



RAD POLICY AGENDA

VT 2023-2024 Legislative Session

We currently face many overlapping national crises that are impacting our Vermont communities. At the same time, our state has entered a new legislative session with one of the most diverse legislatures in Vermont's history, following recent policy wins for environmental justice, abortion rights, school meals, and more.

In the 2023-2024 session, we have the opportunity to advance bold changes that will benefit everyday Vermonters and repair past harms, while putting our state at the forefront of efforts to guarantee housing for all, address the climate crisis through an equity lens, strengthen our public education system, and uphold the rights and dignity of all workers.

The policy priorities that we have laid out in this booklet serve to advance RAD's vision for a Vermont that works for all of us, with healthy, just, and equitable communities for everyone.

Who We Are

As a member-led, people's organization in Vermont and New Hampshire, RAD is shifting the political landscape through electoral and community organizing to ensure that the values and needs of our communities guide the policies of our government. We are building a popular movement to advance human rights, dismantle economic inequality, racism, and sexism, and to build a real democracy. Our founding belief is that it takes people power, year after year, to make the kind of big, bold, long-term changes we want to see in this country.

The Renew's Vision

In 2021, RAD co-founded the Renew New England Alliance, a multi-racial, regional coalition of more than 150 organizations across six states, working to advance a bold policy agenda grounded in a just transition to a regenerative economy.

Within Vermont, RAD is the anchor organization for the Alliance's state affiliate, the Vermont Renew's Coalition. Together, we are building a powerful grassroots movement to re-imagine Vermont from the ground up and develop thriving, equitable, and sustainable local economies that center the priorities of workers and frontline communities and create good-paying, unionized jobs.

Learn more: www.vtrenews.org





HOUSING JUSTICE

Across income, race, and geography, everyone deserves a safe, affordable, and accessible place to live. To keep a job, raise a family, and build community, we all need a place to call home. In short, housing is a human right, and we need housing for all. To advance this vision, we need to:

1. Ensure that Vermonters can get and keep stable housing by allowing eviction records to be expunged after three years, providing needed rental assistance, requiring a “just cause” for future evictions, and providing a right to legal counsel for people facing eviction.
2. Create a Statewide Rental Registry, so that we can know what the true housing situation is in Vermont, allowing us to create policies and protections that are founded on accurate, reliable data.
3. Grow the supply of affordable housing by reducing zoning barriers, supporting full statutory funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and increasing the supply of supportive housing.

Policy Priorities

- Rental Registry
- State solution to rental assistance that replaces the Vermont Rental Assistance Program (VERAP)
- Statewide and Municipal Just Cause Eviction
- Eviction Diversion
- More affordable and low-barrier housing



CLIMATE JUSTICE

No matter what we look like, where we live, or how much money we make, we all deserve clean air and water, the ability to keep our lights and heat on without financial worry, and a livable planet for generations to come.

But as the climate crisis rages on, natural disasters, fires, floods, and droughts are spreading across the US and the world, often hitting BIPOC, lower income, and immigrant communities hardest. Vermont must do its part to ensure a just transition to a clean energy future that mandates renewable energy and ends our reliance on dirty, polluting fossil fuels. And we must guarantee that everyone benefits - especially Vermonters who have been most impacted by past and current harms.

We need a full transition to renewables, with a focus on in-state sources, and a clean heat standard that centers equity and incentivizes energy use mitigation over transition fuels. We also need to create a pathway for geothermal and other thermal networked energy, move away from combusting fuels, and expand electric ratepayer protections to all low- and moderate-income Vermonters.

Policy Priorities

- Revised Renewable Energy Standard (RES) and a transition to 100% renewables with in-state renewables
- Fully-funded Environmental Justice Advisory Council with guaranteed longevity to lead VT through a Just Transition
- Affordable Heat Act
- Ratepayer Protection and Thermal Energy Network Act



ECONOMIC JUSTICE

When Vermont's families thrive, Vermont's communities thrive. To thrive, all workers need fair and dignified wages, full benefits, and strong legal protections.

