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TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

- 2 The Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs to which 3 was referred House Bill No. 702 entitled "An act relating to act relating to 4 legislative operations and government accountability" respectfully reports that 5 it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by 6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the 7 following: 8 * * * Purpose and Findings * * * 9 Sec. 1. PURPOSE
 - (a) The purpose of this act is to actuate the principle of government accountability by focusing on how evidence is used to inform policy, how our State laws are carried out, and how legislation can best be formed to achieve its intended outcomes. This act strives to systematize government accountability efforts as much as possible with simple, clear, independent, objective, and fact-based processes rather than rely upon individual legislators or individual committees to be effective.
 - (b) Government accountability means the principle of demanding that legislation succeeds in achieving its stated policy goals through the provision of means by which to measure whether the policy goals have been met. The metrics for determining whether success has been achieved are as important as the goals themselves.

1	(c) Government oversight means the mechanisms put into place to ensure
2	that the bodies of government tasked with executing legislative intent are
3	properly doing so. Oversight by the Legislature is the examination of the
4	processes followed and the information produced by government officials
5	executing the law to determine whether those officials are properly and
6	adequately achieving the policy goals established by the General Assembly.
7	* * * Creation of the Joint Government Oversight and Accountability
8	Committee * * *
9	Sec. 2. 2 V.S.A. chapter 28 is added to read:
10	CHAPTER 28. JOINT GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND
11	ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE
12	§ 971. CREATION OF COMMITTEE
13	(a) There is created the Joint Government Oversight and Accountability
14	Committee, whose membership shall be appointed each biennial session of the
15	General Assembly. The Committee shall work independently and with other
16	legislative committees to assist with matters related to issues of significant
17	public concern.
18	(b) The Committee shall be composed of eight members: four members of
19	the House of Representatives, who shall not all be from the same party,
20	appointed by the Speaker of the House; and four members of the Senate, who
21	shall not all be from the same party, appointed by the Committee on

1	Committees. In addition to two members-at-large appointed from each
2	chamber, one appointment shall be made from each of the House Committee
3	on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the Senate Committee on
4	Government Operations, and the House and Senate Committees on
5	Appropriations.
6	(c) The Committee shall elect a chair, vice chair, and clerk from among its
7	members and shall adopt rules of procedure. The position of chair shall rotate
8	biennially between the House and the Senate members. The Committee shall
9	keep minutes of its meetings and maintain a file thereof. A quorum shall
10	consist of five members.
11	(d) The Committee shall meet as necessary for the prompt discharge of its
12	duties but shall meet at least every other week.
13	(e) For attendance at a meeting when the General Assembly is not in
14	session, members of the Committee shall be entitled to compensation for
15	services and reimbursement of expenses as provided under subsection 23(a) of
16	this title.
17	(f) The professional and clerical services of the Joint Fiscal Office, the
18	Office of Legislative Operations, and the Office of Legislative Counsel shall
19	be available to the Committee.
20	§ 972. DUTIES AND POWERS

1	(a) Duties. The Committee shall have duties as described in this section
2	and elsewhere in law.
3	(1)(A) The Committee shall exercise government oversight by
4	examining and investigating matters of significant public concern relating to
5	State government performance. The Committee shall examine the possible
6	reasons for any failure of government oversight and provide tangible
7	recommendations to prevent future failures.
8	(B) The Committee will select issues of significant public concern to
9	examine and investigate by a majority of the current Committee members who
10	have not recused themselves from the matter.
11	(C) As used in this section, an "issue of significant public concern"
12	means any issue that:
13	(i) affects the State as a whole;
14	(ii) affects a vulnerable population;
15	(iii) costs the State more than \$100,000,000.00;
16	(iv) implicates a serious failure of State government oversight or
17	accountability;
18	(v) arises from previously enacted legislation; or
19	(vi) constitutes a failure to adequately respond to State or federal
20	audits.

