

Journal of the Senate

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Jeff Fuller of Waterbury.

Senate Bill Recommitted

S. 101.

Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to promoting housing choice and opportunity in smart growth areas.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of Senator Sirotkin, the bill was recommitted to the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

Senate Resolution Referred

S.R. 16.

Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read the first time and is as follows:

Senate resolution urging the United States Postal Service to improve immediately the reliability and timeliness of its deliveries and requesting that Congress take any necessary legislative actions to effectuate this objective.

By Senator Sears, Balint, Campion, and White,

S.R. 16. Senate resolution urging the United States Postal Service to improve immediately the reliability and timeliness of its deliveries and requesting that Congress take any necessary legislative actions to effectuate this objective.

Whereas, even in the digital age, the United States Postal Service (USPS) remains essential for Vermonters and Vermont's economy, and

Whereas, the USPS is mandated to be self-sufficient while also prefunding its future retirees' health benefits far into the future, and

Whereas, to improve USPS revenues, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and the Postal Board of Governors adopted a 10-year USPS transformation plan entitled “Delivering for America” which focuses more on profitability and less on timely service, and

Whereas, the 10-year plan includes an intentional slowing, from three to six days, of the USPS delivery standard for first class mail, and

Whereas, this standard is resulting in deteriorating postal service nationwide, as seen in the fact that approximately 92 percent of first-class mail was delivered on time in the first quarter of 2020 while, during the same period in 2021, that figure fell to 78 percent, and

Whereas, many Vermont communities, including Barre, Bennington, Marshfield, Montpelier, Pownal, Shaftsbury, Stowe, and Williston, have experienced extensive USPS delivery delays, and

Whereas, the late receipt of credit card and utility bills may result in damage to a person’s credit rating or the suspension of a basic utility service, and

Whereas, the tardy arrival of critical medications sent via USPS could be life threatening, and

Whereas, the Bennington Post Office informed an individual that the delivery of packages would be delayed until the post office had the time and/or staff to deliver them, and a full workweek after a stated delivery date had passed the parcels still remained undelivered, and

Whereas, the shortcomings of the USPS are also impacting businesses such as Vermont News & Media, which publishes the *Bennington Banner*, the *Brattleboro Reformer*, and the *Manchester Journal*, and

Whereas, the company attributes the cancellation of over 200 newspaper subscriptions in Bennington and Windham Counties and an anticipated revenue loss of at least \$45,000 to the USPS, and this is merely one example of the negative financial effects of USPS delivery delays on Vermont corporations, and

Whereas, the USPS’s new “Delivering for America” plan is causing significant harm to the health and economic livelihoods of individuals and corporations in Vermont and nationally and should be immediately reassessed, and

Whereas, the postal problems Vermonters are encountering are due to flawed national USPS policies and are not the fault of the hard-working USPS employees in Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate:

That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges the United States Postal Service to reassess its 10-year transformation plan with the goal of immediately restoring the reliability and timeliness of mail delivery to the standard that existed prior to the plan's implementation, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont requests that Congress take any necessary legislative action, including revising the retiree health benefit prefunding requirement, to effectuate this objective, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, the Postal Board of Governors, the Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform's Subcommittee on Government Operations, the U.S. House and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Thereupon, the President, in her discretion, treated the joint resolution as a bill and referred it to the Committee on Government Operations.

Bills Introduced

Senate bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time and referred:

S. 234.

By Senators Bray, Balint, Clarkson and Lyons,

An act relating to changes to Act 250.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

S. 235.

By Senators Bray, Starr, Clarkson and Lyons,

An act relating to Act 250 jurisdiction over agricultural businesses.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

S. 236.

By Senators Bray, Lyons, Clarkson, Hardy, McCormack and Pearson,

An act relating to extended producer responsibility for packaging and paper products.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

S. 237.

By Senators Bray, Lyons, McCormack and Ram Hinsdale,

An act relating to surface water withdrawals and interbasin transfers.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

S. 238.

By Senators Hooker, Balint, Hardy, Lyons, Pollina, Ram Hinsdale and Sirotkin,

An act relating to pharmacy benefit management.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 239.

By Senators Hooker, Balint, Hardy, Lyons, Pollina and Ram Hinsdale,

An act relating to enrollment in Medicare supplemental insurance policies.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 240.

By Senators Hooker, Pollina and Ram Hinsdale,

An act relating to patient financial assistance policies and medical debt protection.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 241.

By Senators Hooker, Balint, Hardy, Pollina and Ram Hinsdale,

An act relating to achieving health equity across the health care system.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 242.

By Senator Lyons,

An act relating to prescription drugs dispensed by a health insurer-designated pharmacy for administration to a patient in a health care setting.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 243.

By Senators Lyons, Hardy, Sears and Sirotkin,

An act relating to implementation of an unused prescription drug repository program.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

S. 244.

By Senator Lyons,

An act relating to strengthening primary care and primary care providers.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

Senate Concurrent Resolutions

The following joint concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the consent calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no Senator having requested floor consideration as provided by the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, were severally adopted on the part of the Senate:

By Senators White and Balint,

By Reps. Partridge and others,

S.C.R. 10.

Senate concurrent resolution congratulating the 2021 Bellows Falls Union High School Terriers Division II championship varsity football team..

House Concurrent Resolutions

The following joint concurrent resolutions having been placed on the consent calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no Senator having requested floor consideration as provided by the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, were severally adopted in concurrence:

By All Members of the House,

By All Members of the Senate,

H.C.R. 76.

House concurrent resolution congratulating Elle Purrier St. Pierre on her outstanding performance in the 2020 Olympics women's 1500-meter race.

By Reps. Hango and others,

By Senators Brock and Parent,

H.C.R. 77.

House concurrent resolution honoring Douglas Weld for his exemplary community service in the town of Berkshire.

By Reps. Marcotte and others,

By Senators Ingalls and Starr,

H.C.R. 78.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the successful rescue effort of Newport City Fire Chief John Harlamert and retired Chief Robert (RJ) George.

By Reps. Mattos and others,

H.C.R. 79.

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2021 Milton High School Yellowjackets Division II boys' varsity soccer team.

By Reps. Burke and others,

By Senators Balint and White,

H.C.R. 80.

House concurrent resolution honoring former Brattleboro Town Manager Peter Elwell for his outstanding municipal public service.

By Reps. Donahue and others,

H.C.R. 81.

House concurrent resolution in memory and recognition of Henry A. LaGue Jr. of Berlin.

By Reps. Shaw and others,

H.C.R. 82.

House concurrent resolution honoring former Brandon Police Lieutenant Rodney Pulsifer for his exemplary law enforcement career.

By Reps. Burke and others,

By Senators Balint and White,

H.C.R. 83.

House concurrent resolution honoring former Brattleboro Public Works Director Stephen Barrett for his outstanding municipal public service.

By Reps. Burke and others,

By Senators Balint and White,

H.C.R. 84.

House concurrent resolution honoring the civic contributions of John H. and Mary F. Carnahan to the community life of Brattleboro.

By Reps. Stevens and others,

H.C.R. 85.

House concurrent resolution designating January 20, 2022, as Homelessness Awareness Day in Vermont.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Balint, the Senate adjourned until one o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, January 13, 2022.