At one o'clock and fifteen minutes in the afternoon the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises
A moment of silence was held in lieu of a devotional.

Committee Bill Introduced; Referred to Ways and Means
H. 446
By the Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife
House bill, entitled
An act relating to miscellaneous natural resources and development subjects
Was read the first time and pending appearance on the Calendar for Notice, and pursuant to Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered
H. 225
Rep. Pugh of South Burlington, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred House bill, entitled
An act relating to possession of a therapeutic dosage of buprenorphine
Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:
Sec. 1. INTENT
It is the intent of the General Assembly to decriminalize possession of 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine. Persons under 21 years of age in possession of 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine would be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program. Persons under 16 years of age in possession of 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine would be subject to delinquency proceedings in the Family Division of the Superior Court. Knowing and unlawful possession of more than 224 milligrams of buprenorphine would continue to be criminal and penalized in the same manner as other narcotics pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4234.
Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 4234 is amended to read:

§ 4234. DEPRESSANT, STIMULANT, AND NARCOTIC DRUGS

(a) Possession.

(1)(A) Except as provided by subdivision (B) of this subdivision (1), a person knowingly and unlawfully possessing a depressant, stimulant, or narcotic drug, other than heroin or cocaine, shall be imprisoned not more than one year or fined not more than $2,000.00, or both.

(B) A person knowingly and unlawfully possessing 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine shall not be punished in accordance with subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1).

(c) Possession of buprenorphine by a person under 21 years of age.

(1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a person under 21 years of age who knowingly and unlawfully possesses 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine commits a civil violation and shall be subject to the provisions of section 4230b of this title.

(2) A person under 16 years of age who knowingly and unlawfully possesses 224 milligrams or less of buprenorphine commits a delinquent act and shall be subject to the provisions of section 4230j of this title.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.

The bill, having appeared on the Calendar one day for Notice, was taken up, read the second time, and the report of the Committee on Human Services was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, Rep. Morgan, L. of Milton demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 126. Nays, 19.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Ancel of Calais        Gregoire of Fairfield        Page of Newport City
Anthony of Barre City  Harrison of Chittenden     Pajala of Londonderry
Arrison of Weathersfield Hilley of Lowell         Palasik of Milton
Austin of Colchester   Hooper of Montpelier        Parsons of Newbury
Bartholomew of Hartland Hooper of Randolph        Partridge of Windham *
Beck of St. Johnsbury  Hooper of Burlington        Patt of Worcester
Birong of Vergennes | Houghton of Essex | Pearl of Danville
Black of Essex | Howard of Rutland City | Pugh of South Burlington
Bleumle of Burlington | James of Manchester | Rachelson of Burlington
Bock of Chester | Jerome of Brandon | Redmond of Essex *
Bongartz of Manchester | Jessup of Middlesex | Rogers of Waterville *
Bos-Lun of Westminster | Killacky of South Burlington | Rosenquist of Georgia
Brady of Williston * | Kimbell of Woodstock | Satcowitz of Randolph
Briglin of Thetford | Kitzmiller of Montpelier | Scheu of Middlebury
Brown of Richmond | Kornheiser of Brattleboro * | Scheuermann of Stowe
Brownell of Pownal | LaClair of Barre Town | Shaw of Pittsford
Brumsted of Shelburne | LaLonde of South | Sheldon of Middlebury
Burditt of West Rutland | Burlington | Sibilia of Dover
Burke of Brattleboro | Lanpher of Vergennes | Sims of Craftsbury
Burrows of West Windsor | Lefebvre of Newark | Small of Winooski
Campbell of St. Johnsbury | Leffler of Enosburgh | Smith of New Haven
Christie of Hartford | Lippert of Hinesburg | Squirrel of Underhill
Cina of Burlington | Marcotte of Coventry | Stebbins of Burlington *
Coffey of Guilford | Martin of Franklin * | Strong of Albany
Colbourn of Burlington * | Masland of Thetford | Sullivan of Dorset *
Colston of Winooski | Mattos of Milton | Surprenant of Barnard
Conlon of Cornwall | McCarthy of St. Albans City | Taylor of Colchester
Copeland Hanzas of | McCormack of Burlington | Till of Jericho
Bradford | McCullough of Williston | Toleno of Brattleboro
Corcoran of Bennington | McFaun of Barre Town | Toof of St. Albans Town
Cordes of Lincoln | Morris of Springfield | Townsend of South
Cupoli of Rutland City | Morrissey of Bennington | Burlington
Dolan of Essex | Mrowicki of Putney | Vyhovsky of Essex
Dolan of Waitsfield | Mulvaney-Stanak of | Walz of Barre City
Donahue of Northfield | Burlington | Webb of Shelburne
Donnelly of Hyde Park | Murphy of Fairfax | White of Bethel
Durfee of Shaftsbury | Nicoll of Ludlow | White of Hartford
Elder of Starksboro | Nigro of Bennington | Whitman of Bennington *
Emmons of Springfield | Norris of Shoreham | Wood of Waterbury
Feltus of Lyndon | Notte of Rutland City | Yacovone of Morristown
Gannon of Wilmington | Noyes of Wolcott | Yantachka of Charlotte
Goldman of Rockingham | O'Brien of Tunbridge |
Grad of Moretown | Ode of Burlington |

