

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 the Vermont State Colleges System.

16 (2) \$6,000,000.00 to the Vermont State Colleges System to double the  
17 nursing 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 In fiscal year 2023 the following amounts are appropriated from the General  
8 Fund to the following recipients for the purposes specified:

9 (1) \$5,000,000.00 to the University of Vermont Office of Engagement,  
10 in consultation with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, to  
11 administer a statewide forgivable loan program of \$5,000.00 per graduate for  
12 recent college graduates across all Vermont higher education institutions who  
13 commit to work in Vermont for two years after graduation.

14 (2) \$3,000,000.00 to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to  
15 administer up to \$3,000.00 per individual for tuition costs incurred for  
16 Vermont-based internships.

17 (3) \$1,000,000.00 to the State Refugee Office to administer as grants to  
18 refugee- or New American-focused programs working in Vermont, to support  
19 increased in-migration or retention of recent arrivals.

20 (4) \$387,000.00 to Vermont Technical College to develop a skilled meat  
21 cutter training and apprenticeship facility.

1 **Sec. 3. CTE FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE; FINDINGS**

2 (a) Vermont’s career and technical education (CTE) system is critical to  
3 ensuring that all Vermonters have access to the high-quality resources they  
4 need to explore a wide variety of career pathways, earn a postsecondary  
5 credential of value, and establish a productive career.

6 (b) CTE is a vital component of our educational system, supporting and  
7 delivering on the goals established by the General Assembly in 2013 Acts and  
8 Resolves No. 77 (flexible pathways), 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189  
9 (workforce development), and in achieving our attainment goal, which is that  
10 70 percent of working-age Vermonters have a credential of value by 2025  
11 (10 V.S.A. § 546).

12 (c) CTE is also an equity lever, providing every student access to critical  
13 workforce training, postsecondary coursework, and the real-world skills and  
14 networks that prepare our youth to continue to earn and learn during and after  
15 high school.

16 (d) As of the fall semester of the 2021–2022 school year, students were  
17 enrolling in CTE programs at a higher rate than at the beginning of the  
18 pandemic, increasing from 4,160 to 4,565. In the 2020–2021 school year,  
19 Vermont’s CTE system awarded Tier II credentials of value to 459 students.

20 (e) Since 2015, through legislative initiatives such as 2015 Acts and  
21 Resolves No. 51, 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 69, 2018 Acts and Resolves No.

1 189, 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 80, and most recently 2021 Acts and  
2 Resolves No. 74, the General Assembly and other stakeholders in education  
3 and in State government have been working to identify, understand, and  
4 resolve long-standing concerns related to the functioning of the CTE system.

5 (f) In 2018, the Agency of Education embarked on a collaborative process  
6 that included students, legislators, and communities across the State to develop  
7 a strategic vision and aspirational goals to help guide the transformation of the  
8 CTE system.

9 (g) The State Board of Education adopted the Agency of Education’s  
10 vision and goals for CTE that “all Vermont learners attain their postsecondary  
11 goals by having access to career and technical education systems that are  
12 equitable, efficient, integrated and collaborative.”

13 (h) 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 189 committed Vermont to a redesign of  
14 its workforce development and training system, including the approval of up to  
15 four pilot sites or projects to examine the way our CTE system is funded and  
16 governed.

17 (i) In a report dated June 14, 2021, the Agency of Education reported on its  
18 progress, which was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report  
19 presented possible alternatives to our current funding structure, which is  
20 widely seen as a barrier to enrollment. However, these alternatives were based  
21 on an examination of only the CTE school district funding model and did not

1 include the study of governance models. The report recommended completing  
2 this study of CTE funding and governance models to propose actionable  
3 implementation steps for the State.

4 (j) The Agency of Education’s State plan for federal Perkins funds is  
5 aligned to the vision and goals created through collaborative processes that  
6 included a public comment period. Processes required in the federal  
7 legislation like the biennial Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment will  
8 strengthen the role of CTE in each region and help to focus the use of limited  
9 federal funds to improve the system.

10 **Sec. 4. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF**

11 **CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VERMONT**

12 (a) There is appropriated to the Agency of Education for fiscal year 2023  
13 the amount of \$180,000.00 from the General Fund to contract for services to:

14 (1) complete a systematic examination of the existing funding structures  
15 of career technical education (CTE) in Vermont and how these structures  
16 impede or promote the State’s educational and workforce development goals;

17 (2) examine CTE governance structures in relationship to those funding  
18 structures;

19 (3) examine the implications of the existing funding and governance  
20 structures for kindergarten through grade 12 schools and adult education;

21 (4) consider the CTE funding and governance structures in other states;

1 and

2 (5) identify and prioritize potential new models of CTE funding and  
3 governance structures to reduce barriers to enrollment and to improve the  
4 quality, duration, impact, and access to CTE statewide.

5 (b) In performing its work, the contractor shall consult with the consultant  
6 and any other stakeholders involved in completing the report on the design,  
7 implementation, and costs of an integrated and coherent adult basic education,  
8 adult secondary education, and postsecondary career and technical education  
9 system pursuant to 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. H.3.

10 (c)(1) On or before March 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall issue a  
11 written report to the House and Senate Committees on Education, the House  
12 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate  
13 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on the  
14 status of its work under subsection (a) of this section.

15 (2) On or before July 1, 2023, the Agency of Education shall develop an  
16 implementation plan, including recommended steps to design and implement  
17 new funding and governance models, and issue a written report to the House  
18 and Senate Committees on Education, the House Committee on Commerce and  
19 Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Economic  
20 Development, Housing and General Affairs describing the results of its work

1 under subsection (a) of this section and making recommendations for  
2 legislative action.

