

1 S.20

2 Introduced by Senators Ram Hinsdale, Clarkson, Cummings, Harrison and

3 Lyons

4 Referred to Committee on

5 Date:

6 Subject: Legislature; Joint Fiscal Office; basic needs budget; State and federal

7 assistance calculator

8 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish the

9 Basic Needs Budget Technical Advisory Commission and requires the creation

10 of a State and federal assistance calculator.

11 An act relating to establishing the Basic Needs Budget Technical Advisory  
12 Commission and creating a State and federal assistance calculator

13 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

14 Sec. 1. BASIC NEEDS BUDGET TECHNICAL ADVISORY

15 COMMISSION

16 (a) Creation. There is created the Basic Needs Budget Technical Advisory

17 Commission to update the methodology used to calculate the basic needs

18 budget pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 526.

19 (b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of the following

20 members:

1           (1) two current members of the House of Representatives, not all from  
2           the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

3           (2) two current members of the Senate, not all from the same political  
4           party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

5           (3) the Director of the Vermont Department of Labor's Division of  
6           Economic and Labor Market Information or designee;

7           (4) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

8           (5) two members representing small business interests, one appointed by  
9           the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the President Pro Tempore;

10          (6) one member, appointed by the Society for Human Resources  
11          Management, Vermont State Council;

12          (7) one member, appointed jointly by the United Way of Northwest  
13          Vermont and the Green Mountain United Way;

14          (8) one member, appointed by Capstone Community Action;

15          (9) one member, appointed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation  
16          Board; and

17          (10) one member, appointed by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

18          (c) Duties. The Commission shall study the methodology used in  
19          calculating the basic needs budget pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 526, including the  
20          following issues:

1           (1) the current methodology for calculating the basic needs budget and  
2           determining livable wage;

3           (2) potential changes to the methodology for calculating the basic needs  
4           budget and determining livable wage; and

5           (3) potential statutory changes to 2 V.S.A. § 526 to account for public  
6           policy changes, data availability, or any other factors that have had an impact  
7           on any aspects of the basic needs budget calculation or the cost to Vermonters  
8           of basic needs as that term is defined in 2 V.S.A. § 526(a)(1).

9           (d) Assistance. The Commission shall have the administrative and  
10          technical assistance of the Joint Fiscal Office and the administrative, legal, and  
11          technical assistance of the Department of Labor and of the Agency of Human  
12          Services.

13          (e) Report. On or before January 1, 2024, the Commission shall submit a  
14          report containing any findings and recommendations for legislative action to  
15          the Joint Fiscal Committee, the House Committees on General and Housing  
16          and on Human Services, and the Senate Committees on Economic  
17          Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Health and Welfare.

18          (f) Meetings.

19               (1) The Joint Fiscal Office shall call the first meeting of the Commission  
20               to occur on or before July 15, 2023.

1           (2) The Commission shall select a chair from among its members at the  
2           first meeting.

3           (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

4           (4) In the course of performing its duties, the Commission shall:

5                 (A) engage a panel of independent experts to assist with data analysis  
6                 and methodological considerations; and

7                 (B) take testimony from a variety of stakeholders, including  
8                 employers and employees.

9           (5) The Commission shall cease to exist on January 1, 2024.

10          (g) Compensation and reimbursement.

11                 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General  
12                 Assembly, a legislative member of the Commission shall be entitled to per  
13                 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23  
14                 for not more than seven meetings.

15                 (2) Other members of the Commission who are not State employees  
16                 shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as  
17                 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than seven meetings.

18          (h) Appropriations.

19                 (1) The sum of \$6,100.00 is appropriated to the General Assembly from  
20                 the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 for per diem compensation and  
21                 reimbursement of expenses for members of the Commission.

1           (2) The sum of \$10,000.00 is appropriated to the Joint Fiscal Office  
2           from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 for costs related to retaining experts  
3           pursuant to subdivision (f)(4)(A) of this section and other services provided to  
4           the Commission by the Joint Fiscal Office.

5           Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 3005 is added to read:

6           § 3005. STATE AND FEDERAL ASSISTANCE CALCULATOR

7           The Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of  
8           Labor and the Agency of Digital Services, shall create and maintain a State and  
9           federal assistance calculator that is programmed to display the State and  
10          federal assistance available depending upon an individual's remuneration and  
11          various household factors, including dependents, marital status, location, and  
12          dwelling size. The Agency's work shall be informed by the findings and  
13          recommendations of the Basic Needs Budget Technical Advisory Commission.  
14          The calculator shall be available for use by the public on the Agency's website.

15          Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

16          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.