1	(2) The Committee shall, with coordination from the Legislative
2	Committee on Administrative Rules, evaluate executive entities directed to
3	adopt rules to ensure consistency and accountability in the rulemaking process.
4	(3) The Committee shall review performance notes issued pursuant to
5	section 523 of this title and monitor performance measures for legislation
6	requiring any performance note.
7	(b) Powers. The Committee shall have powers as described in this section
8	and elsewhere in law.
9	(1) Subpoenas and oaths. The Committee shall have the power to issue
10	subpoenas and administer oaths in connection with the examination and
11	investigation of matters of government oversight and accountability related to
12	issues of significant public concern. The Commission may take or cause
13	depositions to be taken as needed in any investigation or hearing.
14	(2) Direction of Joint Fiscal Office Division of Performance
15	Accountability. The Committee may use the staff and services of the Division
16	of Performance Accountability for carrying out the purposes of this chapter.
17	* * * Reports * * *
18	Sec. 3. 2 V.S.A. § 20 is amended to read:
19	§ 20. LIMITATION ON DISTRIBUTION AND DURATION OF AGENCY
20	REPORTS

(a) Unless otherwise provided by law, whenever it is required by statute,
rule, or otherwise that an agency, department, or other entity submit an annual,
biennial, or other periodic report to the General Assembly, that requirement
shall be met by submission by January November 15 of copies of the report for
activities in the preceding fiscal year to the Clerk of the House, the Secretary
of the Senate, the Office of Legislative Counsel Operations, chairs of
legislative standing committees of jurisdiction, and such individual members
of the General Assembly or committees that specifically request a copy of the
report. To the extent practicable, reports Reports shall also be placed
<u>published</u> on the agency's <u>Internet</u> website. No general distribution or mailing
of such reports shall be made to members of the General Assembly.
* * *
(e) If it becomes apparent to any agency, department, or other entity
directed by the General Assembly to report on a matter that the agency,
department, or entity will be unable to do so within the required time, the
reporting agency, department, or entity shall inform, if applicable, the relevant
legislative committee's current chair, the committee assistant, and the Office of
Legislative Operations of which report will be late, why, and when it will be
<u>delivered.</u>

Sec. 4. MANAGEMENT OF REPORTS AND DATA; APPROPRIATION

1	(a) The Office of Legislative Operations, in coordination with the Office of
2	Legislative Counsel and Legislative Office of Information Technology, shall
3	review the systems involved in publishing the current publicly available
4	legislative reports database to ensure that legislatively mandated reports are
5	being efficiently tracked, submitted, and published in an accessible manner.
6	(b) The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
7	Legislative Office of Information Technology in fiscal year 2025 for the
8	purpose of upgrading the General Assembly's report management system.
9	(c) On or before January 31, 2025, the directors of the Office of Legislative
10	Operations, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and the Legislative Office of
11	Information Technology, or their designees, will together report to the House
12	Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate
13	Committee on Government Operations on the status of the publicly available
14	legislative reports database and with any recommendations for legislative
15	action.
16	* * * Joint Fiscal Office * * *
17	Sec. 5. 2 V.S.A. § 527 is added to read:
18	§ 527. DIVISION OF PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY
19	(a) There is hereby created within Joint Fiscal Office a division to be
20	known as the Division of Performance Accountability.

1	(b) The Division shall provide nonpartisan services as described in this
2	section and elsewhere in law.
3	(c) At the direction of the Joint Government Oversight and Accountability
4	Committee, and with the approval of the Speaker of the House and the
5	President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Division shall produce performance
6	notes regarding certain proposed or enacted legislation for the use of the
7	Committee. Performance notes shall include information regarding legislative
8	intent, policy goals, metrics to measure results and evaluate whether the goals
9	are being accomplished, and estimates of any savings, return on investment, or
10	quantifiable benefit resulting from the adoption of the legislation.
11	Sec. 6. CREATION OF POSITION IN DIVISION OF PERFORMANCE
12	ACCOUNTABILITY; APPROPRIATION
13	(a) One new, permanent, full-time, exempt position is created in the Joint
14	Fiscal Office's Division of Performance Accountability.
15	(b) The sum of \$160,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the
16	Joint Fiscal Office in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of creating a position in
17	the Division of Performance Accountability.
18	* * * Effective Date * * *
19	Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE
20	This act shall take effect on passage.
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6	(Committee vote:)

(Draft No. 1.1 – H.702) 2/23/2024 - TPD - 08:10 AM

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Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE