1	H.709
2	Introduced by Representatives Priestley of Bradford, Anthony of Barre City,
3	Christie of Hartford, Elder of Starksboro, Farlice-Rubio of
4	Barnet, Graning of Jericho, Headrick of Burlington, Lalley of
5	Shelburne, Logan of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, Rice
6	of Dorset, Roberts of Halifax, Templeman of Brownington, and
7	White of Bethel
8	Referred to Committee on
9	Date:
10	Subject: Commerce and trade; business reform; Office of Entrepreneurship;
11	home-based food business
12	Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create the
13	Office of Entrepreneurship to develop policies and programs pertaining to
14	entrepreneurs. This bill would eliminate all first-year fees for new business
15	registrations. This bill would also require the Agency of Commerce and
16	Community Development to produce a report on how to reduce regulations on
17	home-based food businesses.
18 19	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	(6) recommendations on improving overall entrepreneurship in this
2	State, including identifying regional challenges to entrepreneurship; and
3	(7) any additional information deemed necessary by the Agency of
4	Commerce and Community Development to provide an accurate depiction of
5	the conditions of entrepreneurship in Vermont.
6	Sec. 2. 11 V.S.A. § 1625 is amended to read:
7	§ 1625. FEES
8	* * *
9	(e) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a person applying
10	to register and start a new business in this State shall be exempt from all first-
11	year State business fees related to licensure and registration.
12	Sec. 3. HOME-BASED FOOD BUSINESSES; FREEDOM OF FOOD
13	CHOICE; REPORT
14	(a) Legislative intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly that
15	individuals have the right to produce, procure, and consume homemade foods
16	of their choice that are free from unnecessary and anticompetitive regulations
17	and to foster small businesses, innovation, and economic growth.
18	(b) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:
19	(1) There is great interest in small-scale, home-based food businesses in
20	this State, but current law restricts entrepreneurs' ability to establish and grow
21	such businesses.

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

- 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.