

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was  
3 referred House Bill No. 703 entitled “An act relating to promoting workforce  
4 development” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting  
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRITICAL WORKFORCE  
8 SHORTAGES; PRIORITIZING HEALTH AND SAFETY;  
9 APPROPRIATIONS

10 In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General  
11 Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

12 (1) \$1,000,000.00 for program funding for mental health nursing  
13 programs:

14 (A) \$500,000.00 to the University of Vermont; and

15 (B) \$500,000.00 to Vermont State University.

16 (2) \$6,000,000.00 to Vermont State University to double the nursing  
17 program capacity.

18 (3) \$3,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont to scale up its nursing  
19 program by 50 percent.

20 (4) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services for project  
21 management, stakeholder participation, and implementation costs of the Health

1 Care Workforce Development Strategic Plan, exclusive of financial incentive  
2 programs.

3 Sec. 2. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR EXPANDING  
4 THE LABOR FORCE; INCREASING THE NUMBER OF  
5 PARTICIPANTS AND PARTICIPATION RATES;  
6 APPROPRIATIONS

7 (a) In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the  
8 General Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

9 (1) \$5,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement  
10 to administer and equitably grant a statewide grant program of \$5,000.00 per  
11 graduate for recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education  
12 institutions who stay to work in Vermont.

13 (2) \$3,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to  
14 administer up to \$3,000.00 per individual for matching grants for paid  
15 Vermont internships or registered apprenticeships where the grant matches  
16 employer contribution up to the grant limit. The employer contribution shall  
17 meet or exceed Vermont livable wage requirements on its own or any existing  
18 internship or apprenticeship rules for paid work experiences.

19 (3) \$2,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to  
20 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont, to support  
21 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

1           (4) \$300,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat  
2           cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

3           (5) \$1,500,000.00 to the Department of Labor to grant to expand  
4           capacity of Working Fields or other support and retraining nonprofit  
5           organizations, or both, who work with justice-involved, or recently justice-  
6           involved, individuals to support adults with low-level offenses in finding job  
7           training, upskilling, and record expunging opportunities so they can fully  
8           participate in the labor force.

9           (b) A two-year exemption from pension and retirement benefit rules that  
10           restrict or limit retired workers from returning to the workforce over the next  
11           five years.

12           (c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Office of  
13           Professional Regulation shall:

14           (1) waive licensing fees where:

15           (A) critical public services are delivered; or

16           (B) the sector is critical to the current or future economy of the State;

17           (2) expand recognition of work experience and of credentials earned out  
18           of state or country for professions where:

19           (A)(i) critical public services are delivered; or

20           (ii) the sector is critical to the current or future economy of the

21           State; and

1           (B) affording such recognition would not jeopardize public safety;

2           and

3           (3) design expanded apprenticeship pathways to licensure in  
4           collaboration with the State Workforce Development Board Credentialing  
5           Committee and the Department of Labor.

6           (4) [*\$m*] Reduce benefit cliff barriers to employment by increasing the  
7           thresholds in each program that triggers a loss in benefits (e.g., LIHEAP,  
8           childcare subsidies, SNAP, etc) and changing support program “cliffs” to  
9           “slopes” to better reward individuals seeking to (re)enter the labor market.

10           Sec. 3. IMMEDIATE STRATEGIES AND FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC  
11                           SECTORS; CURRENT DEMAND-DRIVEN AND FUTURE-  
12                           DRIVEN INITIATIVES; APPROPRIATIONS

13           (a) In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the  
14           General Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

15           (1) Future-driven initiatives concerning the green economy and climate  
16           workforce.

17           (2) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
18           Development to regrant to entities working to scale investments in sector and  
19           occupation career pathways to complete Talent Pipelines for all the priority  
20           sectors and occupations within two years, with priority given to recipients of  
21           the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge. The Agency shall ensure funding is targeted

1 to the following primary sectors and occupations: construction, health care,  
2 manufacturing (food and durable goods), digital marketing, broadband  
3 installation, accounting, product development, supply chain logistics, energy  
4 system, software development, and outdoor recreation, and customer service.

