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S.291

Introduced by Senators Vyhovsky, Clarkson, Gulick, Hardy, Perchlik and

White

Referred to Committee on Government Operations

Date: January 22, 2026

Subject: Executive; governmental ethics; disclosures; travel disclosures

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require legislators and elected statewide executive officers and their deputies to file disclosures detailing costs and associated information for any travel made in the course of the individual's official capacity or because of the individual's status that is paid for by any source other than the State or by that person themselves.

An act relating to travel disclosures for legislators and certain executive officers

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

~~Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A., § 1214 is added to read:~~

§ 1214. TRAVEL DISCLOSURES

(a) Applicability.

(1) A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall file

with the State Ethics Commission, or as otherwise directed by law, a disclosure

1 ~~detailing costs and associated information for any travel made in the course of~~
2 ~~the member's or executive officer's official capacity or that would not have~~
3 ~~likely occurred but for the member's or executive officer's status of occupying~~
4 ~~the member's or executive officer's office.~~

5 ~~(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, a member of the~~
6 ~~General Assembly or an executive officer shall not file a disclosure if the~~
7 ~~travel is fully paid by the member or executive officer, this State, another state,~~
8 ~~or the federal government.~~

9 ~~(b) Contents and design of disclosure.~~

10 ~~(1) A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall~~
11 ~~disclose, in writing:~~

12 ~~(A) the purpose of the travel;~~

13 ~~(B) whether the travel was purely in the member's or executive~~
14 ~~officer's official capacity or made for another purpose;~~

15 ~~(C) the itinerary of travel, including dates of travel and any stopover~~
16 ~~or intentional visit to another location prior to the destination of travel;~~

17 ~~(D) with reasonable particularity, any expense payment or~~
18 ~~reimbursement received for all costs associated with transportation to and from~~
19 ~~any destination, and food, refreshments, tickets and admissions, entertainment,~~
20 ~~lodging, and anything else of value, whether for cost or in kind, associated~~
21 ~~with the travel,~~

1 ~~(E) the date of any expense payment or reimbursement; and~~

2 (F) which elements of associated travel costs were orchestrated or
3 paid for or provided by:

4 (i) the State;

5 (ii) the member's or executive officer's own person; or

6 (iii) any other sources, including associations, lobbyists, political
7 committees and parties, and individuals.

8 (2) A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall
9 attest to the veracity and completeness of the disclosed information and sign
10 and date the disclosure.

11 (3) Disclosure forms shall, where appropriate, be designed by the State
12 Ethics Commission.

13 (c) Filing date. A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer
14 shall file the disclosure within 30 calendar days following the date on which
15 any costs associated with the travel are incurred.

16 (d) Supplemental disclosure. A member of the General Assembly or an
17 executive officer shall file with the State Ethics Commission, or as otherwise
18 directed by law, a supplemental disclosure in accordance with section 1203 of
19 this title if a particular matter involving the payer or orchestrator of any
20 expense or reimbursement detailed in subdivision (b)(1)(D) of this section

1 ~~comes before the member or executive officer during the six months following~~
2 ~~such acceptance or reimbursement.~~

3 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

4 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.~~

** * * Travel Disclosures * * **

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 1201 is amended to read:

§ 1201. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

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(10) “Immediate family” means an individual’s spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner; child or foster child; sibling; parent; or such relations by marriage or by civil union or domestic partnership; or an individual claimed as a dependent for federal income tax purposes.

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(16) “Staff” means any individual who supports a member of the General Assembly or an executive officer in the member’s or executive officer’s official capacity and acts at the direction of the member or executive officer, whether paid or unpaid or receiving academic credit.

(17) “State officer” means the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts, or Attorney General.

(17)(18) “Unethical conduct” means any conduct of a public servant in violation of the Code of Ethics, as provided for in this chapter.

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 1214 is added to read:

§ 1214. TRAVEL DISCLOSURES; IN GENERAL

(a) Applicability.

(1) A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall file with the State Ethics Commission, or as otherwise directed by law, a disclosure detailing costs and associated information for any travel made in the course of the member’s or executive officer’s official capacity or that would not have likely occurred but for the member’s or executive officer’s status of occupying the member’s or executive officer’s office.

(2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, a member or an executive officer is not required to file a disclosure if the travel is:

(A) fully paid by the member or executive officer, this State, or the federal government; or

(B) of de minimis value, meaning having a value of \$50.00 or less per source per occasion, provided that the aggregate market value of the individual item received from any one source shall not exceed \$150.00 in a calendar year.

(b) Contents and design of disclosure.

(1) A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall disclose, in writing:

(A) the purpose of the travel;

(B) whether the travel was purely in the member's or executive officer's official capacity or made for another purpose;

(C) the itinerary of travel, including dates of travel and any stopover or intentional visit to another location prior to the destination of travel;

(D)(i) with reasonable particularity, any expense made or reimbursement received for all costs associated with transportation to and from any destination, and food, refreshments, tickets and admissions, entertainment, lodging, and anything else of value, whether for cost or in kind, associated with the travel; and

(ii) notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (i) of this subdivision (D), a member or an executive officer is not required to disclose any expenses or reimbursements for any travel fully paid by the member or executive officer, this State, or the federal government;

(E) the date of any expense or reimbursement; and

(F) if certain costs associated with the travel were in part paid for or reimbursed by any other source than the member or executive officer or this State, indicate what amount was paid for or reimbursed by:

(i) the State;

(ii) the member's or executive officer's own person; or

(iii) any other sources, including associations, lobbyists, political committees and parties, individuals, other countries, states, and territories.

(2) A member or an executive officer shall also make the same disclosures described in subdivision (1) of this subsection for any staff and immediate family accompanying the member or executive officer on the travel.

These disclosures shall include the name and title of any staff and only the nature of the relationship for any immediate family.

(3) A member or an executive officer shall attest to the veracity and completeness of the disclosed information and sign and date the disclosure.

(4) Disclosure forms shall, where appropriate, be designed by the State Ethics Commission.

(c) Filing date. A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall file the disclosure within 30 calendar days following the conclusion of travel.

(d) Supplemental disclosure. A member of the General Assembly or an executive officer shall file with the State Ethics Commission, or as otherwise directed by law, a supplemental disclosure in accordance with section 1203 of this title if a particular matter involving the payer or orchestrator of any expense or reimbursement detailed in subsection (b) of this section comes before the member or executive officer during the six months following such acceptance or reimbursement.

Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 1215 is added to read:

§ 1215. TRAVEL DISCLOSURES; EXECUTIVE OFFICERS UNDER GOVERNOR

(a) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection §1214(a) of this title, an executive officer serving under the Governor is not required to disclose any expenses or reimbursements for any travel if:

(1) that executive officer's travel is otherwise required to be approved, reported, and disclosed pursuant to a rule or bulletin as adopted by the Governor;

(2) that rule or bulletin conforms to the requirements of section 1214 of this title; and

(3) copies of all disclosures made by the executive officers pursuant to the rule or bulletin are posted on the Agency of Administration's website.

(b) The Agency of Administration may design its own disclosure forms for executive officers serving under the Governor; provided these forms conform to the requirements of subsection 1214(b) of this title.

* * * General Amendments * * *

Sec. 4. 3 V.S.A. § 1211 is amended to read:

§ 1211. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS; ANNUAL DISCLOSURE

(a) Annually, each Executive officer and county officer shall file with the State Ethics Commission a disclosure form that contains the following information in regard to the previous 12 months:

(1) each source, but not amount, of personal income of the officer and of the officer's spouse or domestic partner, and of the officer together with the officer's spouse or domestic partner, that totals more than \$5,000.00, including:

(A) the officer's employer or business name and address; and

(B) if self-employed, a description of the nature of the self-employment, including the names of any clients whose principal business activities are regulated by or that have a contract with any municipal or State office, department, or agency, provided that this information is known to the eandidate officer or the eandidate's officer's domestic partner and that the disclosed information is not confidential information;

(2) any board, commission, or other entity that is regulated by law on which the officer served and the officer's position on that entity;

** * **

(6) a generalized description, but not amount, to the best of the eandidate's officer's knowledge, of the following investments held by a eandidate an officer or the eandidate's officer's spouse or domestic partner:

(A) individual stock holdings valued at \$25,000.00 or more, which a eandidate an officer exercises control over or has the ability to buy or sell, which shall be listed individually;

(B) interests in investment funds valued at \$25,000.00 or more that a eandidate an officer or the eandidate's officer's spouse or domestic partner has the ability to exercise control over the composition of assets within a fund, which shall be listed individually;

** * **

(F) the details of any loan valued at \$10,000.00 or more, made to the eandidate officer or the eandidate's officer's spouse that is not a commercially reasonable loan made in the ordinary course of business; and

(7) the full name of the eandidate's officer's spouse or domestic partner.

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Sec. 5. 3 V.S.A. § 1221 is amended to read:

§ 1221. STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

** * **

(b) Membership.

(1) The Commission shall be composed of the following seven members:

(A) one member, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;

(B) one member, appointed by the League of Women Voters of Vermont, who shall be a member of the League;

(C) one member, appointed by the Board of Directors of the Vermont Society of Certified Public Accountants, who shall be a member of the Society;

(D) one member, appointed by the Board of Managers of the Vermont Bar Association, who shall be a member of the Association Governor;

(E) one member, appointed by the Board of Directors of the SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) Vermont State Council, who shall be a member of the Council;

(F) one member, who shall be a former municipal officer, appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(G) one member, who shall be a former municipal officer, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees.

** * **

(e) Meetings.

(1) Meetings of the Commission:

~~(1)(A)~~ shall be held at least quarterly for the purpose of the Executive Director updating the Commission on the Executive Director's work;

~~(2)(B)~~ may be called by the Chair and shall be called upon the request of any other two Commission members; and

~~(3)(C)~~ shall be conducted in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 310 et seq.

(2) A majority of the currently appointed members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum. Once a quorum has been established, the vote of a majority of the members present at the time of the vote shall be an act of the Commission.

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** * * Effective Date * * **

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.