

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

H.709

Introduced by Representatives Priestley of Bradford, Anthony of Barre City,
Christie of Hartford, Elder of Starksboro, Farlice-Rubio of
Barnet, Graning of Jericho, Headrick of Burlington, Lalley of
Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Rice
of Dorset, Roberts of Halifax, Templeman of Brownington, and
White of Bethel

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Commerce and trade; business reform; Office of Entrepreneurship;
home-based food business

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create the
Office of Entrepreneurship to develop policies and programs pertaining to
entrepreneurs. This bill would eliminate all first-year fees for new business
registrations. This bill would also require the Agency of Commerce and
Community Development to produce a report on how to reduce regulations on
home-based food businesses.

An act relating to creating the Office of Entrepreneurship and other
programs pertaining to entrepreneurs

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 2478 is added to read:

3 § 2478. OFFICE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4 (a) The Office of Entrepreneurship is created within the Agency of
5 Commerce and Community Development to promote the needs of
6 entrepreneurs in the State by:

7 (1) working to strengthen policies and programs supporting the growth
8 of entrepreneurship in the State across demographic segments and geographic
9 areas;

10 (2) working with stakeholders and organizations supporting
11 entrepreneurship to enhance the learning and skills of, provide technical
12 support to, and expand access to resources for entrepreneurs across the State;

13 (3) serving as a point of contact to assist businesses that have been in
14 operation for not more than five years in interactions with State agencies and,
15 where appropriate, referring businesses to other State or local agencies that
16 provide assistance to businesses; and

17 (4) encouraging the award of at least five percent of the total number of
18 State contracts to businesses that have been in operation for not more than five
19 years and whose principal place of business is in this State.

1 (b) Beginning on March 1, 2026 and each year thereafter, the Office of
2 Entrepreneurship shall submit to the General Assembly a report that includes
3 the following information for the previous calendar year:

4 (1) the number and total dollar amount of State contracts awarded to
5 businesses that have been in operation for not more than five years, including a
6 breakdown by demographic segments and geographical areas throughout the
7 State;

8 (2) the percentage of State contracts awarded to businesses that have
9 been in operation for not more than five years compared to the total number of
10 contracts awarded;

11 (3) the number of businesses owned by women, minorities, or veterans
12 that have been in operation for not more than five years and have been
13 awarded a State contract;

14 (4) the percentage of the total dollar amount of State contracts awarded
15 to businesses that have been in operation for not more than five years
16 compared to the total dollar amount of contracts awarded;

17 (5) recommendations on improving access to State contracts for
18 businesses that have been in operation for not more than five years, including
19 businesses in statistically underrepresented demographic segments and
20 geographic areas of Vermont;

1 (2) Expanding the freedom of entrepreneurs to operate home-based food
2 businesses will provide numerous benefits, including the opportunity for self-
3 employment and to earn a living through work that affords flexibility,
4 creativity, and financial rewards.

5 (3) Consumers desire foods produced by such entrepreneurs.

6 (4) Expanding the freedom of consumers to procure food from home-
7 based food businesses will provide many benefits, including consumers in
8 urban and rural areas in the State gaining access to a greater variety of food
9 options, especially fresh food produced on a small, local scale.

10 (5) Evidence from other states shows that home-based food businesses
11 are safe.

12 (6) Allowing the production, sale, and consumption of a greater variety
13 of homemade foods respects individuals' personal liberty, including economic
14 liberty. Individuals should be free to produce, procure, and consume the
15 homemade foods of their choice.

16 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2025, the Agency of Commerce and
17 Community Development, in consultation with the Agency of Agriculture,
18 Food and Markets; the Department of Health; and other interested
19 stakeholders, shall recommend to the General Assembly through a written
20 report how best to eliminate existing barriers to home-based food businesses
21 and encourage development of new home-based food businesses while

1 protecting public health and safety to expand the ability of Vermonters to
2 produce, procure, and consume the homemade foods of their choice.

3 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.