

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Human Services to which was referred Senate Bill No.  
3 183 entitled “An act relating to reenvisioning the Agency of Human Services”  
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the  
5 House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all after  
6 the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 **Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE**

8 **(a) Since its establishment in 1970, Vermont’s Agency of Human**  
9 **Services has grown significantly in both size and scope. In its current**  
10 **form, the Agency is composed of six departments: the Department for**  
11 **Children and Families; the Department of Corrections; the Department of**  
12 **Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living; the Department of Health;**  
13 **the Department of Mental Health; and the Department of Vermont Health**  
14 **Access, along with several divisions, and many offices, boards, and**  
15 **councils. The Agency’s budget comprises more than half of the overall**  
16 **State budget and the programs and benefits administered by the Agency**  
17 **and its departments have an impact on the lives of all Vermonters.**

18 **(b) The purpose of this act is to create a meaningful process through**  
19 **which the Agency, its departments, and the individuals and organizations**  
20 **with whom they engage most can collaborate to identify opportunities to**  
21 **build on past successes and to make improvements for the future.**

1 Sec. **2**. REENVISIONING THE AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES;

2 REPORT

3 (a) The Secretary of Human Services, in collaboration with the Deputy  
4 Secretary of Human Services and the commissioner of each department within  
5 the Agency of Human Services and in consultation with **the Office of the**  
6 **Health Care Advocate; the Office of the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate;**  
7 **Disability Rights Vermont; the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman;**  
8 **relevant commissions, councils, and advocacy organizations; community**  
9 **partners; individuals and families impacted by the Agency and its**  
10 **departments;** and other **relevant interested** stakeholders, shall consider  
11 options for reenvisioning the Agency of Human Services, such as restructuring  
12 the existing Agency of Human Services or dividing the existing Agency of  
13 Human Services into two or more separate agencies.

14 (b) The Secretary of Human Services and the other stakeholders identified  
15 in subsection (a) of this section shall evaluate the current structure of the  
16 Agency of Human Services, identify potential options for reenvisioning the  
17 Agency and engage in a cost-benefit analysis of each option, and develop one  
18 or more recommendations for implementation. **The Agency shall solicit**  
19 **open, honest feedback from the stakeholders to inform the evaluation,**  
20 **identification of options, and development of recommendations.**

1       (c) On or before February 1, 2025 2026, the Secretary shall provide the  
2       recommendations developed by the Secretary and stakeholders to the House  
3       Committees on Government Operations and Military Affairs, on Health Care,  
4       and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Government  
5       Operations and on Health and Welfare, including the following:

6           (1) the rationale for selecting the recommended option or options;

7           (2) the likely impact of the recommendations on the departments within  
8       the Agency and on the Vermonters served by those departments, including  
9       Vermonters who are members of historically marginalized communities;

10          (3) how the recommendations would center the needs of and lead to  
11       better outcomes for the individuals and families served by the Agency and its  
12       departments and make the Agency more accountable to the Vermonters whom  
13       it serves;

14          (4) how the recommendations could improve collaboration, integration,  
15       and alignment of the services currently provided by the Agency and its  
16       departments and how they could enhance coordination and communication  
17       among the departments and with community partners;

18          (5) how the recommendations could address the workforce and  
19       personnel capacity challenges that the Agency and its departments encounter;

20          (6) how the recommendations could address the technology and facility  
21       challenges that the Agency and its departments encounter;

1           **(7) how the recommendations could strengthen the use of**  
2           **technology to improve access to programs and services, increase**  
3           **accountability, enhance coordination, and expand data collection and**  
4           **analysis;**

5           (8) a transition and implementation plan for the recommendations that is  
6           designed to minimize confusion and disruption for individuals and families  
7           served by the Agency and its departments, as well as for Agency and  
8           departmental staff;

9           (9) a proposed organizational chart for any recommended  
10          reconfigurations; and

11          (10) the estimated costs or savings associated with the  
12          recommendations.

13          Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

14          This act shall take effect on passage.

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18          (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE