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

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Brittney L. Wilson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Mr. Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 10th day of February, 2022, he returned without signature and vetoed a bill originating in the House of Representatives of the following title:

H. 157  An act relating to registration of construction contractors

Governor’s Veto Letter

“February 10, 2022

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I am returning H. 157, An act relating to registration of contractors, without my signature because of my objections described herein.

As I have previously said, I strongly support protecting the interests of consumers, who are already facing a crisis of affordability. I also support policy that helps Vermont’s small businesses succeed and grow. These small, local businesses are the heart and soul of our communities and the backbone of our economy.

The fact is the findings of the Legislature in support of this bill are flawed.
This bill has the potential to undermine and weaken a large number of Vermont’s small businesses – small, local residential contractors – at a time when we all agree we must prioritize new and revitalized housing.

More specifically, this bill favors larger and more established businesses at the expense of small entry-level businesses by imposing, by law, specific contract and insurance requirements that many of the smaller businesses will not be able to meet. Such specific requirements are rarely, if ever imposed on other professions. Ultimately, these provisions harm small businesses – which could lead to closures – and they harm consumers through higher costs and fewer options for making needed repairs.

There are multiple ways of finding residential contractors in one’s community and for holding contractors accountable without creating this new regulatory system. One can find directories maintained by trades associations, as well as commercial listings, social media, consumer sites, references, and, of course, word of mouth.

Importantly, there are existing avenues for determining and adjudicating complaints already, as well as an existing Home Improvement Fraud Registry. Current law clearly authorizes the Attorney General to pursue both civil and criminal complaints against contractors for unfair or deceptive acts or practices. The Criminal Law provisions relating to home improvement fraud apply to oral and written contracts for $500 or more; convictions for home improvement fraud require notice to the Attorney General; and the Attorney General maintains the Home Improvement Fraud Registry (although it is important to note successfully completed deferred sentences will be expunged).

Finally, the Legislature concedes in its findings that registration confers no assurance of competence. Given this concession, we should not risk the economic harm of this legislation when we already have tools in the toolbox to protect consumers and perhaps those tools should be sharpened.

I would agree there is room to improve existing processes already designed to protect consumers, but not necessarily through Legislative action, and certainly not action that could advantage larger established entities over small, local mom-and-pop businesses; reduce our contracting workforce and increase costs for already over-burdened consumers – not to mention the $250 fee that will be charged to get on this registry.

As legislators are well aware, I have been willing to work with you to find a path forward, but based on the objections outlined above, I cannot support this piece of legislation and must return it without my signature pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.
Sincerely,

/s/Philip B. Scott

Philip B. Scott
Governor
PBS/kp”

Communication from Rep. Paul Martin

Received February 9, 2022

“To:
House Speaker Jill Krowinski
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Governor Phil Scott
109 State Street Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

From:
Representative Paul Martin
172 Square Road
Franklin, VT 05457

Dear Governor Scott & House Speaker Krowinski,

It is with great sadness that I must tender this resignation of my seat in the Vermont House of Representatives. Serving the people of my district for the short time that I have been able to has been a great honor and an experience that I will never forget.

I pursued this position with great intentions of working to make Vermont a better place not only for my district but for all Vermonters. The workload and level of commitment required to effectively serve has proven to be far too much for me to balance while running my real estate company in the beautiful City of St. Albans. It has occurred to me in recent weeks that I simply must prioritize my career and the 17 real estate professionals that I lead daily in their successes. I am proud to run a real estate office that employs 12 women and helps Vermonters buy and sell their own slice of our beautiful state. I must remain committed to them, my clients, and my community.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve in the House and hope one day in the future I can pursue a seat within the body when I am much better equipped to handle the commitments required.
Respectfully,

/s/ Paul Martin
Representative Paul Martin”

House Resolution Adopted

H.R. 17

House resolution, entitled

House resolution relating to extending the time-limited hybrid operation of the House of Representatives and House committees and to House Rules Committee meeting authority

Offered by: Committee on Rules

Whereas, 2022, H.R. 16 authorized through Tuesday, February 15, 2022 the hybrid operation of the House of Representatives and House committees and the remote operation of the House Rules Committee, and

Whereas, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a risk to the health and safety of House members, legislative staff, and members of the public, and

Whereas, the House of Representatives wants to ensure a safe process in returning to in-person legislating, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the House of Representatives shall continue to operate in a hybrid manner, whereby House members shall debate and vote in the House chamber but may do so through remote participation if the member must be absent from the chamber due to symptomatic illness or direct COVID-19-related circumstances, and be it further

Resolved: That House committees shall continue to operate in a hybrid manner, such that a member of a House committee may debate and vote remotely in their committee if the member confirms with the member’s committee chair that the member must be absent from committee due to symptomatic illness or direct COVID-19-related circumstances, and be it further

Resolved: That the Committee on Rules is authorized to meet remotely as necessary to address COVID-19-related matters that may impact the operation of the House and its committees, and be it further

Resolved: That the hybrid and remote authority set forth in this resolution shall remain in effect through Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Was read and adopted.
Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to Other Committee

H. 635

Rep. Grad of Moretown moved that the Committee on Judiciary be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to secondary enforcement of minor traffic offenses
And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Government Operations, which was agreed to.