3 Sec. 5. INVESTMENT IN THE UP-SKILLING OF PRIVATE SECTOR  
4 EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS  
5 AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS; APPROPRIATIONS

6 In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the  
7 General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to  
8 regrant a performance-based contract to the Vermont Professionals of Color  
9 Network for statewide delivery of business coaching and other forms of  
10 training to BIPOC business owners, networking and special convenings, and  
11 career fairs, workshops and paid internships, career guidance, and other  
12 support for BIPOC workers across the State.

13 Sec. 6. REGIONAL WORKFORCE EXPANSION SYSTEM

14 (a) Regional Workforce Expansion System. The amount of \$3,000,000 is  
15 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Labor to launch and  
16 lead a coordinated regional system to support the State's workforce expansion  
17 efforts that is designed to:

18 (1) support employers in tailoring their work requirements, conditions,  
19 and expectations to better access local workers;

1           (2) collaborate with local education and training providers and regional  
2           workforce partners, to create and regularly distribute data related to local labor  
3           force supply and demand; and

4           (3) create and share work-based learning and training opportunities with  
5           secondary and post-secondary students, local workforce expansion partners,  
6           and others interested in starting or advancing in their career.

7           (b) System Infrastructure.

8           (1) The Vermont Department of Labor shall make investments that  
9           improve and expand regional capacity to connect supply (workers) and  
10           demand (employment) in real-time.

11           (2) The Department shall place in the Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro,  
12           Rutland, St. Albans and St. Johnsbury areas, six state-funded Workforce  
13           Expansion Specialists who are limited-service, full-time-employees and who  
14           shall report to the Workforce Development Division.

15           (c) Coordination.

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



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

5           (d) Report. On or before December 15, 2024, the Department shall provide  
6           a narrative update on the progress made in hiring staff, establishing  
7           interagency agreements, developing regional information exchange systems,  
8           and serving jobseekers and employers, to the House and Senate Committees of  
9           Jurisdiction. The report shall also recommend ongoing metrics that can be  
10           easily recorded and reported at the local and state levels on a regular basis to  
11           meet multiple information needs.

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

14           **Sec. 7. JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE**  
15           **DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM**

16           **(a) Findings.**

17           **(1) Justice-involved individuals are people who hold a conviction record**  
18           **and may or may not have served time in a corrections facility.**

19           **(2) 95 percent of incarcerated individuals will be released to their**  
20           **communities and between 78-83 percent of those released are between the ages**  
21           **of 25 and 54, which is prime working age.**

1           (3) 63 percent of incarcerated individuals in the Vermont Southern State  
2           Correctional Facility reported job training as the most helpful program to meet  
3           their needs.

4           (b) Policy; appropriations.

5           (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$417,000 is appropriated from  
6           the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to address vocational  
7           enhancement needs.

8           (B) The Department shall use funds to transition vocational training  
9           space within existing correctional facilities to support continued education and  
10           vocational training and placement in the community.

11           (C) The Department may allocate funds over three years, consistent  
12           with the following:

13           (i) \$267,000 for transition development, to include equipment,  
14           renovation of vocational space, and/or mobile lab in one or more sites.

15           (ii) \$100,000 for training partner support.

16           (iii) \$50,000 for development of curriculum.

17           (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000 is appropriated from the  
18           General Fund to Vermont Works for Women, which may be allocated over not  
19           more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry program at  
20           the Chittenden Correctional Facility that will provide continuity of services for  
21           justice involved women and:

1           (A) expand VWW’s current employment readiness program within  
2           the Chittenden facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to  
3           employment;

4           (B) focus on the first six months after individuals are released from  
5           the facility;

6           (C) coordinate with local community resources, parole and probation  
7           offices, and supports to ensure successful transition into the community;

8           (D) assist individuals in successfully transitioning into new jobs; and

9           (E) work with employers to support successful hiring and best  
10          practices to support justice involved employees.

11          (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections  
12          shall create and submit a report on Workforce and Education Training  
13          Programs in Correctional Facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight  
14          Committee, House Corrections & Institutions Committee, House Commerce &  
15          Economic Development, Senate Economic Development and Senate Judiciary.

16          The report shall:

17               (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes needed  
18               to current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational  
19               programs necessary to successfully support justice involved individuals’  
20               reentry into their communities, including changes to programs that better

1 support individuals' skill development, knowledge and support needed to  
2 qualify and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

3 (2) identify disparities of outcomes for justice-involved BIPOC  
4 individuals in facility-based training and educational programming and  
5 successful reentry into the community and solutions for addressing the  
6 disparities;

7 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections Vocational  
8 Enhancement work funding in FY23; and

9 (4) provide an update on what aspects of the Reentry Pilot Program  
10 could and should be replicated in other correctional facilities in Vermont.

11 Sec. 8. REPEAL

12 10 V.S.A. §§ 544 and 545 are repealed.

13 Sec. 9. WORK BASED LEARNING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

14 (a) Vermont Work Based Learning and Training Program. The Department  
15 of Labor shall develop a statewide Work Based Learning and Training  
16 Program that serves transitioning secondary and postsecondary students and  
17 Vermonters seeking work-based experience as part of career change and is  
18 designed to:

19 (1) support Vermonters who are graduating from post-secondary  
20 education or a secondary CTE program or who are pursuing a career change  
21 with a paid on-the-job work experience lasting twelve weeks or less;

1           (2) establish a statewide platform available to all employers to list their  
2           internships, returnships, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeship  
3           opportunities and for jobseekers to view and access information about specific  
4           opportunities; and

5           (3) support employers by providing them with assistance in developing  
6           and implementing meaningful work-based learning and training opportunities.

7           (b) Definitions. As used in this section:

8           (1) "Internship" means a work-based learning experience with an  
9           employer where the participant may, but does not necessarily, receive  
10           academic credit.