Right now, this is still not the case for many Vermonters.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further highlighted what we already knew: workers in Vermont's retail, restaurant, agricultural, and other service industries play deeply vital roles in our communities. And yet, these workers are often underpaid and underprotected in their workplaces. The subminimum wage, a direct legacy of slavery, particularly impacts women, and disproportionately women of color.

It is time to pass One Fair Wage and the VT PRO Act so that we can build a just, equitable economy and a Vermont where we all have what we need to lead fulfilling lives.

Policy Priorities

- One Fair Wage: Ending the Subminimum Wage for Workers in Vermont
- VT PRO Act:
 - Ending No Cause/At Will employment
 - Right to Unionize for farm and domestic workers
 - Majority Sign Up
 - Ban mandatory attendance to Captive Audience meetings



EDUCATION JUSTICE

Every child, whatever their color, background, zip code, ability, or gender, has the right to learn in a nurturing space that values their humanity and upholds their dignity. Strong public schools uplift our communities and are a foundation of a just multiracial democracy.

As powerful national interests seek to silence critical dialogue and divide our communities, Vermont must work to recognize and repair harms of the past, ensure equity and justice in our schools, and build public schools where all students can thrive.

We need legislation that ensures a high-quality, fully-funded, culturally responsive, and honest public education within a safe learning environment for all Vermont students. This means adopting a more equitable tax funding structure, deepening investments in community schools, strengthening mechanisms to stop discrimination, and removing police from classrooms.

Policy Priorities

- Creation of a school funding system that is based on an equitable income tax
- Anti-Discrimination Bill
- School Resource Officers (SROs) out of Schools
- Further investment in and commitment to Community Schools



FOOD JUSTICE

It is time to build a healthy, participatory, and just food system that is by and for our communities.

This requires implementing changes that guarantee access to nutritious food for all Vermonters across race and income, and that ensure social and racial equity in land access.

One way we can advance this vision is by providing nutritious meals at school for all students, to support their learning and wellbeing. Vermont has already been doing this successfully throughout the Covid-19 pandemic; now we need to make this policy permanent.

We also need to strengthen the work of the Land Access and Opportunity Board, so that all Vermonters can benefit from our land and our food systems.

Policy Priorities

- Permanent Universal School Meals
- Appropriation of funds to the Land Access and Opportunity Board for its operations and to fund the opportunity and access programs it recommends



OVERDOSE CRISIS

No matter our circumstances, we all want our friends and family to be treated with compassion and care and to live long, fulfilling lives.

But as the overdose crisis has ripped through our communities and deepened during the pandemic, with Vermont's overdose fatality rate among the fastest to rise, policies have continued to stigmatize, marginalize, and criminalize people who use controlled substances.

This crisis harms us all and has ripple effects throughout our communities. We need evidence-based policies focused on health, equity, and human rights, that break down barriers to care. Instead of wasting resources on punishment and coercion, it's time to expand proven harm reduction solutions and support services for our loved ones struggling with Substance Use Disorder.

Policy Priorities

- Permanent buprenorphine decriminalization for personal use amounts
- Overdose Prevention Sites
- Accessible community-based syringe services for all Vermonters
- Mobile Methadone Clinic Pilot Program
- Expanded treatment education for first responders



DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

We believe that Vermont can lead our country in a new direction, towards healthy, just, and equitable communities for all of us.

To achieve this vision and create a Vermont that works for everyone, we need to ensure that the values and needs of our multiracial, working class communities guide our policies.

We need a government that is by us and for us.

This means making positions of elected leadership accessible to all, regardless of personal wealth or means. It also means enacting a voting system that creates more choice, encourages more people to run for office, and enables more diverse viewpoints to be represented in our elections.

Policy Priorities

- Livable wage salaries for legislators, with healthcare and childcare benefits provided
- Ranked Choice Voting system for all races in Vermont
- People’s Budget in Action: Greater community engagement and transparency in the state budgeting process.




Get In Touch


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