5 (3) \$ [ ] to \_\_\_\_\_ for scholarships and tuition reimbursements to  
6 individuals who gain their CDL truck driving license, become school bus or  
7 snow plow drivers or other priority occupations such as childcare workers,  
8 mental health professionals, HVAC technicians, plumbers, or electricians.

9 (b) The Committee on Government Accountability, in collaboration with  
10 the Chief Performance Officer and Chief Equity Officer, shall develop:

11 (1) performance measurement frameworks for evaluating stimulus- and  
12 incentive-based spending on specific State positions, general occupations, and  
13 sectors, including measuring the cascading impact of State investments in State  
14 employee compensation and incentive-based retention or recruitment on State  
15 supported entities delivering community-based solutions, specifically, social  
16 services with related occupations that are significantly financially dependent  
17 on State-set reimbursement rates for ability to change their compensation  
18 structures; and

19 (2) social equity performance notes to ensure that targeted workforce  
20 incentives are improving, not exacerbating, inequities.

21 **Sec. 4. INVESTMENT IN BUILDING A STATEWIDE ECOSYSTEM TO**

1 PROMOTE CONTINUOUS LIFELONG LEARNING;

2 APPROPRIATIONS

3 (a) There is created a Career and Technical Education Redesign Task

4 Force, the purpose and duties of which are to:

5 (1) reimagine and redesign the Vermont CTE system to ensure that 100  
6 percent of Vermont high school graduates either hold a credential of value, are  
7 in a post-secondary program within a year of graduation, or are in a training  
8 program for a credential of value within one year of graduation;

9 (2) develop a new funding model with no disincentives connected to  
10 increased student participation in CTE programming;

11 (3) develop a next generation CTE delivery model, financing, and  
12 governance system and a transitional road map to move from the current state  
13 to the new model within five years; and

14 (4) redesign CTE system for the digital age and scale online learning in  
15 order to develop curriculum and career pathways that will support  
16 technological resilience in Vermont's workforce.

17 (b) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$35,000,000.00 is appropriated to  
18 [recipient?] for upgrades to existing facilities to expand CTE course offerings  
19 across the State for middle school students, high school students, and adults  
20 and expand teaching modalities, including in person, hybrid, and online.

1       (c) A Higher Education Strategy Task Force is created to develop a clear  
2       and brief set of strategic objectives for State higher education funding, beyond  
3       financial viability, and address:

4           (1) what the system and its institutions are expected to do; and

5           (2) how integrated the institutions should be in the workforce  
6       development ecosystem.

7       (d) The [Agency of Education and the Department of Labor shall enter into  
8       a memorandum of understanding] to create a public-private partnership with  
9       Advance Vermont to support the State’s goal under 10 V.S.A. § 546 that 70  
10       percent of working-age Vermonters hold a credential of value by 2025,  
11       including:

12           (1) formulating policy recommendations for the administration and the  
13       General Assembly;

14           (2) monitoring and disseminating data regarding the performance of the  
15       State’s attainment of the goal;

16           (3) creating and maintaining public-facing communications and  
17       resources to increase awareness of the value of postsecondary education and  
18       training and the variety of education and training pathways;

19           (4) convening members of the education, employer, nonprofit, and  
20       philanthropic communities and State agencies to identify gaps and  
21       opportunities for collaboration;

1           (5) supporting efforts to coordinate and implement regional attainment  
2           initiatives; and

3           (6) ensuring full transparency of all educational and occupational  
4           credentials and competencies that are delivered, issued, funded, authorized,  
5           overseen, or governed in Vermont.

6           SEC. 5. INVESTMENT IN AN AGILE, TECHNOLOGICALLY  
7                               RESILIENT WORKFORCE; APPROPRIATIONS

8           In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General  
9           Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

10           (1) \$250,000.00 each to the University of Vermont and Vermont State  
11           University to support staff capacity to engage in collaborative network  
12           activities and be more responsive to demand-driven training and development  
13           needs; and

14           (2) \$250,000.00 to [recipient?] to source the data and create and  
15           maintain an accurate, curated Jobs Service Database of jobs for which recent  
16           graduates would be qualified to encourage recent college graduates to start  
17           their careers in Vermont and to coordinate the cooperative sharing of  
18           information across all Vermont colleges and universities.