Those who voted in the negative are:

|ACHHEY of Middletown | Graham of Williamstown | Morgan, M. of Milton
Springs | Hango of Berkshire | Peterson of Clarendon
Batchelor of Derby | Helm of Fair Haven | Savage of Swanton
Brennan of Colchester | Lefebvre of Orange | Smith of Derby
Canfield of Fair Haven | Martel of Waterford | Terenzini of Rutland Town
Fagan of Rutland City | McCoy of Poultney | Williams of Granby
Goslant of Northfield * | Morgan, L. of Milton |
Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Dickinson of St. Albans  Norris of Sheldon  Troiano of Stannard
Town  Seymour of Sutton

**Rep. Brady of Williston** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted yes today on H 225 on behalf of people who cannot. I voted yes today for too many of my high school students who taught me about the trauma of addiction and even what the hub and spoke model is because they poured their souls into research projects that were all too personal. Too many of my students are experts about the toll of addiction by losing parents, siblings and friends. I also voted yes today in memory of my cousin who lost his battle with addiction tragically young.”

**Rep. Colburn of Burlington** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes. To any Vermonter struggling with substance use disorder, please stay with us, in whatever way works for you. We love you, you matter, and we want you here.”

**Rep. Goslant of Northfield** explained his vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

I voted no on H.225. I also want to save lives. I strongly believe this drug will save the lives of people fighting addiction. However, my concern is that this drug could lead an unsuspecting, uninformed young person down the road toward addiction. If that tragic event was to happen, my decision would haunt me for life.

I also feel we did not have current testimony from the Vermont Department of Public Safety and the Vermont Department of Health and probably others as I feel this bill was rushed.

I wish I had more time and testimony to possibly support this bill. After all, we all want to save and protect ALL lives. Thank you”

**Rep. James of Manchester** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

Madame Speaker, I vote yes today in support of everyone who is struggling with opioid use disorder and everyone who has fought or is fighting to overcome the disease of addiction. The barriers to recovery are real and they
are daunting. I vote yes to break down those barriers, to confront stigma, to help my fellow Vermonters, to reduce harm, and to save lives. ”

**Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

Today I gratefully vote yes to put personal decisions in the hands of my neighbors and save lives.”

**Rep. Martin of Franklin** explained his vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

Thank you Madame Speaker. I cautiously voted YES on this bill in honor of my cousin and childhood best friend who succumbed to his addictions fueled by his constant run ins with the judicial system from a young age. The culture he ultimately embraced by being a regular in the courtroom never helped reverse the course of his addiction. A hard hand has proved to not be the solution. Vermonter’s suffering from this disease need our help and I believe this bill creates a path forward.”

**Rep. Partridge of Windham** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

Nearly four years ago, my niece died of a fentanyl overdose. Had something less lethal been available to her, she might be alive today. If you have not experienced the loss of a loved one to substance abuse disorder, you are fortunate. It breaks hearts and tears families apart. Today, I cast my vote for Megan Anne and have faith that this bill will save lives.”

**Rep. Redmond of Essex** explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

I cast my yes vote today in honor of 13 women who had returned to VT communities post-incarceration and have passed away since last November, the majority due to overdose. We must activate every tool in the toolbox to help Vermonters struggling with substance use disorder. In our Human Services Committee, we heard repeated testimony from providers that some Vermonters who don’t trust systems and institutions initially use non-prescription buprenorphine as their first steps to get into doctor-prescribed Medication Assisted Treatment. This is about reducing harm and giving Vermonters every pathway possible into treatment.”
Rep. Rogers of Waterville explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

For those who have lost someone to an opiate overdose, there is no right or wrong way that the life should have been saved. The right way to save their life would’ve been the way that worked for them.”

Rep. Stebbins of Burlington explained her vote as follows:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes on H.225, because this bill will help save lives and also in honor of a constituent. This constituent ran against me in this past year’s primary. Throughout his campaign, he shared his personal story of nearly dying and living homeless, as a result of addiction. His strength of character and focus on helping everyone he can struggling with addiction, stays with me. When he lost the campaign, I vowed to keep his story and message front and center in my mind.”

Rep. Sullivan of Dorset explained her vote as follows:

“I voted yes. The biggest effect of decriminalization has been to allow the stigma of drug addiction to fall, to let people speak clearly and to pursue professional help without fear. This Bill allows the possibility to deal with drug users outside the criminal system. Criminal prohibitions have also impeded the use of drugs for legitimate medical research, and have prevented patients from accessing drugs for palliative care and pain treatment. It is best for governments to rely instead on non-penal regulatory and public health policies when they can.”

Rep. Whitman of Bennington explained his vote as follows:

“I believe that today we have sent a message to all Vermonter that substance use disorder is not a crime. Thank you.”

Adjournment

At two o'clock and twenty-eight minutes in the afternoon, on motion of Rep. McCoy of Poultney, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.