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

14           (3) "Registered Apprenticeship" is a program approved by the Vermont  
15           Department of Labor as a federally-recognized apprenticeship program.

16           (4) "Returnship" means an on-the-job learning experience for an  
17           individual who is returning to the workforce after an extended absence or is  
18           seeking a limited-duration on-the-job work experience in a different  
19           occupation or occupational setting as part of a career change.

20           (c) The Department may use available funding to:

21           (1) build and administer the Program;

1           (2) develop an online platform that will connect students and jobseekers  
2           with work-based learning and training opportunities within Vermont;

3           (3) support work-based learning and training opportunities with public  
4           and private employers available to prospective workers located in or relocating  
5           to Vermont;

6           (4) promote work-based learning and training as a valuable component  
7           of a talent pipeline; and

8           (5) assist employers in developing meaningful work-based learning and  
9           training opportunities.

10          (d) The Department shall collect data and establish goals and performance  
11          measures that demonstrate program results for activities funded through the  
12          Program.

13          (e) The Department shall engage appropriate State agencies and  
14          departments to expand Program opportunities with State government and with  
15          entities awarded State contracts.

16          (f) Reporting. On or before February 15, 2023, the Department shall report  
17          on recommended metrics for measuring Program performance to the relevant  
18          committees of jurisdiction.

19          Sec. 10. THE VERMONT TRADES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

20          (a) The Vermont Trades Scholarship Program is created and shall be  
21          administered by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont

1 Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse **initial licensing fees, exam fees,**  
2 **and tuition payments** under the Program on behalf of eligible individuals,  
3 subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

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

6 (1) be enrolled in an industry recognized training and certification  
7 program that leads to initial employment or career advancement in a building,  
8 mechanical, industrial, or medical trade, **or in clean energy, energy efficiency,**  
9 **weatherization, or clean transportation;**

10 (2) demonstrate financial need;

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

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

16 (c)(1) The Corporation shall give preference to students attending a  
17 Vermont-based training program or, if one isn't available for their certification,  
18 an offer of employment or promotion from a Vermont employer upon  
19 completion.

20 (2) The Corporation shall give priority to applicants who have not  
21 received other assistance.

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

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

9        Sec. 11. THE VERMONT TRADES LOAN REIMBURSEMENT

10        PROGRAM

11        (a) The Vermont Trades Loan Repayment Reimbursement Program is  
12        created and shall be administered by the Vermont Student Assistance  
13        Corporation. The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation shall disburse  
14        funds under the Program to eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of  
15        funds by the General Assembly for this purpose.

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

18                (1) be a Vermont resident

19                (2) be employed in an occupation in the building, mechanical, industrial,  
20        or medical trades, or in the clean energy, energy efficiency, weatherization, or



1 clean transportation sectors, for an average of at least 30 hours per week for  
2 least one full calendar year before applying.

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

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

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

12 (e) The sum of \$500,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
13 Vermont Student Assistance Corporation for loan repayment for trades  
14 professionals under the Program.

15 Sec. 12. CTE CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

16 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM; REVOLVING LOAN FUND

17 (a) Purpose. This section authorizes and provides funding for a CTE  
18 Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential Learning Program and Revolving  
19 Loan Fund, the purposes of which are to:

20 (1) expand the experiential and educational opportunities for high school  
21 and adult CTE students to work directly on construction projects;

1           (2) build community partnerships among CTE centers, housing  
2           organizations, government, and private businesses;

3           (3) beautify communities and rehabilitate buildings that are  
4           underperforming assets;

5           (4) expand housing access to Vermonters in communities throughout the  
6           State; and

7           (5) improve property values while teaching high school and adult  
8           students trade skills.

9           (b) Appropriation; creation of fund; administration.

10           (1) In fiscal year 2023 the amount of \$15,000,000.00 is appropriated  
11           from the Education Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to  
12           create and administer a CTE Construction and Rehabilitation Experiential  
13           Learning Program and Revolving Loan Fund pursuant to this section.

14           (2) The Board may use not more than five percent of the Fund for its  
15           costs of administration.

16           (c) Proposals; applications; funding.

17           (1) A regional CTE center, working in collaboration with one or more  
18           housing and community partners, private businesses, nonprofit organizations,  
19           or municipalities, shall identify construction projects that would be relevant  
20           and appropriate for CTE students enrolled in construction, electrical,  
21           plumbing, design, business management, or other CTE programs, including:

1           (A) rehabilitation of residential properties that are blighted or not  
2 code-compliant;

3           (B) new residential construction projects or improvements to land in  
4 cases of critical community need; and

5           (C) commercial construction projects that have substantial  
6 community benefit.

7           (2) Prior to or during the application process, a CTE center and its  
8 partners may consult with the Board to identify and consider potential funding  
9 partners to leverage amounts available through the Fund.

10           (3) A CTE center and its partners shall apply to the Board for funding  
11 by submitting a project application that includes the information required by  
12 the Board and addresses the following:

13           (A) the educational benefits for students and fit with the CTE  
14 curriculum;

15           (B) the community benefits for the neighborhood, municipality, or  
16 region in which the project is located; and

17           (C) the partners with whom the CTE center is collaborating and the  
18 respective responsibility for the aspects of a project, including:

19           (i) educational instruction and academic credit;

20           (ii) project management;

21           (iii) insurance coverage for students and the property;

1                    (iv) compensation and benefits, including compliance with labor  
2                    laws, standards, and practices; and

3                    (v) property acquisition, ownership, and transfer.

4                    (3) A CTE center may use funding for, and shall specify in its  
5                    application the allocation of costs associated with:

6                    (A) acquisition, design, permitting, construction, marketing, and  
7                    other building-related expenses; and

8                    (B) costs for labor, including for student wages and for instructor  
9                    compensation during the academic year as well as for summer or other work  
10                   that is not otherwise budgeted during the academic year;

11                   (d) Eligibility; review; approval. The Board may approve an application  
12                   that includes the information required by subsection (c) of this section and  
13                   provide funding for a project that meets the following eligibility criteria:

14                   (1) The project involves the rehabilitation of blighted or otherwise non-  
15                   code compliant property, or new residential construction projects or  
16                   improvements to land in cases of critical need, and results in a building with  
17                   not more than four residential dwelling units.

18                   (2) The project includes a weatherization component.

19                   (3) Students working on the project receive academic credit, a  
20                   competitive wage, or both.

1       (e) Affordability; flexibility. If appropriate in the circumstances, the Board  
2       may condition funding for a project on the inclusion of one or mechanisms  
3       addressing the affordability of the property upon rent or sale.

4       (f) Funding; proceeds; revolving loans.

5           (1) The Board shall provide funding for projects from the amounts  
6       available in the Fund in the form of zero-interest loans, in an amount, for a  
7       period, and upon terms specified by the Board.

8           (2) The Board shall return to the Fund any proceeds realized to provide  
9       funding for future projects.

10       (g) Report. The Board shall address the implementation of this section in  
11       its annual report to the General Assembly.

12                           \* \* \* Health Care Workforce \* \* \*

13       Sec. 13. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

14       (a) The General Assembly values all health care workers, at every level and  
15       in each component of the health care system. The General Assembly also  
16       acknowledges the many struggles faced by health care workers and that the  
17       pandemic has placed further strain on an already taxed system. Many health  
18       care workers have not had their pay adjusted over time to address increases in  
19       the cost of living, essentially amounting to pay cuts from year to year. Health  
20       care workers have experienced burnout, trauma, and moral injuries due to a  
21       history of underfunding and the present stress of the pandemic.

1       (b) In order to retain and recruit health care workers in Vermont, it is the  
2       intent of the General Assembly to invest in multiple solutions aimed at  
3       reinforcing our health care workforce in the present and sustaining our health  
4       care workers into the future.

5       Sec. 14. EMERGENCY GRANTS TO SUPPORT NURSE EDUCATORS

6       (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Health  
7       from General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and shall carry forward for the purpose  
8       of providing emergency interim grants to Vermont’s nursing schools over three  
9       years to increase the compensation for their nurse faculty and staff, with  
10       \$1,000,000.00 to be distributed in each of fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025 to  
11       increase the compensation for each full-time-equivalent (FTE) member of the  
12       clinical and didactic nurse faculty and staff. The Department shall distribute  
13       the funds among the nursing schools in Vermont equitably based on each  
14       school's proportion of nursing faculty and staff to the total number of FTE  
15       nursing faculty and staff across all nursing schools statewide.

16       (b) If the nurse faculty or staff, or both, of a nursing school receiving a  
17       grant under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement, the  
18       use of the grant funds provided to the nursing school for those faculty or staff,  
19       or both, shall be subject to impact bargaining between the nursing school and  
20       the collective bargaining representative of the nurse faculty or staff, or both, to  
21       the extent required by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

1       Sec. 15. NURSE PRECEPTOR INCENTIVE GRANTS; HOSPITALS;  
2       WORKING GROUP; REPORT

3           (a)(1) The sum of \$2,400,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human  
4       Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to provide incentive grants  
5       to hospital-employed nurses in Vermont to serve as preceptors for nursing  
6       students enrolled in Vermont nursing school programs. The Agency shall  
7       distribute the funds to hospitals employing nurses who provide student  
8       preceptor supervision based on the number of preceptor hours to be provided,  
9       at a rate of \$5.00 per preceptor hour, or a lesser hourly rate if the need exceeds  
10       the available funds.

11           (2) If nurse preceptors receiving compensation pursuant to a grant awarded  
12       to a hospital under this section are subject to a collective bargaining agreement,  
13       the use of the grant funds provided to the hospital for the nurse preceptors shall  
14       be subject to impact bargaining between the hospital and the collective  
15       bargaining representative of the nurses to the extent required by the collective  
16       bargaining agreement.

17           (b)(1) The Director of Health Care Reform or designee in the Agency of  
18       Human Services shall convene a working group of stakeholders representing  
19       nursing schools, long-term care facilities, designated and specialized service  
20       agencies, federally qualified health centers, home health agencies, primary care  
21       practices, and other health care facilities to:

1           (A) identify ways to increase clinical placement opportunities across  
2           a variety of health care settings for nursing students enrolled in Vermont  
3           nursing school programs;

4           (B) establish sustainable funding models for compensating nurses  
5           -serving as preceptors or for supporting the hiring of additional nurses to  
6           alleviate the pressures on nurse preceptors, or both; and

7           (C) develop an action plan for implementing the clinical placement  
8           expansion and sustainable funding models identified and established pursuant  
9           to subdivisions (A) and (B) of this subdivision (1), including addressing the  
10          need for student housing opportunities.

11          (2) On or before January 15, 2023, the Director of Health Care Reform  
12          shall provide the working group’s action plan and any recommendations for  
13          legislative action to the House Committees on Health Care, on Commerce and  
14          Economic Development, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees on  
15          Health and Welfare, on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs,  
16          and on Appropriations.

17          Sec. 16. HEALTH CARE EMPLOYER NURSING PIPELINE AND  
18          APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

19          (a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Vermont Student  
20          Assistance Corporation (VSAC) from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 and  
21          shall carry forward for the purpose of providing grants to health care



1 employers, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, designated and  
2 specialized service agencies, federally qualified health centers, and other health  
3 care providers, to establish or expand partnerships with Vermont nursing  
4 schools to create nursing pipeline or apprenticeship programs, or both, that will  
5 train members of the health care employers' existing staff, including personal  
6 care attendants, licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to  
7 become higher-level nursing professionals. Through a combination of  
8 scholarship awards, grants awarded to health care employers pursuant to this  
9 section, and the health care employer's contributions, the trainees' tuition and  
10 fees shall be covered in full, and trainees shall be provided with assistance in  
11 meeting their living costs, such as housing and child care, while attending the  
12 program.

13 (b) In awarding grants pursuant to this section, VSAC shall give priority to  
14 health care employer proposals based on the following criteria:

15 (1) the extent to which the health care employer proposes to participate  
16 financially in the program;

17 (2) the extent of the health care employer's commitment to sustaining  
18 the program financially, including providing financial support for nurse  
19 preceptors, to create ongoing opportunities for educational advancement in  
20 nursing;

1           (3) the ability of the health care employer’s staff to leverage nursing  
2           scholarship opportunities to maximize the reach of the grant funds;

3           (4) the employer’s demonstrated ability to retain nursing students in the  
4           Vermont nursing workforce;

5           (5) the employer’s geographic location, in order to ensure access to  
6           pipeline and apprenticeship programs for nursing staff across Vermont; and

7           (6) the employer’s commitment to advancing the professional  
8           development of individuals from marginalized communities, especially those  
9           that have been historically disadvantaged in accessing educational  
10           opportunities and career advancement in the health care professions.

11           (c)(1) VSAC shall begin awarding grants under this section expeditiously  
12           in order to enable health care employer staff to begin enrolling in nursing  
13           school programs that commence in the fall of 2022.

14           (2) On or before September 15, 2022, VSAC shall provide an update to  
15           the Health Reform Oversight Committee on the status of program  
16           implementation.

17           Sec. 17. 18 V.S.A. § 34 is added to read:

18           § 34. VERMONT NURSING **FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE**  
19           **PROGRAM**

20           (a) The Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Incentive Program is created  
21           and shall be administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with

1 the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. The Vermont Student  
2 Assistance Corporation shall disburse scholarship funds under the Program on  
3 behalf of eligible individuals, subject to the appropriation of funds by the  
4 General Assembly for this purpose.

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

7 (1) be enrolled at an approved postsecondary education institution as  
8 defined in 16 V.S.A. § 2822;

9 (2) demonstrate financial need;

10 (3) demonstrate academic capacity by carrying **the minimum** grade point  
11 average in the individual's course of study prior to receiving the fund award;

12 and

13 (4) agree to work as a nurse in Vermont for a minimum of one year  
14 following licensure for each year of scholarship awarded.

15 (c)(1) First priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students  
16 pursuing a practical nursing certificate who will be eligible to sit for the  
17 NCLEX-PN examination upon completion of the certificate.

18 (2) Second priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students  
19 pursuing an associate's degree in nursing who will be eligible to sit for the  
20 NCLEX-RN examination upon graduation.

1           (3) Third priority for scholarship funds shall be given to students  
2           pursuing a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

3           (4) Fourth priority shall be given to students pursuing graduate nursing  
4           education.

5           (d) Students attending an approved postsecondary educational institution in  
6           Vermont shall receive first preference for scholarships.

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

13       Sec. 18. REPEAL

14           18 V.S.A. § 31 (educational assistance; incentives; nurses) is repealed.

15       Sec. 19. VERMONT NURSING **FORGIVABLE LOAN INCENTIVE**

16       PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

17           The sum of \$3,000,000.00 in Global Commitment investment funds is  
18           appropriated to the Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships  
19           for nursing students under the **Vermont Nursing Forgivable Loan Program**  
20           established in Sec. 17 of this act.

1 Sec. 20. 18 V.S.A. § 35 is added to read:

2 § 35. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) “Corporation” means the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
5 established in 16 V.S.A. § 2821.

6 (2) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
7 requirements for loan repayment under this section.

8 (3) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education  
9 institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

10 (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans  
11 under this section.

12 (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
13 serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
14 for attendance at an eligible school.

15 (6) “Program” means the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program  
16 created under this section.

17 (b) The Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program is created and shall be  
18 administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with the  
19 Corporation. The Program provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals  
20 who live and work as a nurse in this State and who meet the eligibility  
21 requirements in subsection (e) of this section.

1       (c) The loan repayment benefits provided under the Program shall be paid  
2       on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation, subject to the  
3       appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for this purpose.

4       (d) To be eligible for loan repayment under the Program, an individual  
5       shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

6           (1) have graduated from an eligible school where the individual has,  
7           within the past five years, been awarded a nursing degree;

8           (2) had an overall the minimum grade point average or better or the  
9           equivalent as determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use  
10          grade point averages from the eligible school;

11          (3) work as a nurse in this State; and

12          (4) be a resident of Vermont.

13       (f)(1) An eligible individual shall be entitled to an amount of loan  
14       cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year of loans for  
15       every for one year of service as a nurse in this State.

16       (2) The Corporation shall award loan repayments in amounts that are  
17       sufficient to attract high-quality candidates while also making a meaningful  
18       increase in Vermont’s health care professional workforce.

19       (i) The Corporation shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
20       necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

1       Sec. 21. VERMONT NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM;  
2       APPROPRIATION

3           The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
4       Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for loan repayment for nurses under  
5       the Vermont Nursing Loan Repayment Program established in Sec. 20 of this  
6       act.

7       Sec. 22. 18 V.S.A. § 36 is added to read:

8       § 36. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT  
9       PROGRAM

10       (a) Definitions. As used in this section:

11           (1) “Eligible individual” means an individual who satisfies the eligibility  
12       requirements under this section for a scholarship or loan repayment.