19           Sec. 6. ENABLE EVERY WORKER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE  
20                               WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE  
21                               SUPPORT; APPROPRIATIONS



1       In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$400,000.00 is appropriated from the  
2       General Fund to the Department of Labor to regrant as a performance-based  
3       grant to a Vermont based nonprofit with statewide reach to design, market, and  
4       pilot a job coaching and career planning help-line and online platform to  
5       provide incumbent workers with career counseling, resources for evaluating  
6       job transitions, and risk/reward calculation of switching employers.

7       *Reduce size of WIOA Board*

8       Sec. 7. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR

9               EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS

10              AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

11       (a) In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the  
12       General Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

13              (1) \$1,500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
14       Development to regrant a performance-based contract for statewide delivery of  
15       a SmallBusiness411 helpline and website to help small businesses navigate  
16       available resources to an entity with statewide reach, small business expertise,  
17       and the technical knowledge to expand upon the SBA Community Navigator  
18       Pilot Program. The successful grant proposal must include a marketing budget  
19       to boost visibility of the program.

20              (2) \$2,000,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
21       Development to regrant to the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund to assemble,

1 develop, and design the content, delivery model, and statewide roll-out of a  
2 new employer initiative to upskill employers.

3 (A) The initiative will improve access to employer best practices, HR  
4 information, interpreted labor market info, business coaching, and support for  
5 adapting business models to current market conditions.

6 (B) The initiative will provide training in best practices to businesses  
7 on how to operate remotely effectively over the long-term.

8 (C) The content shall include an employer of choice program to  
9 support businesses prioritizing human well-being, healthy work, and high-  
10 quality employment practices and creativity and innovation in the way we  
11 work, for example, four-day work weeks, benefits, work culture, employee  
12 ownership, and B-Corp certification.

13 (D) VSJF will collaborate with, and regrant funds through  
14 performance-based grants to, the RDCs and specialized trade and business  
15 associations for sector- or market-specific training and to fund local and  
16 regional distribution and trainings.

17 (3) \$500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community

18 Development:

19 (A) to regrant a performance-based contract for statewide delivery of  
20 business coaching to support employee ownership business models, including  
21 worker co-ops and employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs); and

1           (B) to create a task force on ESOPs and worker ownership business  
2           models to make recommendations on how the State can ease regulation to  
3           stimulate transition to ESOPs or worker-ownership.

4           (4) \$500,000.00 to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
5           Development to regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont  
6           Professionals of Color Network for statewide delivery of business coaching  
7           and other forms of training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special  
8           convenings, and career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance,  
9           and other support for BIPOC workers across the State.

10           (5) Update Vermont Training Program criteria for eligibility to allow  
11           training and coaching for small business owners and their management teams  
12           to improve their capacity to evolve and lead their small businesses and  
13           increase base funding for this program to \$2.5 million per year. [amend 10  
14           VSA 540 et seq?]

15           Sec. 8. INVESTMENT IN NEW MODELS OF CONNECTION-BUILDING  
16           ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS TO  
17           IMPROVE ALIGNMENT, COLLABORATION, INSIGHTS, AND  
18           STRATEGY; APPROPRIATIONS

19           In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated from the  
20           General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to

1 make a performance-based grant to a nonprofit to serve as a statewide

2 Connecting Organization, which shall:

3 (1) create, convene, and administer a Vermont Workforce Network;

4 (2) provide sub-grant, performance-based awards to six regional  
5 Workforce-Education Business Councils, each of whom will employ a full-  
6 time regional Navigator; and

7 (3) coordinate with the implementation of VDOL Pilot Project of  
8 Workforce Expansion Specialists in six regions of the State.

9  
10 Sec. 9. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

11 (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The Department of Labor shall  
12 launch and lead a coordinated regional system to support the State's workforce  
13 expansion efforts. The system will be designed to:

14 (1) Support employers in tailoring their work requirements, conditions,  
15 and expectations to better access local workers.

16 (2) Collaborate with local education and training providers and regional  
17 workforce partners, to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor  
18 force supply and demand.

