whom a lobbyist may be representing.

(3) As a result, some members of the public may have the perception that there is a lack of transparency as to who is working as a lobbyist and for whom.

(4) Encouraging every lobbyist to wear identification that clearly indicates the lobbyist’s name and the name of the lobbyist’s client or firm will improve transparency and promote public trust in the legislative process.

Sec. 3. LOBBYIST IDENTIFICATION

(a) When the General Assembly is in session, a lobbyist as defined in 2 V.S.A. § 261 is encouraged to wear a name tag or another form of identification that is clearly visible and that:
(1) states:

(A) the lobbyist’s name; and

(B) the lobbyist’s client or employer or, in cases where the lobbyist represents more than one client or employer, the name of the lobbyist’s firm, if any; and

(2) is substantially similar in size, format, and information displayed to a sample name tag or identification that shall be developed by the Sergeant at Arms.

(b) The Sergeant at Arms and the Office of Legislative Counsel shall report to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2023 on the rate of compliance by lobbyists with this section, the advantages and disadvantages of requiring that lobbyists wear name tags or identification, and a recommendation as to whether a voluntary program is sufficient or whether further legislative action to improve participation should be considered. In preparing their report, the Sergeant at Arms and the Office of Legislative Counsel shall solicit input from lobbyists, Representatives and Senators, staff of the General Assembly, and other stakeholders.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.