13           (2) “Eligible school” means an approved postsecondary education  
14       institution, as defined under 16 V.S.A. § 2822.

15           (3) “Gift aid” means grant or scholarship financial aid received from the  
16       federal government or from the State.

17           (4) “Loan repayment” means the cancellation and repayment of loans  
18       under this section.

19           (5) “Loans” means education loans guaranteed, made, financed,  
20       serviced, or otherwise administered by the Corporation under this subchapter  
21       for attendance at an eligible school.

1           (6) “Program” means the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
2           Repayment Program created under this section.

3           (7) “Scholarship” means a scholarship awarded under this section  
4           covering tuition, room, board, and the cost of required books and supplies for  
5           up to full-time attendance at an eligible school.

6           (b) Program creation. The Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
7           Repayment Program is created and shall be administered by the Department of  
8           Health in collaboration with the Corporation. The Program provides  
9           scholarships to students enrolled in an eligible school who commit to working  
10           as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State and who meet the  
11           eligibility requirements in subsection (d) of this section. The Program also  
12           provides loan repayment on behalf of individuals who work as nurse educators  
13           at a nursing school in this State and who meet the eligibility requirements in  
14           subsection (e) of this section.

15           (c) The scholarship and loan repayment benefits provided under the  
16           Program shall be paid on behalf of the eligible individual by the Corporation,  
17           subject to the appropriation of funds by the General Assembly specifically for  
18           this purpose.

19           (d) Eligibility for scholarships. To be eligible for a scholarship under the  
20           Program, an individual, whether a resident or nonresident, shall satisfy all of  
21           the following requirements:



1           (1) be enrolled at an eligible school in a program that leads to a graduate  
2           degree in nursing;

3           (2) continually demonstrate satisfactory academic progress by  
4           maintaining the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as  
5           determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point  
6           averages;

7           (3) have used any available gift aid;

8           (4) have executed a contract with the Corporation committing the  
9           individual to work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State;

10          (5) have executed a promissory note obligating the individual to repay  
11          the individual's scholarship benefit, in whole or in part, if the individual fails  
12          to complete the period of service required in subsection (f) of this section; and

13          (6) have completed the Program's application form, the free application  
14          for federal student aid (FAFSA), and the Vermont grant application each  
15          academic year of enrollment in accordance with a schedule determined by the  
16          Corporation.

17          (e) Eligibility for loan repayment. To be eligible for loan repayment under  
18          the Program, an individual shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

19               (1) graduated from an eligible school where the individual has, within  
20               the past five years, been awarded a graduate degree in nursing;

1           (2) had the minimum grade point average or better or the equivalent as  
2           determined by the Corporation if the eligible school does not use grade point  
3           averages from the eligible school;

4           (3) work as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State; and

5           (4) be a resident of Vermont.

6           (f) Service commitment.

7           (1) Scholarships. For each year of service as a nurse educator at a  
8           nursing school in this State, an eligible individual shall be entitled to a full  
9           academic year of full scholarship benefit under the Program. If an eligible  
10           individual fails to serve as a nurse educator at a nursing school in this State for  
11           a period that would entitle the individual to the full scholarship benefit  
12           received by the individual, other than for good cause as determined by the  
13           Corporation, then the individual shall reimburse the Corporation a pro rata  
14           portion of the scholarship paid under the Program pursuant to the terms of the  
15           interest-free reimbursement promissory note signed by the individual at the  
16           time of entering the Program.

17           (2) Loan repayment. An eligible individual shall be entitled to an  
18           amount of loan cancellation and repayment under this section equal to one year  
19           of loans for every for one year of service as a nurse educator at a nursing  
20           school in this State.

1        (g) Adoption of policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Corporation  
2        shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to implement the  
3        provisions of this section.

4        Sec. 23. NURSE EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN REPAYMENT  
5        PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION

6        The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
7        Department of Health in fiscal year 2023 for scholarships and loan repayment  
8        for nurse educators under the Nurse Educator Scholarship and Loan  
9        Repayment Program established in **Sec. 22 of this act.**

10       Sec. 24. NURSING SCHOOLS; SIMULATION LAB UPDATE AND  
11       EXPANSION; APPROPRIATION

12       The sum of \$4,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human Services  
13       in fiscal year 2023 for purposes of providing capital grants to nursing school  
14       programs to enable them to renovate or expand their simulation laboratories, or  
15       both, in order to enable them to increase student enrollment. The amount of  
16       the grant funds shall be divided among the nursing schools in Vermont based  
17       on each school's projected nursing student enrollment following completion of  
18       the renovation or expansion.

19       Sec. 25. 18 V.S.A. § 9456 is amended to read:

20       § 9456. BUDGET REVIEW

1 (a) The Board shall conduct reviews of each hospital’s proposed budget  
2 based on the information provided pursuant to this subchapter and in  
3 accordance with a schedule established by the Board.

4 (b) In conjunction with budget reviews, the Board shall:

5 \* \* \*

6 (10) require each hospital to provide information on administrative  
7 costs, as defined by the Board, including specific information on the amounts  
8 spent on marketing and advertising costs; ~~and~~

9 (11) require each hospital to create or maintain connectivity to the  
10 State’s Health Information Exchange Network in accordance with the criteria  
11 established by the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc., pursuant to  
12 subsection 9352(i) of this title, provided that the Board shall not require a  
13 hospital to create a level of connectivity that the State’s Exchange is unable to  
14 support;

15 (12) review the hospital’s investments in workforce development  
16 initiatives, including nursing workforce pipeline collaborations with nursing  
17 schools and compensation and other support for nurse preceptors; and

18 (13) consider the salaries for the hospital’s executive and clinical  
19 leadership and the hospital’s salary spread, including a comparison of median  
20 salaries to the medians of northern New England states.

