

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to which was
3 referred Senate Bill No. 30 entitled “An act relating to creating a Sister State
4 Program“ respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends
5 that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all
6 after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 **Sec. 1. PURPOSE OF VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM**

8 (a) The purpose of the Vermont Sister State Program is to create,
9 administer, and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships between the State
10 and other select countries or provinces. In relevant Sister State agreements,
11 this Program will help the State support and communicate with active-duty
12 personnel, foreign service officers, aid organizations, nongovernmental
13 organizations, and Peace Corps volunteers promoting Vermont.

14 (b) The Program is designed to help promote a better understanding of
15 Vermonters to residents of Sister States and vice versa.

16 Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 2488 is added to read:

17 § 2488. VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM

18 (a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Sister State Program is created
19 within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

20 (b) Oversight.

1 (1) The Vermont Sister State Committee composed of the following
2 members shall oversee the Program:

3 (A) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or
4 designee;

5 (B) the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Arts Council
6 or designee;

7 (C) two members, appointed by the Senate Committee on
8 Committees, with experience in international relations;

9 (D) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House, with
10 experience in international education and cultural exchange;

11 (E) two members, appointed by the Governor, with experience in
12 international arts, recreation, or governance; and

13 (F) the Vermont Adjutant General or designee.

14 (2) The members appointed pursuant to subdivisions (1)(C)–(E) of this
15 subsection shall serve for terms of five years or until the member’s earlier
16 resignation or removal for cause by a two-thirds vote of the other sitting
17 members of the Committee.

18 (3) If a member resigns or is removed, the appointing authority shall
19 appoint a new member for the remainder of the member’s term within 30 days
20 after the member’s resignation or removal.

1 (4) The members of the Committee shall select a chair by a majority
2 vote.

3 (c) Administration. Subject to the approval of the Vermont Sister State
4 Committee:

5 ~~(1) the Agency may contract for administration of part or all of the~~
6 ~~Program with a nonprofit organization that has expertise in international~~
7 ~~affairs;~~

8 (1) the Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall create
9 an application form and process for evaluating Sister State relationships; and

10 (2) the Agency may adopt rules and policies for the Program.

11 (d) Program requirements.

12 (1) The Vermont Sister State Committee may approve not more than
13 five Sister State relationships per calendar year with countries or provinces
14 formally recognized by the U.S. Department of State in varying regions of the
15 world upon finding that a relationship meets the following goals:

16 (A) the relationship fosters understanding and collaboration between
17 residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in Vermont
18 and residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in the
19 Sister State;

1 (B) the relationship creates opportunities for cultural exchanges and
2 joint programs for educational, recreational, artistic, humanitarian, and
3 economic purposes that benefit both Vermont and the Sister State;

4 (C) the relationship promotes peace, human rights, and
5 environmental sustainability; and

6 (D) the relationship involves a diverse range of individuals, sectors,
7 organizations, and communities in Vermont and the Sister State.

8 (2) A Sister State agreement shall not initially exceed eight years and
9 may be renewed for five-year increments upon approval of the Committee if it
10 determines the relationship has met the goals of the Sister State Program.

11 (3) The Committee shall establish the Sister State Program’s priorities,
12 objectives, and goals and shall report to the relevant legislative committees and
13 the Governor biannually on or before February 1 concerning the status of the
14 Program, its programs, agreements, and progress meeting its goals.

15 (4) The Committee shall foster relationships between nongovernmental
16 organizations operating in a country or province subject to a Sister State
17 agreement.

18 (5) In the event of an emergency, such as a public health emergency;
19 war or armed conflict; or serious human rights, environmental, or economic
20 violations, the Committee shall meet within three days following the
21 emergency to vote whether to terminate a Sister State agreement.

1 (e) Compensation.

2 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
3 Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem
4 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23.

5 (2) Unless otherwise compensated by the member’s employer for
6 performance of the member’s duties on the Committee, a nonlegislative
7 member of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and
8 reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

9 (3) Payments to members of the Committee authorized under this
10 subsection shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of
11 Commerce and Community Development or other specific appropriation made
12 for that purpose.

13 Sec. 3. IMPLEMENTATION

14 The authorities authorized to make appointments to the Vermont Sister
15 State Committee pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2488(b)(1)(C)–(E) shall appoint
16 members to initial terms of three, four, and five years, respectively.

17 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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(Committee vote: _____)

Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE