

1 S.266

2 Introduced by Senators Weeks, Collamore and Williams

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Taxation and finance; salaries and fees; General Assembly;

6 communication funds

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide
8 members of the General Assembly with communication funds for conveying to
9 the public information regarding members' official business, activities, and
10 duties of the General Assembly.

11 An act relating to General Assembly communication funds

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

13 Sec. 1. 32 V.S.A. § 1052 is amended to read:

14 § 1052. MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; COMPENSATION
15 AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

16 * * *

17 (e) Each member of the General Assembly is entitled to an amount to be
18 expenses for the purpose of communicating to the member's constituents the
19 official business, activities, and duties of the General Assembly.

1 (1) Amount of funds. On the second day of January, each member of
2 the House of Representatives shall receive an amount of \$500.00 and each
3 Senator shall receive an annual amount of \$2,000.00, which shall be increased
4 by the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index, CPI-U, U.S. city
5 average, not seasonally adjusted, or successor index, as calculated by the U.S.
6 Department of Labor or successor agency for the 12 months preceding the
7 previous January 2, to be rounded off to the nearest \$0.01.

8 (2) Use of communication funds.

9 (A) Communication funds shall only be expended by the member for
10 conveying information to the member's constituents and the general public on
11 matters relating to the member's own official business, activities, and duties, or
12 to the functioning, working, or operating of the General Assembly and shall
13 include the requesting of the views from the public as a guide or a means of
14 assistance in the performance of those functions.

15 (B) Communication funds shall not:

16 (i) be used to defray any personal or campaign-related expenses;

17 (ii) be used to make any electioneering communications, having
18 the same meaning in 17 V.S.A. § 2901; or

19 (iii) be pooled or amassed between members to issue
20 communications in a shared manner.

1 (C) Communication fund expenditures shall be reported to the State
2 Ethics Commission annually by the 31st day of December and shall include:

3 (i) the amount of the expenditure;

4 (ii) a description of the communication;

5 (iii) the recipient of the communication funds; and

6 (iv) an updated balance of the member's unspent communication
7 funds for that year.

8 (D) Unused funds shall not be rolled over into the next year. Any
9 unspent funds shall be returned to the General Fund by the first day of the
10 second March after the communication funds were dispensed to the member.

11 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

12 This act shall take effect on January 1, 2025.