21 \* \* \*

1       Sec. 26. GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; FISCAL YEAR 2023  
2       HOSPITAL BUDGET REVIEW; NURSING WORKFORCE  
3       DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

4           For hospital fiscal year 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board may exclude  
5           all or a portion of a hospital’s investments in nursing workforce development  
6           initiatives from any otherwise applicable financial limitations on the hospital’s  
7           budget or budget growth. Notwithstanding any provision of GMCB Rule  
8           3.202, the Board may modify its hospital budget guidance for hospital fiscal  
9           year 2023 as needed to comply with this section.

10       Sec. 27. DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES;  
11       MEDICAID RATE INCREASE; REPORT

12           (a) Since the 1960s, the State and federal governments have directed the  
13           community mental health system to provide care in the community using the  
14           least restrictive means for those who would previously have been  
15           institutionalized, but never redistributed the money to the community mental  
16           health system or fully funded that mandate. The General Assembly is taking  
17           the steps set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section to address the  
18           shortfall.

19           (b) In order to increase by 10 percent the Medicaid rates for the mental  
20           health and developmental disability services provided by designated and  
21           specialized service agencies, the sum of \$41,854,493.00 in Global

1 Commitment dollars is appropriated to the Agency of Human Services in fiscal  
2 year 2023.

3 (c) The Departments of Mental Health and of Disabilities, Aging, and  
4 Independent Living, in consultation with representatives of the designated and  
5 specialized services agencies, shall report to the House Committees on Health  
6 Care, on Human Services, and on Appropriations and the Senate Committees  
7 on Health and Welfare and on Appropriations on or before January 15, 2023  
8 with the total amount of funds that would be necessary on an annual basis to  
9 increase the salaries for all staff in the community mental health system to the  
10 level of equivalent positions in the State workforce, Vermont hospitals, and  
11 school settings.

12 Sec. 28. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; DESIGNATED AND  
13 SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGENCIES; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

14 (a) The sum of \$6,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of Human  
15 Services from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to expand the supply of  
16 high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and  
17 developmental disability services professionals by distributing funds to the  
18 designated and specialized service agencies equitably based on each agency's  
19 proportion of full-time- equivalent (FTE) mental health, substance use disorder  
20 treatment, and developmental disability services staff to the total number of  
21 FTE mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and developmental

1 disability services staff across all designated and specialized service agencies  
2 statewide. The designated and specialized service agencies shall use these  
3 funds for loan repayment and tuition assistance to promote the recruitment and  
4 retention of high-quality mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and  
5 developmental disability services professionals available to Vermont residents  
6 in need of their services, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

7 (b)(1) Each designated and specialized service agency shall make the funds  
8 received pursuant to subsection (a) of this section available to its current and  
9 prospective employees as set forth in subdivisions (A) and (B) of this  
10 subdivision (1) on a rolling basis in exchange for a one-year service obligation  
11 to provide mental health, substance use disorder treatment, or developmental  
12 disability services, or a combination of these, at a designated or specialized  
13 service agency in this State. The funds may be used for the following  
14 purposes:

15 (A) loan repayment for master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level  
16 direct service staff, and nurses; and

17 (B) tuition assistance for individuals pursuing degrees to become  
18 master’s-level clinicians, bachelor’s-level direct service staff, and nurses.

19 (2) Loan repayment and tuition assistance funds shall be available to the  
20 current and prospective employees of designated and specialized service

1 agencies in the form of forgivable loans, with the debt forgiven upon the  
2 employee's completion of the required service obligation.

3 (c) Until the funds have been fully expended, the Agency of Human  
4 Services shall report on or before January 15 annually to the House  
5 Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Human Services and  
6 the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare with  
7 information on the following:

8 (1) the specific designated and specialized service agencies that have  
9 received funds to date and the programs within each of those agencies in which  
10 the financial assistance recipients will deliver services;

11 (2) the amount of financial assistance funding provided to each  
12 recipient;

13 (3) the specific degrees or certificates toward which the tuition  
14 assistance recipients are working and those earned by loan repayment  
15 recipients; and

16 (4) the number of new employees attracted to the designated and  
17 specialized service agencies as a result of the financial assistance, their fields  
18 of study, and the programs in which they deliver services.

19 Sec. 29. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; BARRIERS TO  
20 MENTAL HEALTH LICENSURE; REPORT



1       The Office of Professional Regulation shall undertake a systematic review  
2       of the licensing processes for mental health and substance use disorder  
3       treatment professionals to identify barriers to licensure. On or before January  
4       15, 2023, the Office shall provide its findings and recommendations to address  
5       any identified barriers to licensure to the House Committees on Health Care,  
6       on Human Services, on Commerce and Economic Development, and on  
7       Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare, on  
8       Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, and on Government  
9       Operations.

10       Sec. 30. AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES; POSITION;

11       APPROPRIATION

12       (a) One classified, three-year limited-service Health Care Workforce  
13       Coordinator position is created in the Agency of Human Services, Office of  
14       Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023 to support the health care workforce  
15       initiatives set forth in this act and in the Health Care Workforce Development  
16       Strategic Plan. The Coordinator shall focus on building educational, clinical,  
17       and housing partnerships and support structures to increase and improve health  
18       care workforce training, recruitment, and retention.

19       (b) The sum of \$170,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
20       Agency of Human Services, Office of Health Care Reform in fiscal year 2023

1 for the Health Care Workforce Coordinator position, of which \$120,000.00 is  
2 for personal services and \$50,000.00 is for operating expenses.