19 (3) Create and share work-based learning and training opportunities with  
20 secondary and post-secondary students, local workforce expansion partners,  
21 and others interested in starting or advancing in their career.

1           (b) System Infrastructure.

2                   (1) The Vermont Department of Labor will make investments that  
3           improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and  
4           demand (employment) in real-time.

5                   (2) The Department will place six (6) state-funded Workforce  
6           Expansion Specialists in the Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Rutland, St.  
7           Albans and St. Johnsbury areas. These limited-service, full-time-employees  
8           will report to the Workforce Development Division.

9           (c) Coordination.

10                   (1) The Department shall co-convene regular, regional meetings of  
11           education, training, business, and service provider partners; coordinate local  
12           workforce information collection and distribution, assist with pilot projects,  
13           provide targeted sector support, and develop localized career resources such as  
14           information for career counseling, local job fairs, career expos, available to a  
15           wide range of stakeholders.

16                   (2) The Department shall develop labor market information reports by  
17           CTE district to support discussion and decision making that will address local  
18           labor market challenges and opportunities and support a regional approach to  
19           solving local or unique labor supply challenges.

20                   (d) Report. On, or before, December 15, 2024, the Department shall  
21           provide a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing

1 interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,  
2 and serving jobseekers and employers, to the House and Senate Committees of  
3 Jurisdiction. The report will also recommend ongoing metrics that can be  
4 easily recorded and reported at the local and state levels on a regular basis to  
5 meet multiple information needs.

6 (e) Implementation. The Department of Labor shall begin implementing the  
7 Regional Workforce Expansion System on or before August 1, 2022.

8 Sec. 10. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; RELOCATION ASSISTANCE  
9 SUPPORT

10 (a) Relocation Support Specialists. VDOL shall participate in supporting  
11 individuals seeking to relocate to Vermont by providing career counseling,  
12 employment and non-employment referrals, making warm handoffs, and  
13 remaining part of the relocation team for any individual until they are no  
14 longer needed.

15 (b) Out-of-State Recruitment Efforts. VDOL will provide employers with  
16 out-of-state recruitment efforts such as hiring events and following up on  
17 coordinate, targeted outreach. As part of this effort the Department will also  
18 participate in job fairs and other events, as both a coordinator and a participant.

19 (c) Information Management System. As VDOL is expanding its  
20 technological systems to support case management, customer and information  
21 management, data collection, information bank, and reporting requirements it

1 will tailor its solution to integrate functionality that will enhance  
2 communication and information exchange about prospective out-of-state  
3 jobseekers, recruitment efforts, and prospective relocators.

4  
5 Sec 11. WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

6 Strike 10 VSA 544 and 545 and replace with: Vermont Work-Based Learning  
7 and Training Program

8 (a) Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program. The Department  
9 of Labor shall develop a statewide Work Based Learning and Training  
10 Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and  
11 Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of career change. This  
12 program will be designed to:

13 (1) Support Vermonters who are graduating from post-secondary  
14 education or a secondary CTE program or who are pursuing a career change  
15 with a paid on-the-job work experience lasting twelve weeks or less,

16 (2) Establish a statewide platform available to all employers to list their  
17 internships, returnships, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeship  
18 opportunities and for jobseekers to view and access information about specific  
19 opportunities; and to

20 (3) Support employers by providing them with assistance in developing  
21 and implementing meaningful work-based learning and training opportunities.

1           (b) Definitions.

2           (1) As used in this section, "internship" means a work-based learning  
3           experience with an employer where the participant may, but does not  
4           necessarily, receive academic credit.

5           (2) "Returnship" means an on-the-job learning experience for an  
6           individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or is  
7           seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different  
8           occupation or occupational setting as part of a career change.

9           (3) "Pre-apprenticeship" is a program of combined learning and work-  
10           based experiences that lead to an informal apprenticeship or formal registered  
11           apprenticeship program.

12           (4) "Registered Apprenticeship" is a program approved by the VDOL as  
13           a federally recognized apprenticeship program.

14           (c) Funding made available for this program may be used to:

15           (1) Build and administer the program,

16           (2) Develop an online platform that will connect students and jobseekers  
17           with work-based learning and training opportunities within Vermont

18           (3) Support work-based learning and training opportunities with public  
19           and private employers available to prospective workers located in or relocating  
20           to Vermont.



1           (4) Promote work-based learning and training as a valuable component  
2           of a talent pipeline, and

3           (5) Assist employers in developing meaningful work-based learning and  
4           training opportunities.

5           (d) The Department of Labor shall collect data and establish program goals  
6           and performance measures that demonstrate program results for activities  
7           funded through the Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program.

8           (e) The Department of Labor will engage appropriate agencies and  
9           departments of the State in the Work Based Learning and Training Program to  
10           expand these opportunities with State government and with entities awarded  
11           State contracts.

12           (f) Reporting: By February 15, 2022, the Vermont Department of Labor  
13           will report on recommended metrics for measuring program performance to  
14           the relevant Committees of jurisdiction.

15           ***Sec. X. Apprenticeship***

16           ***[ NOTE THERE IS LANGUAGE IN THE BUDGET BILL THAT***  
17           ***AUTHORIZES THE CARRY FORWARD OF THESE FUNDS] IF YOU***  
18           ***WANT ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO DIRECT USE; SB CAN***  
19           ***PROVIDE. Current language:***

20                   *DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; TRADE APPRENTICESHIP EXPENSE*  
21                   *REIMBURSEMENT; PROGRAM EXPANSION*

1           \$1,000,000 of funds carried forward in the special apprenticeship fund  
2           is allocated for use by the Department to reimburse for costs incurred  
3           for work tools and personal protective equipment for new apprentices,  
4           and for expansion of registered apprenticeship programs and  
5           participants.

6           Sec. 12. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

7           (a) The Vermont Trades Scholarship Program is created and shall be  
8           administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont  
9           Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse tuition payments under the  
10          Program on behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds  
11          by the General Assembly for this purpose.

12          (b) To be eligible for a scholarship under the Program, an individual,  
13          whether a resident or nonresident, shall:

14               (1) be enrolled in an industry recognized training and certification  
15               program the leads initial employment or career advancement in a building,  
16               mechanical, industrial, or medical trade, and

17               (2) demonstrate financial need.

18               (3) register with the Vermont Department of Labor for the purpose of  
19               receiving relevant job referrals, if unemployed; and

1           (4) agree to work in their profession in Vermont for a minimum of one  
2           year following licensure or certification completion for each year of  
3           scholarship awarded.

4           (c) Students attending a Vermont-based training program or, if one isn't  
5           available for their certification, an offer of employment or promotion from a  
6           Vermont employer upon completion, shall receive first preference for  
7           scholarships.

8           (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for a scholarship under this section.  
9           Scholarships shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds are available, and any  
10          funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over and shall be available  
11          to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the following fiscal year to  
12          award additional scholarships as set forth in this section.

13          (e) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in base General Funds is appropriated to the  
14          Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for scholarships for trades students  
15          under the Vermont Trades Scholarship Program.

16          Sec. 13. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT  
17          PROGRAM

18          (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is  
19          created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance  
20          Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse

1 funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of  
2 funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

3 (b) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual,  
4 shall:

5 (1) be a Vermont resident

6 (2) be employed in an occupation in the building, mechanical, industrial,  
7 or medical trades for an average of at least 30 hours per week for least one full  
8 calendar year before applying.

9 (c) For every year of work in a qualifying occupation, an individual shall  
10 be eligible for up to \$5,000 in loan repayment reimbursement.

11 Reimbursements shall not exceed the total amount of educational debt owed.

12 (d) There shall be no deadline to apply for loan repayment reimbursement  
13 under this section. Loan repayment shall be awarded on a rolling basis if funds  
14 are available, and any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall roll over  
15 and shall be available to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation in the  
16 following fiscal year to award additional loan repayment as set forth in this  
17 section.

18 (e) The sum of \$500,000 in base General Funds is appropriated to the  
19 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan repayment for trades  
20 professionals under the Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Program.

21

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13

Sec. X. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

(Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE COMMITTEE