Senate Proposal of Amendment to House Proposal of Amendment Concedured in

S. 30

An act relating to prohibiting possession of firearms within hospital buildings

The Senate concurred in the House proposal of amendment with the following proposal of amendment thereto:

In Sec. 2, 13 V.S.A. § 4019, by striking out subsection (d) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (d) to read as follows:

(d) A person shall not transfer a firearm to another person if:

1. the transfer requires a background check under this section or under federal law; and

2. the licensed dealer facilitating the transfer has not been provided with a unique identification number for the transfer by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Which proposal of amendment was considered.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment to the House proposal of amendment?, Rep. Brennan of Colchester 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 House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment to the House proposal of amendment?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 91. Nays, 53.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Ancel of Calais       Elder of Starksboro       O'Brien of Tunbridge
Anthony of Barre City Emmons of Springfield  Ode of Burlington
Arrison of Weathersfield Fagan of Rutland City  Partridge of Windham
Austin of Colchester  Garofano of Essex      Patt of Worcester
Bartholomew of Hartland Goldman of Rockingham  Pugh of South Burlington
Black of Essex *  Grad of Moretown  Rachelson of Burlington
Bluemle of Burlington  Hooper of Burlington  Rogers of Waterville
Bock of Chester  Houghton of Essex  Satcowitz of Randolph
Bongartz of Manchester  Howard of Rutland City  Scheu of Middlebury
Bos-Lun of Westminster  James of Manchester  Sheldon of Middlebury
Brady of Williston  Jerome of Brandon  Sims of Craftsbury
Briglin of Richmond  Killacky of South Burlington  Squirrel of Underhill
Brumsted of Shelburne  Kimbell of Woodstock  Stebbins of Burlington
Burke of Brattleboro  Kitzmiller of Montpelier  Stevens of Waterbury
Burrows of West Windsor  Kornheiser of Brattleboro  Sullivan of Dorset
Campbell of St. Johnsbury  LaLonde of South  Surprenant of Barnard
Chase of Colchester  Burlington  Taylor of Colchester
Christie of Hartford  Lanpher of Vergennes  Till of Jericho
Cina of Burlington  Lippert of Hinesburg  Toleno of Brattleboro
Coffey of Guilford  Long of Newfane  Townsend of South
Colburn of Burlington  Masland of Thetford  Burlington
Colston of Winooski  McCarthy of St. Albans City  Troiano of Stannard
Conlon of Cornwall  McCormack of Burlington  Walz of Barre City
Copeland Hanzas of Bradford  Morris of Springfield  White of Bethel
Corcoran of Bennington  Mrowicki of Putney  White of Hartford
Cordes of Lincoln  Mulvaney-Stanak of  Whitman of Bennington
Dolan of Essex  Burlington  Wood of Waterbury
Dolan of Waitsfield  Nicoll of Ludlow  Yacovone of Morristown
Donnally of Hyde Park  Nigro of Bennington  Yantachka of Charlotte
Durfee of Shaftsbury  Notte of Rutland City

Those who voted in the negative are:

Achey of Middletown  Higley of Lowell  Page of Newport City
Springs  Hooper of Randolph  Pajala of Londonderry
Beck of St. Johnsbury  Labor of Morgan  Palasik of Milton
Brennan of Colchester  LaClair of Barre Town  Parsons of Newbury
Brownell of Pownal  Lefebvre of Newark  Pearl of Danville
Burditt of West Rutland  Lefebvre of Orange  Peterson of Clarendon
Canfield of Fair Haven  Leffler of Enosburgh  Rosenquist of Georgia
Cupoli of Rutland City  Martocci of Coventry  Scheuermann of Stowe
Dickinson of St. Albans  Martel of Waterford  Seymour of Sutton
Town  Mattos of Milton  Shaw of Pittsford
Donahue of Northfield  McCoy of Poultney  Sibilia of Dover
Feltus of Lyndon  McFaul of Barre Town  Smith of Derby
Gannon of Wilmington  Morgan, L. of Milton  Smith of New Haven
Goslant of Northfield  Morgan, M. of Milton  Strong of Albany
Graham of Williamstown  Morrissette of Bennington  Toof of St. Albans Town
Gregoire of Fairfield  Murphy of Fairfax  Walker of Swanton
Hango of Berkshire  Norris of Sheldon  Williams of Granby
Harrison of Chittenden  Norris of Shoreham
Helm of Fair Haven  Noyes of Wolcott
Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Birong of Vergennes  Terenzini of Rutland Town
Hooper of Montpelier  Vyhoffsky of Essex

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

“Madam Speaker:

Until it is established that you are not prohibited from possessing a firearm, you should not have one. There are some things that are far more important than the inconvenience of taking a little bit of extra time. And this amendment ensures that.”

**Third Reading; Bill Passed**

*H. 477*

House bill, entitled

An act relating to leave for crime victims

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed.

**Message from the Senate No. 22**

A message was received from the Senate by Mr. Marshall, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has on its part passed Senate bill of the following title:

*S. 280.* An act relating to miscellaneous changes to laws related to vehicles.

In the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

**Adjournment**

At one o'clock and forty-seven 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.