



Vermont Center for Independent Living
Kate Larose
Pandemic Equity Coordinator

Senate Committee on Government Operations
January 11, 2024

R **E** **C** **A** **P**



The image shows five wooden blocks arranged in a row, spelling out the word "RECAP" in bold, black, uppercase letters. A sixth wooden block is stacked on top of the first block (the 'R'). This top block features a red arrow pointing to the left, indicating a review or a return to the beginning of the sequence.



VOTE
TOMORROW

Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations

Part 35 Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local
Government Services.

60%

of polling places
are inaccessible

H.681

An act relating to government operations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak

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

* * * Elections * * *

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT; PROTECTION OF CITIZENS AND OF
ELECTIONS

It is the intent of the General Assembly that, if the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues its expected spread in the State of Vermont, the citizens of Vermont should be able to protect their health, safety, and welfare while also continuing to exercise their right to participate in elections in order to maintain our democratic institutions. Accordingly, this act sets forth temporary elections provisions in response to COVID-19.

The Pandemic Has Opened Up Civic Life to Vermonters With Disabilities

By **PAUL HEINTZ**



Published October 28, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. | Updated November 2, 2020 at 9:05 p.m.



Maria Rinaldi

| GLENN RUSSELL

**GOVERNOR'S DIRECTIVE TO THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

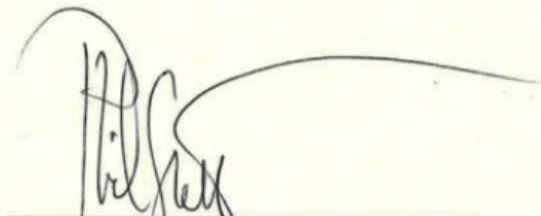
Today, June 14, 2021, because of the hard work of so many Vermonters and their commitment to each other, 80 percent of eligible Vermonters have now received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This figure makes Vermont the envy of the nation, the safest state in the United States and a global leader. This achievement meets the threshold set for lifting State restrictions.

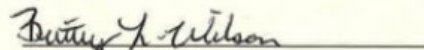
I, Philip B. Scott, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of Vermont by the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the emergency powers set forth in 20 V.S.A. §§ 8, 9 and 11 and other laws, hereby direct the Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to rescind all remaining mandatory Specialized and Universal Guidance measures set forth in the Vermont Forward Plan.

This Directive shall take effect upon signing.

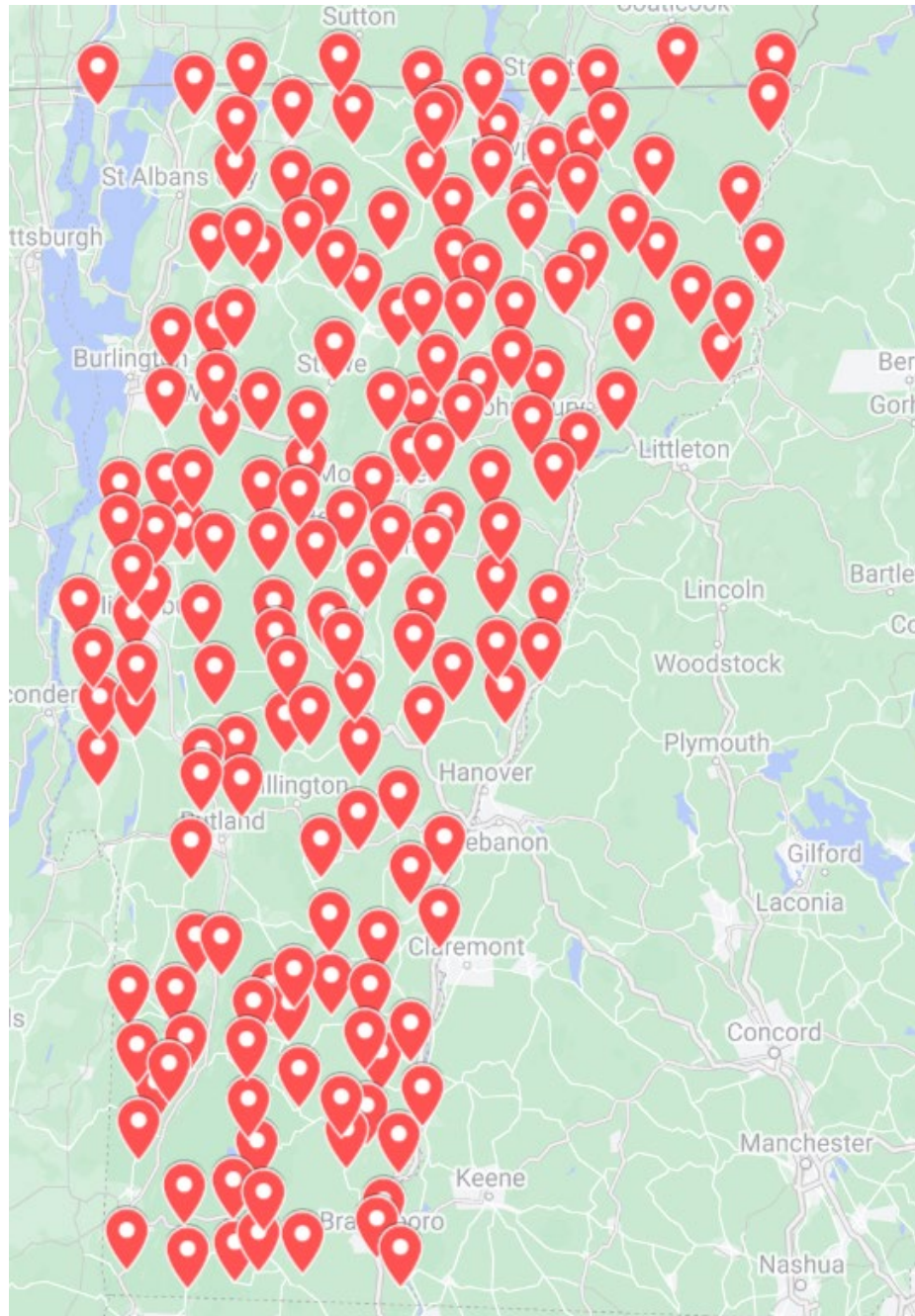


By the Governor:


Philip B. Scott
Governor


Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

Dated: June 14, 2021



Brattleboro Reformer

Turbow: Brattleboro's Representative Town Meeting should be more accessible

By Sarah Turbow Feb 8, 2023

“...covert barriers to access like these make it difficult or impossible for young people, disabled people, and working people to participate. Instead, even our most ostensibly accessible bodies are dominated by those who have the most free time, the most resources, and the most robust health. In other words, the most privileged. So much for democracy by the people, for the people.”



THE STORY



A magnifying glass with a dark frame is positioned over a light blue background. The lens of the magnifying glass is centered on the word "EXAMPLE", which is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The magnifying glass's handle extends downwards and to the right from the bottom of the lens. The background is a uniform, light blue color with a subtle texture.

EXAMPLE

No. 1. An act relating to temporary alternative procedures for annual municipal meetings and electronic meetings of public bodies.

(H.42)

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

Sec. 1. ANNUAL MUNICIPAL MEETINGS; ALTERNATIVE
PROCEDURES FOR 2023 AND 2024

(a) Change of annual meeting date. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, until July 1, 2024, a municipal legislative body may vote to move the date of the municipality's annual meeting to a date later in the same year. In any municipality that moves the date of an annual meeting pursuant to this subsection, municipal officers shall serve until the annual meeting and until successors are chosen.

(b) Authority to apply Australian ballot system. Notwithstanding the provisions of 17 V.S.A. § 2680(a) and 16 V.S.A. § 723(a) that require the voters of a municipality to vote to apply the provisions of the Australian ballot system to the annual or special meeting of the municipality, until July 1, 2024,

I am hereby requesting a reasonable accommodation under [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) which requires state and local governments and their election officials to ensure that people with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to vote in all elections.

[H.42](#) was recently signed into law which provides a mechanism for towns to ensure local Town Meeting Day elections are accessible to all, including options which allow for all articles to be voted on by Australian ballot and/or for a change of date so that events can be held outside in warmer months (as our neighbors in Sheffield have opted to do).

I understand that our selectboard has decided to move forward with a floor vote for one or more articles, which requires in-person attendance indoors.

Due to limitations experienced because of my disability, indoor, in-person floor votes are not accessible to me and I am requesting a reasonable accommodation of Australian ballot or change of meeting date to warmer weather so that it may be held outside so that I may have equal opportunity to vote on all articles.

02/23/2023

We received your request for Reasonable Accommodations for 2023 Town Meeting participation. At this point statutorily **it is too late** to change to an Australian Ballot for March 7th. After much consideration, we feel it is unreasonable to change the meeting date at this time since Town Meeting has already been Warned and Town Reports have been printed and mailed.

As Newark Selectboard, we are committed to our obligation to listen to the interests and concerns of our community members. Over the past year our community members strongly expressed their interest in returning to our in person Town Meeting.

Also, we have looked into creating a Zoom option for you, which we can do for **listening purposes only as election law requires that all voters be present at Town Meeting to participate in voice votes**

Kate

Kate (she/her)

Recording

Town of Newark

Play

10:14 AM

ANOTHER

A magnifying glass with a black frame and handle is positioned over the word 'EXAMPLE'. The lens of the magnifying glass is centered on the word, making it appear larger and more prominent. The background is a light blue, textured surface.

EXAMPLE



Greetings Noreen and Zach,

Per [Title II](#) of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I am requesting equal access to all meetings and materials pertaining to the proposed Twin States project.

Specifically, the reasonable modifications I am requesting are as follows:

- Virtual **video and audio access** to any public meetings or gatherings pertaining to this matter
- Full and equal participation to all **public comment opportunities via remote access**
- Full and equal access to all **materials shared** at such meetings or gatherings via electronic means

Please let me know what additional information you might need in order to fully honor this reasonable modifications request under federal civil rights law.

Thank you,

Kate



Town of Canaan, VT

August 31, 2023 · 🌐



Canaan Selectboard Meetings have gone hybrid!

Thanks to funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the [Town of Canaan, VT](#), has decided to make Selectboard meetings available to all residents and non-residents from the comfort of their homes. The meetings will be streamed over Zoom, where you can interact and participate in the meeting just as if you were here at the Town Office. We are excited to offer this excellent service to our residents. We understand that individuals have many reasons why attending the meetings in person is difficult. Our solution is to provide Zoom.

Click on the link and/or enter the Meeting ID and Passcode into Zoom to join in on the meetings. The stream will go live at 6:00 PM every night when a meeting is scheduled.

Meeting ID: 875 9178 4837

Passcode: 02251782

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87591784837...>



“VCDR recognizes that community and democracy are both stronger when **everyone** is able to take part.”

