

# State of Vermont

## Senate Chamber



Montpelier, Vermont

### Senate Resolution

By Senators Baruth, Bray, Brock, Champion, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Gulick, Hardy, Harrison, Hashim, Ingalls, Julow, Kitchel, Lyons, MacDonald, McCormack, Norris, Perchlik, Ram Hinsdale, Starr, Vyhovsky, Watson, Weeks, Westman, White, Williams and Wrenner,

**S.R. 21.** Senate resolution in memory of Senator and former Bennington Selectboard Chair Richard Sears.

*Whereas*, the extraordinary life of Dick Sears coalesced in a manner more akin to fiction than reality, and

*Whereas*, Dick Sears was born Stephen Story in 1943 at the Framingham, Massachusetts, state penal facility, to an imprisoned mother whom he never knew, and

*Whereas*, at nine months of age, the Sears family of Ashland, Massachusetts, adopted him out of foster care, providing a loving home and a new name, and

*Whereas*, after Dick Sears graduated from the University of Vermont, the Department of Corrections hired him to counsel young offenders, initiating his lifelong focus on troubled youth, and

*Whereas*, in 1971, Dick Sears established 204 Depot Street in Bennington, an organization dedicated to mentoring boys entangled in the justice system, and he directed the program for 35 years, and

*Whereas*, in this role, Dick Sears developed important political skills that led to his chairing the Bennington Selectboard and, ultimately, to his election in 1992 to the State Senate, representing the Bennington Senate District, and

*Whereas*, not surprisingly, Senator Richard Sears was appointed to the Senate Committee on Judiciary; became its vice chair in 1995; and, in 1997, was elevated to committee chair, serving in this role until 2024, and

*Whereas*, Senator Richard Sears guided the enactment of legislation providing for civil unions and, later, marriage equality; the easing of cannabis restrictions; the unification of the State trial court system; the enabling of adoptees to learn of their biological parentage; and the improvement of juvenile justice; and he served in leadership roles on other panels related to the justice system, as well as on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and

*Whereas*, his Senate colleagues would chuckle at his seemingly humorous Friday “No” votes on motions to adjourn at the week’s end, and

*Whereas*, on the first weekend of June 2024, Senator Richard Sears, whose wife, Beverly, died in 2023, died at 81 years of age, and during his life, he was thrilled to have established family relationships with his special son, John Murphy, and his previously unknown sister, Irene Macheimer, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate:***

That the Senate of the State of Vermont expresses its profound sadness at the passing of its cherished colleague, Senator Richard Sears, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the family of Senator Richard Sears.