3 Sec. 31. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE  
4 DATA HUB; HEALTH RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN

5 The sum of \$2,500,000.00 is appropriated to the Department of Labor from  
6 the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 to enable the Department to serve as the  
7 State’s health care workforce data hub. The Department shall collect health  
8 care workforce data and identify and propose solutions to address data gaps,  
9 and shall share the data with the Green Mountain Care Board to inform the  
10 Board’s work in identifying the State’s health resources available to meet  
11 Vermonters’ health care needs and additional resources that may be necessary,  
12 as part of the Board’s Health Resource Allocation Plan responsibilities  
13 pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9405. The Department shall use existing statewide  
14 information to the extent practicable to avoid imposing administrative burdens  
15 on health care providers and to avoid duplication of efforts underway  
16 elsewhere in Vermont. The Department shall expand its data collection  
17 practices over two years to include all levels of the health care workforce,  
18 beginning with the highest-level licensed health care professionals.

19 Sec. 32. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE  
20 BOARD; SUPPLY AND DEMAND MODELING

1        On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Labor, in collaboration  
2        with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall explore and recommend to the  
3        House Committees on Health Care, on Human Services, and on Commerce and  
4        Economic Development and the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare  
5        and on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs a process,  
6        methodology, and necessary funding amounts to establish and maintain the  
7        capacity to perform health care supply and demand modeling based on  
8        information in the health care workforce data hub, for use by health care  
9        employers, health care educators, and policymakers.

10       Sec. 33. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL REGULATION; GREEN  
11       MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS;  
12       ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION; REPORT

13       (a) The Department of Financial Regulation shall explore the feasibility of  
14       requiring health insurers and their prior authorization vendors to access clinical  
15       data from the Vermont Health Information Exchange whenever possible to  
16       support prior authorization requests in situations in which a request cannot be  
17       automatically approved.

18       (b) The Department of Financial Regulation shall direct health insurers to  
19       provide prior authorization information to the Department in a format required  
20       by the Department in order to enable the Department to analyze opportunities  
21       to align and streamline prior authorization request processes. The Department

1 shall share its findings and recommendations with the Green Mountain Care  
2 Board, and the Department and the Board shall collaborate to provide  
3 recommendations to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate  
4 Committees on Health and Welfare and on Finance on or before January 15,  
5 2023 regarding the statutory changes necessary to align and streamline prior  
6 authorization processes and requirements across health insurers.

7 Sec. 34. 33 V.S.A. § 3543 is amended to read:

8 § 3543. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

9 (a)(1) There is established a need-based student loan repayment assistance  
10 program for the purpose of providing student loan repayment assistance to any  
11 individual employed by a regulated, privately operated center-based child care  
12 program or family child care home.

13 (2) An eligible individual shall:

14 (A) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or in  
15 a family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an  
16 average of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year, except that this  
17 minimum time requirement does not apply to an employee of Vermont Head  
18 Start to the extent it conflicts with any law or contract provision governing the  
19 terms of employment.

20 (B) receive an annual salary of not more than \$50,000.00; and

1 (C) have earned an associates or bachelor's degree with a major  
2 concentration in early childhood, child and human development, elementary  
3 education, special education with a birth to age eight focus, or child and family  
4 services within the preceding five years.

5 \* \* \*

6 Sec. 35. PILOT PROGRAM; POSITIONS EMBEDDED WITHIN  
7 RECOVERYCENTERS

8 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2023, \$1,290,000.00 is appropriated to the Department  
9 for Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living's Division of Vocation  
10 Rehabilitation and the Vermont Association of Business Industry and  
11 Rehabilitation from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for the purpose  
12 of developing and implementing a two-year pilot program that embeds 15 FTE  
13 new positions within 12 recovery centers across the State.

14 (2) The 15 FTE limited-service positions shall be allocated as follows:

15 (A) Of the total appropriation, \$540,000.00 total shall be allocated in  
16 equal amounts to fund the following 2.5 FTE at each of two geographically  
17 diverse recovery centers:

18 (i) one FTE to serve as an employment counselor within the  
19 Division of Vocation Rehabilitation;

20 (ii) one FTE to serve as an employment consultant within the  
21 Vermont Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation; and

1                    (iii) 0.5 FTE to serve as Employment Assistance Program staff  
2                    within the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation.

3                    (B) Of the total appropriation, \$75,000.00 shall be allocated in equal  
4                    amounts to fund one FTE who shall serve as an employment support counselor  
5                    at each of the 10 remaining recovery centers in the State.

6                    (b) On or before January 1, 2024, the Division of Vocational  
7                    Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Business  
8                    Industry and Rehabilitation, shall submit a report to the House Committees on  
9                    Commerce and Economic Development and on Human Services and to the  
10                   Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs  
11                   and on Health and Welfare summarizing the effectiveness of the pilot program,  
12                   including:

13                   (1) educational attainment and achievement of program recipients;

14                   (2) acquisition of a credential of value pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 546;

15                   (3) number of job placements; and

16                   (4) job retention rates.

17                   **Sec. 36. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; HIGHER**

18                   **EDUCATION SAVINGS INCENTIVE; PUBLIC EDUCATION**

19                   **CAMPAIGN**

20                   **In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$XXX is appropriated to the Department**  
21                   **for Children and Families' Child Development Division to develop and**

1 implement as public education campaign aimed at ensuring that families in the  
2 Child Care Financial Assistance Program are aware that the earnings deposited  
3 in a qualified child education savings account, such as the Vermont Higher  
4 Education Investment Plan established in 16 V.S.A. § 2877, or any similar plan  
5 qualified under 26 U.S.C. § 529, shall be disregarded in determining the  
6 amount of a family’s income for the purpose of determining continuing  
7 eligibility.

8 Sec. 37. EFFECTIVE DATE

9 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022, except that Sec. 25 shall take  
10 effect on January 1, 2023 and shall apply to hospital fiscal years 2024 and  
11 after.

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

19  
20  
21

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR THE COMMITTEE