

House Calendar

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

77th DAY OF THE BIENNIAL SESSION

House Convenes at 10:00 A.M.

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ACTION CALENDAR

Action Postponed Until March 25, 2025

Third Reading

H. 342

An act relating to protecting the personal information of certain public servants

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Harvey of Castleton to H. 342

That the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) The General Assembly finds that Vermont’s judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and other public servants play an essential role in the functioning of the government of the State of Vermont and that the nature of their official duties regularly places them in danger of death, serious physical injury, and other reprisals from members of the public.

(b) Violence to and intimidation of such public servants and their families is on the rise and public access to the personal information of these individuals can be and has been used to facilitate violence and intimidation. The personal information of these individuals is of negligible value to the public interest or public discourse.

(c) Accordingly, the provisions of this act are both necessary and appropriate to protect the privacy, safety, and security of public servants and to prevent interference in the administration of justice and the operation of government in the State of Vermont.

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. chapter 62, subchapter 3B is added to read:

Subchapter 3B. Public Servant Privacy

§ 2444. NONDISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVANT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Authorized agent” means any of the following persons or entities authorized to submit or revoke a request for the redaction or nondisclosure of

protected information on behalf of a covered person and to engage in communications and enforcement related to the request:

(A) a designated trustee or other agent pursuant to a written power of attorney or other legal instrument on behalf of any covered person who is physically or mentally incapacitated;

(B) a parent or legal guardian on behalf of any child who is a minor and who is otherwise entitled to address redaction or nondisclosure pursuant to this section; and

(C) a person or entity who has been appointed pursuant to a notarized document by a covered person to act for the covered person for the submission or revocation of requests for redaction or nondisclosure of protected information.

(2) “Commercial entity” means any business, corporation, partnership, limited partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, or association engaged in the buying or selling of goods or services for profit.

(3) “Covered person” means any of the following individuals:

(A) active or former judges, government lawyers, law enforcement officers, federal law enforcement officers, jurors, members of the General Assembly, parole and probation officers, and members of the Vermont Parole Board;

(B) employees of:

(i) the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families;

(ii) the Vermont Human Rights Commission;

(iii) the Department of Corrections;

(iv) the Department of Public Safety, including the Vermont State Police;

(v) the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs; and

(vi) all courts in the State;

(C) investigators, victim advocates, mental health crisis workers, and embedded crisis specialists who are employed or work on a contract basis for any of the entities listed in subdivision (B) of this subdivision (3); and

(D) the immediate family of individuals identified in subdivisions (A)–(C) of this subdivision (3).

(4) “Disclose,” “disclosing,” or “disclosure” means to publicly post.

(5) “Federal law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in 18 U.S.C. § 115(c)(1) but is limited to those individuals who work or reside in Vermont.

(6) “Government lawyer” means a licensed attorney who practices law in Vermont in the capacity as a State or federal employee.

(7) “Home address” means a partial or complete street address or other information that reveals a home’s location, including tax parcel ID, legal property description, or geographic coordinates.

(8) “Home telephone number” means any telephone number used primarily for personal communications, including a landline or cellular telephone number.

(9) “Immediate family” has the same meaning as in 3 V.S.A. § 1201.

(10) “Judge” means any justice, judge, or magistrate of a State court or of a federal court located in Vermont, or any person who serves as a judge, justice, or magistrate in another state who maintains a home address in Vermont.

(11) “Juror” means an individual who has served on a Vermont jury in the last 18 months.

(12) “Law enforcement officer” has the same meaning as in 20 V.S.A. § 2351a.

(13) “Parole and probation officer” means:

(A) a corrections services specialist employed by the Department of Corrections; or

(B) a parole or probation officer employed by a Vermont county or municipality.

(14)(A) “Protected information” means a covered person’s:

(i) home address, including primary residence and any secondary residences;

(ii) home telephone number;

(iii) personal email address;

(iv) Social Security number or driver’s license number; and

(v) license plate number or other unique identifiers of a vehicle owned, leased, or regularly used by a covered person.

(B) “Protected information” does not include protected information that a covered person voluntarily and publicly discloses on or after July 1, 2025.

(15) “Public agency” has the same meaning as in 1 V.S.A. § 317.

(b) Nondisclosure of protected information.

(1) Notice.

(A) A covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person has the right through this section to send a notice to a public agency or commercial entity requesting that the public agency or commercial entity cease disclosure or redisclosure of the covered person’s protected information.

(B) The notice as set forth in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (1) shall be in a form provided by the Secretary of State, except that no prior verification of a covered person’s or authorized agent’s status shall be required for the notice. The Secretary of State shall publish the form of notice not later than 90 days after July 1, 2025, provided that until such form is published, covered persons and their authorized agents may use their own form of written notice that references this section, identifies the sender as a covered person or an authorized agent acting on behalf of a covered person, and requests that the public agency or commercial entity cease disclosure of the covered person’s protected information.

(2) Requirements.

(A) Unless otherwise required by law, upon a public agency receiving physical or electronic notice from a covered person, or an authorized agent of the covered person, requesting that the public agency cease disclosing or redisclosing protected information of the covered person, the public agency shall cease disclosing the protected information not later than 15 days after receipt of the notice and shall not disclose or redisclose the protected information after that time. The requirements in this subdivision (A) shall not be construed to limit or affect the rights persons have pursuant to subsection 2440(f) of this title.

(B) Upon a commercial entity receiving physical or electronic notice from a covered person, or an authorized agent of the covered person, requesting that the commercial entity cease disclosing or redisclosing protected information of the covered person, the commercial entity shall cease disclosing the protected information not later than 15 days after receipt of the notice and shall not disclose or redisclose the protected information after that time.

(3) Injunction.

(A) A public agency or commercial entity that receives a notice from a covered person or an authorized agent of the covered person pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection (b) that discloses or rediscloses the covered person's protected information more than 15 days after receiving the notice is in violation of this section and shall be subject to an injunction in a civil action brought in Superior Court by the covered person.

(B) A public agency or commercial entity that violates an injunction granted by a court pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3) is liable to the covered person for reasonable attorney's fees and court costs.

(C) In any judicial proceeding pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3), the standard of fault shall be ordinary negligence.

(4) Limitations.

(A) A disclosure of protected information shall not constitute a violation of this section if the disclosure is:

(i) made with the express authorization of the covered person, provided that the authorization is provided subsequent to the relevant nondisclosure request; or

(ii) for the sole purpose of facilitating a transaction initiated by the covered person.

(B) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting an employer from providing employee information to the Vermont Labor Relations Board or to employee organizations that is required under Vermont law.

(C) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a public agency or commercial entity to delete protected information.

(D) A covered person or an authorized agent accessing a commercial entity's website or other public application for the purpose of determining whether the covered person's protected information is being disclosed shall not, as a result of such access, be deemed to have agreed on behalf of the covered person to any website terms and conditions with respect to the covered person's rights under this section.

Sec. 3. REPORTING ON INJUNCTIONS

On or before February 15 of each year commencing in 2026 and ending in 2031, the State Court Administrator shall submit a report to the House Committee on Judiciary and the Senate Committee on Judiciary identifying the following from the previous calendar year:

(1) the number of injunctions pursuant to this act filed, granted, denied, and appealed;

(2) for injunctions that were granted, the number that were subsequently violated;

(3) for injunctions that were violated, the amount in attorney's fees and court costs awarded in each case; and

(4) any additional information or data the Administrator believes is relevant to the report.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Committee Bill for Second Reading

H. 474

An act relating to miscellaneous changes to election law

(Rep. Waters Evans of Charlotte will speak for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.)

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Sibilia of Dover, Donahue of Northfield, Headrick of Burlington, and Lipsky of Stowe to H. 474

That the bill be amended by adding a reader assistance heading and a new section to be Secs. 5a to read as follows:

* * * Independent Candidate Filing Deadline * * *

Sec. 5a. 17 V.S.A. § 2402 is amended to read:

§ 2402. REQUISITES OF STATEMENT

* * *

(d)(1) A statement of nomination and a completed and signed consent form shall be filed:

* * *

(C) in the case of any other independent candidate, not earlier than the fourth Monday in April and not later than 5:00 p.m. on the ~~Thursday preceding~~ fourteenth day following the primary election prescribed by section 2351 of this chapter, and not later than 5:00 p.m. of the ~~third day prior to~~ fourteenth day following the day of a special primary election.

* * *

H. 483

An act relating to the expansion of existing income tax credits

(Rep. Kimbell of Woodstock will speak for the Committee on Ways and Means.)

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Lipsky of Stowe, Cina of Burlington, Hango of Berkshire, Hooper of Randolph, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Sibilgia of Dover to H. 483

That the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this act is to:

(1) expand the eligibility requirement for the Vermont Child Tax Credit to allow a credit for children six years of age or younger;

(2) expand the earned income tax credit for individuals without qualifying children to 100 percent of the federal credit;

(3) increase the income thresholds used to determine eligibility for the partial exemption of Social Security benefits and retirement income; and

(4) exempt military retirement and survivor benefit income from Vermont income tax.

Sec. 2. 32 V.S.A. § 5830f is amended to read:

§ 5830f. VERMONT CHILD TAX CREDIT

(a) A resident individual or part-year resident individual who is entitled to a child tax credit under the laws of the United States or who would have been entitled to a child tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual or the individual's spouse does not have a taxpayer identification number shall be entitled to a refundable credit against the tax imposed by section 5822 of this title for the taxable year. The total credit per taxable year shall be in the amount of \$1,000.00 per qualifying child, as defined under 26 U.S.C. § 152(c) but notwithstanding the taxpayer identification number requirements under 26 U.S.C. § 24(e) and (h)(7), who is five six years of age or younger as of the close of the calendar year in which the taxable year of the taxpayer begins. For a part-year resident individual, the amount of the credit shall be multiplied by the percentage that the individual's income that is earned or received during the period of the individual's residency in this State bears to the individual's total income. An otherwise eligible individual shall be entitled to the credit under this section without

regard for the laws of the United States pertaining to the amount of federal child tax credit that may be refunded.

* * *

Sec. 3. 32 V.S.A. § 5828b is amended to read:

§ 5828b. EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

(a) A resident individual or part-year resident individual who is entitled to an earned income tax credit granted under the laws of the United States ~~or who would have been entitled to an earned income tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number~~ shall be entitled to a credit against the tax imposed for each year by section 5822 of this title. The credit shall be for an individual who claims one or more qualifying children 38 percent or for an individual who does not claim one or more qualifying children 100 percent of the earned income tax credit granted to the individual under the laws of the United States ~~or that would have been granted to the individual under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number~~, multiplied by the percentage that the individual's income that is earned or received during the period of the individual's residency in this State bears to the individual's total income. A resident individual or part-year resident individual who would have been entitled to or granted an earned income tax credit under the laws of the United States but for the fact that the individual, the individual's spouse, or one or more of the individual's children does not have a qualifying taxpayer identification number shall be entitled to a credit under this section.

* * *

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 5830e is amended to read:

§ 5830e. RETIREMENT INCOME; SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

(a) Social Security income. The portion of federally taxable Social Security benefits excluded from taxable income under subdivision 5811(21)(B)(iv) of this chapter shall be as follows:

(1) For taxpayers whose filing status is single, married filing separately, head of household, or surviving spouse:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, all federally taxable benefits received under the federal Social Security Act shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00 but less than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, the percentage of federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, no amount of the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded under this section.

(2) For taxpayers whose filing status is married filing jointly:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, all federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00 but less than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, the percentage of federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, no amount of the federally taxable benefits received under the Social Security Act shall be excluded under this section.

(b) Civil Service Retirement System income. The portion of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System excluded from taxable

income under subdivision 5811(21)(B)(iv) of this title shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section and shall be determined as follows:

(1) For taxpayers whose filing status is single, married filing separately, head of household, or surviving spouse:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00 but less than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, the percentage of the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$50,000.00~~ \$55,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$60,000.00~~ \$65,000.00, no amount of the income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded under this section.

(2) For taxpayers whose filing status is married filing jointly:

(A) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is less than or equal to ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded.

(B) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is greater than ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00 but less than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, the percentage of the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System to be excluded shall be proportional to the amount of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income over ~~\$65,000.00~~ \$70,000.00, determined by:

(i) subtracting the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer from ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00;

(ii) dividing the value under subdivision (i) of this subdivision (B) by \$10,000.00; and

(iii) multiplying the value under subdivision (ii) of this subdivision (B) by the first \$10,000.00 of income received from the Civil Service Retirement System.

(C) If the federal adjusted gross income of the taxpayer is equal to or greater than ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$80,000.00, no amount of the income received from the Civil Service Retirement System shall be excluded under this section.

(c) Other contributory retirement systems; earnings not covered by Social Security. Other retirement income, ~~except U.S. military retirement income pursuant to subsection (d) of this section,~~ received by a taxpayer of this State shall be excluded pursuant to subsection (b) of this section as though the income were received from the Civil Service Retirement System and shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section, provided that:

(1) the income is received from a contributory annuity, pension, endowment, or retirement system of:

(A) the U.S. government or a political subdivision or instrumentality of the U.S. government;

(B) this State or a political subdivision or instrumentality of this State; or

(C) another state or a political subdivision or instrumentality of another state; and

(2) the contributory system from which the income is received was based on earnings that were not covered by the Social Security Act.

~~(d) U.S. military retirement income. U.S. military retirement income received by a taxpayer of this State shall be excluded pursuant to subsection (b) of this section as though the income were received from the Civil Service Retirement System and shall be subject to the limitations under subsection (e) of this section. [Repealed.]~~

(e) Requirement to elect one exclusion. A taxpayer of this State who is eligible during the taxable year for the Social Security income exclusion under subsection (a) of this section and ~~any~~ one or both of the exclusions under subsections (b) ~~—(d)~~ and (c) of this section shall elect either one of the exclusions for which the taxpayer is eligible under subsections (b) ~~—(d)~~ and (c) of this section or the Social Security income exclusion under subsection (a) of this section, but not both, for the taxable year. A taxpayer of this State who is eligible during the taxable year for ~~more than one of the~~ both exclusions under subsections (b) ~~—(d)~~ and (c) of this section shall elect only one of the exclusions for which the taxpayer is eligible for the taxable year.

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. § 5811 is amended to read:

§ 5811. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter unless the context requires otherwise:

* * *

(21) “Taxable income” means, in the case of an individual, federal adjusted gross income determined without regard to 26 U.S.C. § 168(k) and:

* * *

(B) decreased by the following items of income (to the extent such income is included in federal adjusted gross income):

(i) income from U.S. government obligations;

(ii) with respect to adjusted net capital gain income as defined in 26 U.S.C. § 1(h) reduced by the total amount of any qualified dividend income: either the first \$5,000.00 of such adjusted net capital gain income or 40 percent of adjusted net capital gain income from the sale of assets held by the taxpayer for more than three years, except not adjusted net capital gain income from:

(I) the sale of any real estate or portion of real estate used by the taxpayer as a primary or nonprimary residence; or

(II) the sale of depreciable personal property other than farm property and standing timber; or stocks or bonds publicly traded or traded on an exchange, or any other financial instruments; regardless of whether sold by an individual or business; and provided that the total amount of decrease under this subdivision (21)(B)(ii) shall not exceed 40 percent of federal taxable income or \$350,000.00, whichever is less;

(iii) recapture of State and local income tax deductions not taken against Vermont income tax;

(iv) the portion of certain retirement income and federally taxable benefits received under the federal Social Security Act that is required to be excluded under section 5830e of this chapter;

(v) the amount of any federal deduction or credit that the taxpayer would have been allowed for the cultivation, testing, processing, or sale of cannabis or cannabis products as authorized under 7 V.S.A. chapter 33 or 37, but for 26 U.S.C. § 280E; ~~and~~

(vi) the amount of interest paid by a qualified resident taxpayer during the taxable year on a qualified education loan for the costs of attendance at an eligible educational institution; and

(vii) U.S. military retirement income and U.S. military survivor benefit income received by the surviving spouse or dependent of the deceased service member; and

* * *

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section shall take effect on passage.

(b) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Secs. 1–5 shall take effect retroactively on January 1, 2025 and shall apply to taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2025.

Governor's Veto

H. 141

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Text of Veto Message

The text of the communication from His Excellency, the Governor, whereby he vetoed and returned unsigned **House Bill No. H. 141** to the House is as follows:

March 14, 2025

The Honorable BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives
State House
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Ms. Wrask:

Pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution, I'm returning H.141, *An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments*, without my signature.

For weeks, I have been clear that I do not support H.141 as passed by the House or the Senate for many reasons including:

1. Given growing uncertainty around federal funding and the potential for significant funding cuts to critical programs, spending additional general funds in the budget adjustment for expenses that are not time sensitive is irresponsible. These new spending proposals should be

considered as part of the FY26 budget to be weighed against other initiatives that may have been reduced due to federal budget cuts.

2. Expanding the free “hotel/motel program,” moves us backwards, reversing important progress made towards reforming this failed program, agreed upon by the Administration and Legislature just last year. After nearly five years of experience, we know this approach is far too expensive and fails our constituents, communities and taxpayers.

I proposed a compromise path to the Committee of Conference which would have moved these spending and policy decisions to the FY26 budget while providing \$2.1 million in flexible grants to municipalities to address needs in their communities during April, May and June. My compromise proposal protects the most vulnerable, develops emergency shelter capacity, adheres to the agreement from the last session, and limits unnecessary appropriations while we monitor federal action.

This compromise proposal, or something similar, remains on the table.

For these reasons, I’m vetoing H.141 pursuant to Chapter II, Section 11 of the Vermont Constitution.

It’s my hope the Legislature will reconsider and send me a budget adjustment I can agree to.

Sincerely,

Philip B. Scott
Governor

New Business

Third Reading

H. 10

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

H. 319

An act relating to miscellaneous environmental subjects

H. 321

An act relating to miscellaneous cannabis amendments

H. 484

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

H. 489

An act relating to fiscal year 2025 budget adjustments

Favorable with Amendment

H. 237

An act relating to prescribing by doctoral-level psychologists

Rep. McFaun of Barre Town, for the Committee on Health Care, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 26 V.S.A. § 3001 is amended to read:

§ 3001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Practice of psychology” means rendering or offering to render to individuals, groups, or organizations, for a consideration, any service involving the application of principles, methods, and procedures of understanding, predicting, and influencing behavior that are primarily drawn from the science of psychology. The science of psychology includes assessment, diagnosis, prevention, and amelioration of adjustment problems and emotional and mental disorders of individuals and groups.

(2) “Psychologist” or “practicing psychologist” means a person who is licensed to practice psychology under this chapter.

(3) “Psychologist-doctorate” means a person who is so licensed under this chapter.

(4) “Psychologist-master” means a person who is so licensed under this chapter.

(5) “Board” means the Board of Psychological Examiners established under this chapter.

* * *

(12) “Collaborating practitioner” means a physician licensed to practice medicine pursuant to chapter 23 or 33 with a specialty in psychiatry.

(13) “DSM” means the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders current at the time of practice.

(14) “Drug” has the same meaning as section 2022 of this title.

(15) “Prescribing psychologist” means a licensed, doctoral-level psychologist who has undergone specialized training, has passed an

examination as determined by rule, and has received a current prescribing specialty under section 3019 of this title that has not been revoked or suspended by the Board.

(16) "Prescription drug" has the same meaning as in section 2022 of this title.

(17) "Prescriptive authority" means the authority to prescribe or discontinue prescription drugs solely for the purpose of diagnosing, treating, or managing a condition recognized in the DSM. "Prescriptive authority" excludes the authority to:

(A) dispense, administer, or distribute prescription drugs; and

(B) prescribe or discontinue prescription drugs for patients who are less than 18 years of age, over 80 years of age, or pregnant.

Sec. 2. 26 V.S.A. § 3009a is amended to read:

§ 3009a. POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD

(a) The Board shall adopt rules necessary to perform its duties under this chapter, including rules that:

(1) specify educational and other prerequisites for obtaining licensure;

~~(2) explain complaint and appeal procedures to licensees, applicants, and the public;~~

~~(3) explain continuing education requirements; and~~

(3) regulate prescribing psychologist licensees pursuant to section 3019 of this title, including:

(A) the settings of clinical rotations; and

(B) prescriptive authority, including designation of conditions and drugs excluded from that authority, as well as requirements for the prescribing of particular drugs; and

~~(4) explain how the Board shall investigate suspected unprofessional conduct~~ regulate collaborative practice agreements pursuant to section 3019 of this title, including collaborating practitioner qualifications and annual competency evaluations.

* * *

Sec. 3. 26 V.S.A. § 3019 is added to read:

§ 3019. PRESCRIBING BY DOCTORAL-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGISTS

SPECIALITY

(a) Prescribing psychologist specialty. A psychologist-doctorate may apply to the Board for a prescribing psychologist specialty. The application shall be made in a manner approved by the Board and include the payment of any required fees.

(b) Specialty by examination. A psychologist-doctorate shall be eligible for the prescribing specialty if the psychologist-doctorate:

(1) holds a current license to practice psychology at the doctoral level in the State;

(2) has successfully completed a postdoctoral training program in psychopharmacology designated by the American Psychological Association or its successor;

(3) has completed clinical rotations over a total of not less than 14 months in not less than nine practice settings, to include psychiatry, pediatrics, geriatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, and one elective;

(4) has completed a national certifying exam, as determined by rule; and

(5) meets all other requirements for obtaining a prescribing psychologist specialty, as determined by rule.

(c) Criteria for prescribing medication.

(1) A written collaborative agreement is required for all prescribing psychologists practicing under a prescribing psychologist specialty issued pursuant to this section.

(2) The issuance of prescriptive authority by a collaborating practitioner to a prescribing psychologist shall only include prescription drugs for the treatment of mental health conditions that the collaborating practitioner generally provides to patients in the normal course of practice.

(3) The collaborating practitioner shall file the collaborative agreement with the Board and notice of any termination of the agreement.

(4) Issuance of prescribing authority for Schedule II through V controlled substances shall identify the specific controlled substance by brand name or generic name. Prescription or administration of a controlled substance by injection shall not be allowed.

(d) Specialty by endorsement. The Director of the Board may, upon payment of the required fee, grant a prescribing specialty without examination if:

(1) the applicant holds active psychologist prescribing authority in another U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction; and

(2) the requirements for psychologist prescribing authority in that jurisdiction are, in the judgement of the Director, substantially equivalent to the requirements of this section.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Sec. 2 (power and duties of the Board) shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(b) All remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the report of the Committee on Health Care be amended as follows:

In Sec. 3, 26 V.S.A. § 3019, in subsection (d), by striking out the word “the” before “required fee” and inserting in lieu thereof “any”

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

H. 401

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

Rep. Burtt of Cabot, for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) Vermont enhance its food resiliency through increased supply and distribution of locally produced food products;

(2) Vermonters have more access to the local food marketplace as both producers and consumers;

(3) local food producers are able to meet the demand for Vermont-made food products from visitors to the State;

(4) small-scale food producers, new business start-ups, and sole proprietors benefit from raising the limit of the existing licensing exemption for at-home bakery products to adjust for inflationary cost changes occurring since the initial statutory enactment; and

(5) supply-chain costs and inflationary considerations be addressed to bring risk management thresholds more in line with the economic conditions at the time of initial statutory enactment.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 4353 is amended to read:

§ 4353. FEES

(a) The Commissioner may establish by rule any requirement the Department needs to determine the applicable categories or exemptions for licenses. The following license fees shall be paid annually to the Department at the time of making the application according to the following schedules:

* * *

(3) Food manufacturing establishment — a fee for any person or persons that process food for resale to restaurants, stores, or individuals according to the following schedule:

(A) Food manufacturing establishments; nonbakeries

~~I — Gross receipts of \$10,001.00 to \$50,000.00; \$175.00~~

~~II — Gross receipts of over \$50,000.00 \$30,000.00;~~
\$275.00

~~III — Nonhome-operated food service establishment
with gross receipts of \$30,000.00 or less;
\$175.00~~

~~IV — Gross Home-operated food service establishment
with gross receipts of \$10,000.00 \$30,000.00 or less
are exempt pursuant to section 4358 of this title~~

(B) Food manufacturing establishment; bakeries

~~I — Home bakery with gross receipts over \$30,000.00;
\$100.00~~

~~II — Small commercial; \$200.00~~

~~III — Large commercial; \$350.00~~

~~IV — Nonhome-operated bakery with gross receipts of
\$30,000.00 or less; \$50.00~~

~~V — Home-operated bakery with gross receipts of~~

\$30,000.00 or less are exempt pursuant to section
4358 of this title

* * *

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 4358 is amended to read:

§ 4358. EXEMPTIONS

* * *

(b) ~~The provisions of licensure requirements and related licensure fees in this subchapter shall not apply to an individual manufacturing and selling bakery products from his or her own home kitchen~~ a food manufacturing establishment operating from a home kitchen whose average gross retail sales do not exceed \$125.00 per week are less than or equal to \$30,000.00 per year.

* * *

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 8-0-0)

Rep. Masland of Thetford, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 481

An act relating to stormwater management

(Rep. Logan of Burlington will speak for the Committee on Environment.)

Rep. Ode of Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Squirrell of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends the bill ought to pass when amended as follows:

By striking out Sec. 8 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 8 to read as follows:

Sec. 8. RECOMMENDED APPROPRIATION

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Clean Water Board shall recommend \$5,000,000.00 from the Clean Water Fund in fiscal year 2027 to

the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Program in 10 V.S.A. § 928 for costs of complying with permitting requirements under 10 V.S.A. § 1264(c)(7), including for residential subdivisions when the municipality assumes full legal responsibility for the stormwater system.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Action Postponed Until March 26, 2025

Favorable with Amendment

H. 244

An act relating to State contracting standards for advertising

Rep. Waters Evans of Charlotte, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 29 V.S.A. § 902(a) is amended to read:

(a) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract for and make all purchases, including all fuel, supplies, materials, and equipment, for all departments, offices, institutions, and other agencies of the State and counties. However, ~~he or she~~ the Commissioner may delegate authority to those governmental agencies to purchase directly individually approved types and classes of items when the interests of the State are best served thereby, provided that any such delegated authority shall be subject to the same limitations set forth in subsections 910(a)–(c) of this subchapter as apply to the Commissioner. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner shall also contract for and purchase materials for the repair and for the construction and equipment of new buildings to be erected by the State, unless otherwise provided. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner may purchase such supplies, materials, and equipment as are requisitioned by the supervisors of the natural resources conservation districts. ~~He or she~~ The Commissioner may also cooperate with and advise officials of any political subdivision of the State or any institution of higher education chartered in Vermont and accredited or holding a certificate of approval from the State Board of Education in their purchase of any of the supplies, materials, and equipment needed by the political subdivision or institution of higher education, and may act as the agent of the political subdivision at the request of the authorized officials or agent thereof in the purchase of supplies, materials, and equipment.

Sec. 2. 29 V.S.A. § 910 is added to read:

§ 910. STATE CONTRACTS FOR ADVERTISING

(a) When contracting for print or digital advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local news organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the print or digital advertising services.

(b) When contracting for radio or television advertising services for the State or its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall contract with local broadcast organizations for not less than 70 percent of the total annual value of the radio or television advertising services.

(c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services may exclude from the total annual value of advertising services any advertisement focused on tourism and any employment search or job posting.

(d) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall maintain a list of local news organizations and local broadcast organizations.

(e) As used in this section:

(1) “Local broadcast organization” means an organization licensed to broadcast in the State by the Federal Communications Commission.

(2) “Local news organization” means an organization that:

(A) engages professionals to create, edit, produce, and distribute original content concerning matters of public interest through reporting activities;

(B) employs a full-time employee who dedicates at least 30 hours a week to providing coverage of an area of the State for dissemination to the local or State community and lives within 50 miles of the coverage area;

(C)(i) has published at least one print publication per month over the previous 12 months and either holds a valid U. S. Postal Service periodical permit or dedicates at least 25 percent of its content to local news; or

(ii) on average over the previous 12 months, has published online at least one piece per week about the local or State community and has at least 33 percent of its online audience in Vermont;

(D) has disclosed in its print publication or on its website its beneficial ownership or, in the case of a nonprofit entity, its board of directors;

(E) in the case of an organization that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3), declares as its stated mission in its filings with the Internal Revenue Service the coverage of local or State news; and

(F) over the previous calendar year did not receive more than 50 percent of its gross receipts from political action committees, other entities described in 26 U.S.C. § 527, or from organizations exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(4), (c)(5), or (c)(6).

Sec. 3. 29 V.S.A. § 911 is added to read:

§ 911. CONTRACTS FOR ADVERTISING; REPORTING

Annually, on or before June 30, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall submit to the General Assembly a report summarizing any advertising services purchased by the State and its agencies, departments, instrumentalities, or institutions during the preceding fiscal year, including a summary of the amounts spent by entity on advertising services and where those funds were spent.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 7-4-0)

NOTICE CALENDAR

Favorable with Amendment

H. 167

An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Rep. Bos-Lun of Westminster, for the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Food insecurity in Vermont, and across the country, has increased in recent years after a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) Increased access to produce improves health outcomes for individuals.

(3) For local food purchased from Vermont farms, every dollar spent contributes an additional \$0.60 to the local economy.

(4) Vermont Foodbank has been administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program since 2018, injecting \$9.5 million dollars into the Vermont agricultural economy since 2018 by purchasing over 5.7 million pounds of local food and supporting 299 farms in 2024.

(5) The General Assembly should ensure the continued operation of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program by Vermont Foodbank by establishing a grant program at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to provide ongoing, annual appropriations to the Program.

Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. chapter 207, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program

§ 4631. VERMONTERS FEEDING VERMONTERS GRANT PROGRAM

(a) As used in this section, “local food” has the same meaning as “local” in 9 V.S.A. § 2465a(b).

(b) There is created in the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program to provide grants to Vermont Foodbank to:

(1) purchase local food directly from Vermont farms to distribute through Vermont Foodbank’s distribution channels; and

(2) offer subgrants to:

(A) Vermont Foodbank’s network partners to buy directly from local farms of all sizes a variety of agricultural commodities and products; and

(B) Vermont Foodbank’s partners that buy directly from local farms of all sizes with a focus on providing culturally preferred foods or local relationships.

(c)(1) The Vermont Foodbank, after consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, shall report annually on or before March 1 to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry and the Senate Committee on Agriculture regarding implementation and administration of the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program. The report shall include:

(A) the total amount of food purchased with grants from the Program;

(B) the total number of farms purchased from;

(C) the total number of sites where food purchased under the Program was distributed; and

(D) if grants from the Program are used to purchase farm shares, the total number of shares.

(2) When the Vermont Foodbank reports under this section, information regarding persons receiving food under the Program shall be provided in a form that does not disclose the identity of the individual persons, households, or businesses from whom the information was obtained or whose characteristics, activities, or products the information is about.

Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION

In addition to other funds appropriated in fiscal year 2026, \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to implement the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program established pursuant to 6 V.S.A. § 4631. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets may use up to \$67,500.00 of the appropriation under this section for the purposes of administering the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 8-0-0)

Rep. Stevens of Waterbury, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry be amended by striking out Sec. 3, appropriation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 3 to read as follows:

Sec. 3. CONTINGENCY ON FUNDING

The duty of the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets to implement Sec. 2 of this act, Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant Program, is contingent upon an appropriation in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund for the specific purposes described in Sec. 2 of this act.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 218

An act relating to fiscal year 2026 appropriations from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund

Rep. Maguire of Rutland City, for the Committee on Human Services, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

(1)(A) \$1,976,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for the provision of services that increase motivation of and engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(2) \$76,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform to fund an outreach worker position.

(3)(A) \$1,400,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(4)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(5) \$800,000.00 for distribution as follows:

(A) not more than \$35,000.00 to the Department of Corrections for distribution to Pathways Vermont to implement a contingency management pilot program in Chittenden County for individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections; and

(B) the remainder to the Department of Health for grants to providers for ongoing support for contingency management.

(6) \$32,157.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Brattleboro Fire Department to establish community training programs on the

administration of opioid antagonists, CPR, first aid, and Stop the Bleed protocols.

(7) \$44,229.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Champlain Housing Trust to continue a pilot program providing access to wound care and preventative health care in three low-barrier shelters within Chittenden County.

(8) \$800,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports and clinical nursing programs.

(9) \$309,000.00 to the Department of Health for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont's Project Connectionworks to reduce opioid use disorder morbidity and mortality in Windham County through prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

(10) \$50,000.00 to the Judicial Branch to train Vermont's judges on issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide.

(11) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate Youth Services to establish Healthy Youth Program counselors at the Basement Teen Center at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Washington County.

(12) \$100,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Friends for Change's Youth Center in Bellows Falls for the purpose of delivering intervention strategies and harm reduction supports to youth and young adults.

(13) \$170,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Spectrum Youth and Family Services for two new positions to expand opioid use disorder screening, treatment, and case management services to youth in Chittenden and Franklin Counties.

(14) \$80,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont for the purpose of teaching parenting skills and providing social and emotional parenting supports for individuals with opioid use disorder.

(15) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for distribution to HireAbility Vermont to provide specialized employment services for individuals with opioid use disorder in Burlington, Newport, Rutland, and Bennington.

(16) \$550,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Northeast Kingdom Community Action to hire four peer support specialists to

assist individuals with opioid use disorder who are transitioning out of homelessness into safe, permanent housing.

(17) \$150,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Connecticut Valley Addiction Services, Inc. to expand opioid use treatment in rural Windsor County.

(18) \$300,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and the Johnson Health Center to continue and improve the Managed Medical Response Partnership.

(19) \$30,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Treatment Associates of Washington County Mental Health to hire an embedded recovery coach.

(20) \$20,824.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Umbrella to provide integrated services between domestic and sexual violence providers and partners in recovery in northeastern Vermont.

(b) The Department of Health shall carry forward \$1,100,000.00 appropriated from the Opioid Settlement Special Fund in fiscal year 2025 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center upon submission of a grant proposal that has been approved by the Burlington City Council and meets the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 4256, including the guidelines developed by the Department of Health. Any unmet need in fiscal year 2026, up to \$550,000.00, shall be addressed in the Department's budget adjustment proposal.

(c) All grant agreements associated with funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall require outcome and measurements data to be collected and reported to the department issuing the grant and to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 93 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 93. OPIOID USE DISORDER

Subchapter 1. Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder

* * *

§ 4754. LIMITATION ON PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for prescription drugs for a patient who is receiving ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder if the dosage prescribed is within the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's dosing recommendations.

(b) A health insurance plan shall not require prior authorization for all counseling and behavioral therapies associated with ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for a patient who is receiving medication-assisted treatment.

Subchapter 2. Opioid Settlement

* * *

§ 4772. OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

* * *

(b) Membership.

(1) The Advisory Committee shall be composed of the following members and shall reflect the diversity of Vermont in terms of gender, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and socioeconomic status and ensure inclusion of individuals with lived experience of opioid use disorder and their family members whenever possible:

* * *

(E) a primary care prescriber with experience providing ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder within the Blueprint for Health hub and spoke model, appointed by the Executive Director of the Blueprint for Health, to provide a statewide perspective on the provision of ~~providing medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder services;

* * *

(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall demonstrate broad ongoing consultation with individuals living with opioid use disorder about their direct experience with related systems, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder, residential treatment, recovery services, harm reduction services, overdose, supervision by the Department of Corrections, and involvement with the Department for Children and Families' Family Services Division. To that end, the Advisory Committee shall demonstrate consultation with individuals with direct lived experience of opioid use disorder, frontline support professionals, the Substance Misuse Oversight Prevention and Advisory Council, and other stakeholders to identify spending priorities as related to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services and harm reduction strategies for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Governor, the Department of Health, and the General Assembly on prioritizing spending from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. The Advisory Committee shall consider:

(1) the impact of the opioid crisis on communities throughout Vermont, including communities' abatement needs and proposals for abatement strategies and responses;

(2) the perspectives of and proposals from opioid use disorder prevention coalitions, recovery centers, and medication-assisted treatment medication for opioid use disorder providers; and

(3) the ongoing challenges of the opioid crisis on marginalized populations, including individuals who have a lived experience of opioid use disorder.

* * *

(e) Presentation. Annually, the Advisory Committee shall vote on its recommendations. Recommendations shall be informed by outcomes and measurements reported by previous grantees. If the recommendations are supported by an affirmative vote of the majority, the Advisory Committee shall present its recommendations for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established pursuant to this subchapter to the Department of Health and concurrently submit its recommendations in writing to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare. The Advisory Committee's written recommendations shall address how each recommendation meets one or more of the criteria listed in subsections 4774(b) and (c) of this subchapter. The Advisory Committee shall give priority consideration to services requiring funding on an ongoing basis.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Health shall call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee to occur on or before June 30, 2022.

(2) Annually, the Advisory Committee shall elect a voting vice chair from among its nongovernmental members.

(3) The Advisory Committee shall meet at least quarterly but not more than 12 times per calendar year.

~~(3)~~(4) The Advisory Committee shall adopt procedures to govern its proceedings and organization, including voting procedures and how the staggered terms shall be apportioned among members.

~~(4)~~(5) All meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be consistent with Vermont's Open Meeting Law pursuant to 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 2.

* * *

§ 4774. OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

* * *

(c) Priority for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund shall be aimed at reducing overdose deaths, including the following:

* * *

(2) increasing access to ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder and other opioid-related treatment, specifically:

(A) increasing distribution of ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder to individuals who are uninsured or whose health insurance does not cover the needed goods and services;

(B) providing education to school-based and youth-focused programs that discourage or prevent misuse, including how to access opioid use disorder treatment;

(C) providing ~~medication-assisted~~ education and awareness training on medication for opioid use disorder to health care providers, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement, and other first responders; and

* * *

(3) assisting pregnant and postpartum individuals, specifically:

(A) enhancing services for expanding screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) services to non-Medicaid eligible or uninsured pregnant individuals;

(B) expanding comprehensive evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment and recovery services, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder, for individuals with co-occurring opioid use disorder and other substance or mental health disorders for up to 12 months postpartum; and

* * *

(5) expanding the availability of warm handoff programs and recovery services, specifically:

(A) expanding services such as navigators and on-call teams to begin ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder in hospital emergency departments;

* * *

(6) treating incarcerated populations, specifically:

(A) providing evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment and recovery support, including ~~medication-assisted treatment~~ medication for opioid use disorder for individuals with opioid use disorder or co-occurring substance use or mental health disorders while transitioning out of the criminal justice system; and

* * *

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 10-1-0)

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the report of the Committee on Human Services be amended by striking out Sec. 1 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 1 to read as follows:

Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

(1)(A) \$1,976,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for the provision of services that increase motivation of and engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(2) \$76,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform to fund an outreach worker position.

(3)(A) \$1,400,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(4)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be funded annually at not less than fiscal year 2026 levels, unless and until the

Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(5)(A) \$1,100,000.00 to the Department of Health for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center upon submission of a grant proposal that has been approved by the Burlington City Council and meets the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 4256, including the guidelines developed by the Department of Health.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue to appropriate funds from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund through fiscal year 2028 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for the operation of the overdose prevention center, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(6) \$800,000.00 for distribution as follows:

(A) not more than \$35,000.00 to the Department of Corrections for distribution to Pathways Vermont to implement a contingency management pilot program in Chittenden County for individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections; and

(B) the remainder to the Department of Health for grants to providers for ongoing support for contingency management.

(7) \$32,157.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Brattleboro Fire Department to establish community training programs on the administration of opioid antagonists, CPR, first aid, and Stop the Bleed protocols.

(8) \$44,229.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Champlain Housing Trust to continue a pilot program providing access to wound care and preventative health care in three low-barrier shelters within Chittenden County.

(9) \$800,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports and clinical nursing programs.

(10) \$309,000.00 to the Department of Health for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont's Project Connectionworks to reduce opioid use disorder morbidity and mortality in Windham County through prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

(11) \$50,000.00 to the Judicial Branch to train Vermont's judges on issues related to opioid use disorder and strategies for use in dockets statewide.

(12) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate Youth Services to establish Healthy Youth Program counselors at the Basement Teen Center at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Washington County.

(13) \$100,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Friends for Change's Youth Center in Bellows Falls for the purpose of delivering intervention strategies and harm reduction supports to youth and young adults.

(14) \$170,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Spectrum Youth and Family Services for two new positions to expand opioid use disorder screening, treatment, and case management services to youth in Chittenden and Franklin Counties.

(15) \$80,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont for the purpose of teaching parenting skills and providing social and emotional parenting supports for individuals with opioid use disorder.

(16) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for distribution to HireAbility Vermont to provide specialized employment services for individuals with opioid use disorder in Burlington, Newport, Rutland, and Bennington.

(17) \$550,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Northeast Kingdom Community Action to hire four peer support specialists to assist individuals with opioid use disorder who are transitioning out of homelessness into safe, permanent housing.

(18) \$150,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Connecticut Valley Addiction Services, Inc. to expand opioid use treatment in rural Windsor County.

(19) \$300,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform and the Johnson Health Center to continue and improve the Managed Medical Response Partnership.

(20) \$30,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Treatment Associates of Washington County Mental Health to hire an embedded recovery coach.

(21) \$20,824.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Umbrella to provide integrated services between domestic and sexual violence providers and partners in recovery in northeastern Vermont.

(b) All grant agreements associated with funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall require outcome and measurements data to be collected and

reported to the department issuing the grant and to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee.

(Committee Vote: 10-1-0)

H. 397

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the statutes governing emergency management and flood response

Rep. Birong of Vergennes, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Division of Emergency Management; Plans and Reports * * *

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 3a is amended to read:

§ 3a. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION; DUTIES; BUDGET

(a) In addition to other duties required by law, the Division of Emergency Management shall:

* * *

(3) Annually on or before the last legislative day in January, provide an update and presentation to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations concerning all action items in the all-hazards mitigation plan required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) Provide assistance to municipalities to develop and implement the components of the Statewide Emergency Management Plan described in subdivision 41(4) of this chapter.

* * *

Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 41 is amended to read:

§ 41. STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Department of Public Safety's Vermont Emergency Management Division, in collaboration with the Chief Recovery Officer and in consultation with regional planning commissions, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns,

and Vermont's long-term recovery groups, shall create, and republish as needed, but not less than every five years, a comprehensive State Emergency Management Plan. The Plan shall:

(1) detail response systems during all-hazards events, including communications, coordination among State, local, private, and volunteer entities, and the deployment of State and federal resources. ~~The Plan shall also;~~

(2) detail the State's emergency preparedness measures and goals, including those for the prevention of, protection against, mitigation of, and recovery from all-hazards events. ~~The Plan shall;~~

(3) include templates and guidance for regional emergency management and for local emergency plans that support municipalities in their respective emergency management planning; and

(4) provide a framework for municipalities to develop and implement:

(A) emergency parking plans for areas within a municipality affected by an all-hazard event;

(B) municipal plans and systems to ensure that vulnerable populations, including aging populations and individuals with disabilities, within the municipality are contacted and visited to ensure their safety and wellness during an all-hazard event;

(C) emergency notification systems to provide real-time alerts to residents, which shall utilize multichannel communication systems; and

(D) training to support the officers and staff that municipalities are required to maintain following an all-hazard event, including individual assistance coordinators and disaster waste coordinators.

* * * Voluntary Buyout Program and Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement Program * * *

Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 51 is added to read:

§ 51. FLOOD-PRONE PROPERTIES; VOLUNTARY BUYOUT PROGRAM

The Division of Emergency Management and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall establish and maintain the Voluntary Buyout Program for flood-prone properties. The Program shall allow a municipality, at the request of the owner of a flood-prone property, to apply for funding to cover the purchase price of the property. The purchase price shall be the full fair market value of the flood-prone property. The municipality shall maintain

the acquired property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property.

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 3710 is added to read:

§ 3710. VOLUNTARY BUYOUT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement Program to reimburse municipalities for the value of municipal property taxes associated with the flood-prone properties acquired by a municipality pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 51 and preserved as public open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property.

(b) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Public Safety shall certify the properties eligible for the Program to the Commissioner of Taxes along with any other information required by the Commissioner of Taxes. To be eligible for reimbursement under the Program, a municipality must have acquired an eligible property on or after July 1, 2023 and preserved the property as public open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall first certify properties to the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to this subsection on or before September 1, 2025.

(c) The Commissioner of Taxes shall certify the Program payment amounts to the Secretary of Administration. The Secretary shall make an annual payment to each municipality for each eligible property to compensate for the loss of municipal property tax. The payment shall be calculated using the grand list value of the acquired property for the year during which the property was either damaged by flooding or identified as flood-prone by the Commissioner of Public Safety, multiplied by the municipal tax rate, including any submunicipal tax rates, in effect each year. This payment shall be made on or before January 1 of each year for five years.

(d) If a municipality has received payment for any acquired property under subsection (c) of this section for five consecutive years, it shall be eligible for payment for ensuing five year periods in an amount equal to one-half of the initial annual payment calculated under subsection (c).

(e) Payments made pursuant to this section shall be paid from the PILOT Special Fund established under section 3709 of this subchapter. Payments shall be disbursed only after all other requirements of subchapter 4 of this chapter are met. If the PILOT Special Fund balance is insufficient to pay the full amount of all payments authorized under this subchapter, then payments calculated under this section and due to each eligible municipality for each property shall be reduced proportionately.

Sec. 5. VOLUNTARY BUYOUT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM;
TRANSFERS FROM PILOT SPECIAL FUND

Notwithstanding any provision of 32 V.S.A. § 3709 to the contrary, in fiscal year 2026 the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall transfer from the PILOT Special Fund to the Voluntary Buyout Reimbursement Program \$1,000,000.00 for purposes of the administration of the Program.

* * * Division of Emergency Management; Assistance to Municipalities * * *

Sec. 6. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; POSITIONS;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The following positions are created in the Division of Emergency Management:

- (1) one full-time, exempt Municipal Grant Liaison; and
- (2) one full-time, exempt All-Hazard Mitigation Technician.

(b) The Municipal Grant Liaison shall be dedicated to grant research, grant applications support, coordination between municipal corporations and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and direct assistance to municipal corporations for the acquisition of grants and other funding sources for all-hazard relief and recovery efforts. The Flood Mitigation Technician shall be dedicated to providing or supporting engineering analyses for all-hazard mitigation projects, oversight of municipal remediation and recovery projects, and managing technical assistance to municipal corporations for all-hazard recovery.

Sec. 7. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; ALL-HAZARD
AND WEATHER ALERT SYSTEMS FOR MUNICIPAL
CORPORATIONS

Upon request of a municipal corporation, the Division of Emergency Management, in collaboration with regional planning commissions and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, shall assist the municipal corporation with access to and development of the following:

- (1) surface water flood monitoring devices, which shall automatically trigger notification systems for emergency services providers and residents;
- (2) alert systems that are integrated with a statewide weather alert system for real-time updates during severe weather events; and
- (3) connection to a statewide enhanced weather alert system that:

(A) predicts local and regional conditions using advanced modeling;
and

(B) issues real-time warnings for flooding, blizzards, and ice storms
through multiple communication channels.

* * * Needs Assessment Report * * *

Sec. 8. DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; STATE
STAKEHOLDERS; NEEDS ASSESSMENT; REPORT

The Division of Emergency Management, Chief Recovery Officer, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Natural Resources, and Agency of Transportation shall conduct a needs assessment to identify any additional staffing, resources, technical needs, or authority needed to carry out the provisions of this act. On or before November 15, 2025, the Division shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations containing the needs assessments conducted by the State agencies and departments identified in this section.

* * * Vermont Community Radio Program * * *

Sec. 9. VERMONT COMMUNITY RADIO GRANT PROGRAM

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Vermont's seven active community radio stations currently serve over 200,000 Vermonters, many in rural and underserved areas.

(2) Community radio stations have consistently provided critical information during emergencies, including Tropical Storm Irene, recent severe flooding, and other natural disasters.

(3) These stations operate with small budgets, primarily relying on volunteer staff and listener donations, and are ineligible for federal funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting due to their size.

(4) Upcoming FCC-approved stations in Bristol, Richmond-Underhill-Jericho, and Ludlow will expand coverage to nearly all Vermont counties, increasing statewide accessibility to vital community radio services.

(5) Investment in these stations strengthens Vermont's public safety network and promotes civic engagement by providing local, hyper-focused content that commercial and statewide media cannot replicate.

(b) Intent. The intent of this section is to ensure Vermont's community radio stations remain resilient and prepared to serve as lifelines during emergencies while fostering local engagement and preserving Vermont's unique community fabric.

(c) Grant program.

(1) The Vermont Community Radio Grant Program is established to provide one-time funding to community radio stations for the purpose of:

(A) upgrading equipment and infrastructure necessary for reliable emergency broadcasting;

(B) procuring and installing backup generators; and

(C) enhancing operational sustainability through software improvements and technical training.

(2) The Program shall be administered by the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee in collaboration with the Vermont Association of Broadcasters.

(3) Grants shall be allocated as follows:

(A) up to \$25,000.00 per station for seven active community radio stations; and

(B) up to \$10,000.00 per station for three upcoming stations currently under construction.

(4) To be eligible for a grant under the Program, an applicant shall:

(A) be a nonprofit, noncommercial community radio station licensed in Vermont;

(B) demonstrate a history of providing emergency broadcasting services or show the capacity to provide those services upon funding; and

(C) submit a detailed implementation plan for the proposed use of grant funding.

(d) Report. On or before June 30, 2026, a community radio station that receives a grant under the Program shall provide to the Commissioner of Public Safety a report detailing the:

(1) use of grant funds, including itemized expenses;

(2) improvements achieved in emergency readiness and operational capacity; and

(3) impact on community service and engagement.

* * * Municipal Finances and Indebtedness * * *

Sec. 10. 24 V.S.A. 1585 is added to read:

§ 1585. UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

Monies from a budget approved by the voters at an annual or special meeting that are not expended by the end of a municipality's fiscal year shall be under the control and direction of the legislative body of the municipality and may be carried forward from year to year as an unassigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balances may be invested and reinvested as are other monies received by a town treasurer and may be expended for any public purpose as established by the legislative body of the municipality.

Sec. 11. 24 V.S.A. § 1790 is added to read:

§ 1790. EMERGENCY BORROWING; ALL-HAZARD EVENT OR STATE OF EMERGENCY

The legislative body of a municipality may borrow money, in the name of the municipal corporation, by issuance of its notes or orders for the purpose of paying expenses of the municipal corporation or for public improvements associated with an all-hazards event or a declared state of emergency pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 1. The notes or orders shall be for a period of not more than five years or a term not to exceed the reasonably anticipated useful life of the improvements or assets financed by the notes or orders.

Sec. 12. 24 V.S.A. § 1759 is amended to read:

§ 1759. DENOMINATIONS; PAYMENTS; INTEREST

(a)(1) Any bond issued under this subchapter shall draw interest at a rate not to exceed the rate approved by the voters of the municipal corporation in accordance with section 1758 of this title, or if no rate is specified in the vote under that section, at a rate approved by the legislative ~~branch~~ body of the municipal corporation, ~~such~~ the interest to be payable ~~semiannually~~ as determined by the legislative body of the municipal corporation. ~~Such~~ The bonds or bond shall be payable serially, the first payment to be deferred not later than from one to five years after the issuance of the bonds and subsequent principal payments or debt service payments, which include both principal and interest payments, to be continued annually in equal substantially level or diminishing declining amounts, as determined by the legislative body of the municipality, so that the entire debt will be paid in not more than 20 years from the date of issue.

(2) In the case of bonds issued for the purchase or development of a municipal forest, the first payment may be deferred not more than 30 years

from the date of issuance ~~thereof of the bond.~~ Thereafter such After any deferral period, the bonds or bond shall be payable annually in equal substantially level or diminishing amounts declining annual debt service as the legislative body of the municipal corporation may determine, so that the entire debt will be paid in not more than 60 years from the date of issue.

* * *

(b) General obligation bonds authorized under this subchapter for the purpose of financing the improvement, construction, acquisition, repair, renovation, and replacement of a municipal plant as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 2901 shall be paid serially, the first payment to be deferred not later than from one to five years after the issuance of the bonds, and subsequent principal payments or debt service payments, which include both principal and interest payments, to be continued annually in substantially level or declining amounts, as determined by the legislative body of the municipal corporation, so that the entire debt will be paid ~~over a term equal to the useful life of the financed improvements, but~~ not more than 40 years from the date of issue, ~~and may be so arranged that beginning with the first year in which principal is payable, the amount of principal and interest in any year shall be as nearly equal as is practicable according to the denomination in which such bonds are issued, notwithstanding other permissible payment schedules authorized by this section.~~

* * * Dam Drawdown During Emergency Flood Events * * *

Sec. 13. 20 V.S.A. § 9 is amended to read:

§ 9. EMERGENCY POWERS OF GOVERNOR

Subject to the provisions of this chapter, in the event of an all-hazards event in or directed upon the United States or Canada that causes or may cause substantial damage or injury to persons or property within the State in any manner, the Governor may declare a state of emergency within the entire State or any portion or portions of the State. Thereafter, the Governor shall have and may exercise for as long as the Governor determines the emergency to exist the following additional powers within ~~such~~ the area or areas:

* * *

(12) In consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee, to authorize the Agency to waive applicable permits and restrictions under 10 V.S.A. chapter 47 or the Vermont Water Quality Standards to allow dams within the State to draw down water levels in anticipation of a flood event that is likely to cause substantial damage or injury to persons or property. Waivers may only be issued if the Governor, in consultation with the

Secretary of Natural Resources or designee, has significant reason to believe doing so will decrease the risk of substantial damage to persons or property within the State. Dam operators operating under a waiver shall be required to make every effort to minimize the environmental impact of a water level drawdown under the authorized waiver.

* * * Appropriations * * *

Sec. 14. APPROPRIATIONS

(a) In fiscal year 2026, the following sums are appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public Safety:

(1) \$275,000.00 to support the two positions created in Sec. 6 of this act;

(2) \$950,000.00 to support the Urban Search and Rescue Team created pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 50; and

(3) \$205,000.00 for the purpose of funding the Vermont Community Radio Grant Program.

(b) In fiscal year 2026, the sum of \$275,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources for purposes of procuring a fire apparatus.

(c) Any unexpended monies from the appropriation under subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall revert to the General Fund on or before July 1, 2026.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 3, 20 V.S.A. § 51, in the fourth sentence, by striking out “The municipality shall maintain the acquired property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property” and inserting in lieu thereof “A municipality may transfer or redevelop the acquired property for purposes of constructing flood-resilient housing” before the period.

Second: By striking out Secs. 4 and 5 in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof new Secs. 4 and 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 3709 is amended to read:

§ 3709. PILOT SPECIAL FUND

(a) There is hereby established a PILOT Special Fund consisting of local option tax revenues paid to the Treasurer pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 138. This Fund shall be managed by the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to chapter 7, subchapter 5 of this title. Notwithstanding subdivision 588(3) of this title, all interest earned on the Fund shall be retained in the Fund for use in meeting future obligations. The Fund shall be exclusively for payments required under chapter 123, ~~subchapter~~ subchapters 4 and 4C of this title, and for any additional State payments in lieu of taxes for correctional facilities ~~and to the City of Montpelier.~~ The Commissioner of Finance and Management may draw warrants for disbursements from this Fund in anticipation of receipts.

* * *

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. chapter 123, subchapter 4C is added to read:

Subchapter 4C. Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program

§ 3710. MUNICIPAL GRAND LIST STABILIZATION PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program within the Department of Taxes to reimburse municipalities for municipal property taxes assessed under chapter 133 of this title for flood-prone properties acquired by a municipality pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 51 or a prior voluntary buyout program operated by the Division of Emergency Management.

(b) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commissioner of Public Safety shall certify to the Commissioner of Taxes the properties eligible for the Municipal Grand List Stabilization Program and shall submit any other information required by the Commissioner of Taxes. To be eligible for the Program under this subchapter, a municipality must have acquired an eligible property on or after July 1, 2023 and preserved the property as open space with a deed restriction or covenant prohibiting development of the property. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall first certify properties to the Commissioner of Taxes pursuant to this subsection on or before September 1, 2025.

(c) Upon notification by the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Commissioner of Taxes shall certify the payment amounts and make an annual payment to each municipality for each eligible property to compensate for the

loss of municipal property tax. The payment shall be calculated using the grand list value of the acquired property for the year during which the property was either damaged by flooding or identified as flood-prone by the Commissioner of Public Safety, multiplied by the municipal tax rate, including any submunicipal tax rates, in effect each year. This payment shall be made on or before January 1 of each year for five years.

(d) A property shall not be eligible for reimbursement payments for more than 10 years. The Commissioner shall make an annual payment for the full amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section for five years. After a municipality has received payments for an eligible property for five consecutive years, the Commissioner shall make an annual payment to the municipality for any subsequent year of eligibility in an amount equal to one-half of the amount calculated under subsection (c) of this section.

(e) Payment under this section shall be calculated and issued from the PILOT Special Fund under section 3709 of this title only after all other grants under subchapter 4 of this chapter are calculated and issued. If the PILOT Special Fund balance is insufficient to pay the full amount of all payments authorized under this subchapter, then payments calculated under this section and due to each municipality for each property shall be reduced proportionately.

Third: In Sec. 6, Division of Emergency Management; positions; appropriation, in the section heading, by striking out the semicolon and the word “APPROPRIATION” following “POSITIONS” and in subsection (b), in the second sentence, following the word “The” by striking out the word “Flood” and inserting in lieu thereof “All-Hazard” preceding “Mitigation Technician”

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 12, 24 V.S.A. § 1759, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 12. [Deleted.]

Fifth: By adding two new sections to be Secs. 13a and 13b and their reader assistance headings to read as follows:

* * * Local Option Tax; Amount Paid to Municipality * * *

Sec. 13a. 24 V.S.A. § 138 is amended to read:

§ 138. LOCAL OPTION TAXES

* * *

(c)(1) Any tax imposed under the authority of this section shall be collected and administered by the Department of Taxes, in accordance with

State law governing such State tax or taxes and subdivision (2) of this subsection; provided, however, that a sales tax imposed under this section shall be collected on each sale that is subject to the Vermont sales tax using a destination basis for taxation. Except with respect to taxes collected on the sale of aviation jet fuel, a per-return fee of \$5.96 shall be assessed, ~~70~~ 75 percent of which shall be borne by the municipality, and ~~30~~ 25 percent of which shall be borne by the State to be paid from the PILOT Special Fund. Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 603 or any other provision of law or municipal charter to the contrary, revenue from the fee shall be used to compensate the Department for the costs of administering and collecting the local option tax and of administering the State appraisal and litigation program established in 32 V.S.A. § 5413. The fee shall be subject to the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 605.

* * *

(d)(1) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section and subdivision (2) of this subsection with respect to taxes collected on the sale of aviation jet fuel, of the taxes collected under this section, ~~70~~ 75 percent of the taxes shall be paid on a quarterly basis to the municipality in which they were collected, after reduction for the costs of administration and collection under subsection (c) of this section. Revenues received by a municipality may be expended for municipal services only, and not for education expenditures. Any remaining revenue shall be deposited into the PILOT Special Fund established by 32 V.S.A. § 3709.

* * *

* * * Flooding Abatement Program * * *

Sec. 13b. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 82, Sec. 1, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 108, Sec. 3, is further amended to read:

Sec. 1. REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES OF STATE

EDUCATION PROPERTY TAXES THAT WERE ABATED DUE
TO FLOODING

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Taxes may approve an application by a municipality for reimbursement of State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426. To be eligible for reimbursement under this section, prior to November 15, ~~2024~~ 2025, a municipality must have abated, in proportion to the abated municipal tax, under 24 V.S.A. § 1535 the State education property taxes that were assessed on eligible property, after application of any property tax credit allowed under 32 V.S.A. chapter 154.

(2) As used in this subsection, “eligible property” means property lost or destroyed due directly or indirectly to severe storms and flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, provided the loss or destruction resulted in one or more of the following:

(A) a 50 percent or greater loss in value to the primary structure on the property;

(B) loss of use by the property owner of the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more;

(C) loss of access by the property owner to utilities for the primary structure on the property for 60 days or more; or

(D) condemnation of the primary structure on the property under federal, State, or municipal law, as applicable.

(b) If a municipality demonstrates that, due to disruption to tax collections resulting from flooding in an area that was declared a federal disaster between July 1, 2023 and ~~October 15, 2023~~ December 31, 2024, the municipality incurred unanticipated interest expenses on funds borrowed to make State education property tax payments owed under 32 V.S.A. § 5402(c) and 16 V.S.A. § 426, the municipality may be reimbursed by an amount equal to its reasonable interest expenses under this subsection, provided the amount of reimbursed interest expenses shall not exceed eight percent.

* * *

Sixth: By striking out Sec. 15, effective date, and its reader assistance heading in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof a new reader assistance heading and Sec. 15 to read as follows:

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section shall take effect on passage.

(b) Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 214, Sec. 13b (flooding abatement reimbursement program) shall take effect retroactively on November 15, 2024.

(c) All other sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Harrison of Chittenden, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, when further amended as

recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, and when further amended as follows:

First: By striking Sec. 6, Division of Emergency Management; positions; appropriation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

Second: By striking out Sec. 9, Vermont Community Radio Program, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 9 to read as follows:

Sec. 9. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 14, appropriations, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 14 to read as follows:

Sec. 14. [Deleted.]

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 479

An act relating to housing

(Rep. Mihaly of Calais will speak for the Committee on General and Housing.)

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 6, 32 V.S.A. § 5930u, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. 32 V.S.A. § 5930u is amended to read:

§ 5930u. TAX CREDIT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

* * *

(11) “First-generation homebuyer” means a homebuyer who self-attests that the homebuyer is an individual:

(A) whose parents or legal guardians:

(i) do not have and during the homebuyer’s lifetime have not had any residential ownership interest in any state; or

(ii) lost ownership of a home due to foreclosure, short sale, or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure and have not owned a home since that loss; or

(B) who has at any time been placed in foster care.

* * *

(g) Credit allocation.

(1) In any fiscal year, the allocating agency may award up to:

(A) \$400,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations to all applicants for rental housing projects, for an aggregate limit of \$2,000,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (A).

(B) \$675,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans or grants for owner-occupied unit financing or down payment loans as provided in subdivision (b)(2) of this section consistent with the allocation plan, including for new construction and manufactured housing, for an aggregate limit of \$3,375,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (B). Of the total first-year credit allocations made under this subdivision (B), \$250,000.00 shall be used each fiscal year for manufactured home purchase and replacement.

(C) \$250,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for grants to first-time homebuyers who are also first-generation homebuyers as provided in subdivision (b)(3)(D) of this section, for an aggregate limit of \$1,250,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (C).

(2) If the full amount of first-year credits authorized by an award are not allocated to a taxpayer, the Agency may reclaim the amount not allocated and re-award such allocations to other applicants, and such re-awards shall not be subject to the limits set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(h) Credit allocation; Down Payment Assistance Program.

(1) In fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2019, the allocating agency may award up to \$125,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans through the Down Payment Assistance Program created in subdivision (b)(2) of this section.

(2) In fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year ~~2026~~ 2031, the allocating agency may award up to \$250,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans through the Down Payment Assistance Program created in subdivision (b)(3) of this section.

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 6A to read as follows:

Sec. 6A. 32 V.S.A. § 5930u is amended to read:

§ 5930u. TAX CREDIT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

* * *

(11) ~~“First-generation homebuyer” means a homebuyer who self-attests that the homebuyer is an individual:~~

~~(A) whose parents or legal guardians:~~

~~(i) do not have and during the homebuyer’s lifetime have not had any residential ownership interest in any state; or~~

~~(ii) lost ownership of a home due to foreclosure, short sale, or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure and have not owned a home since that loss; or~~

~~(B) who has at any time been placed in foster care. [Repealed.]~~

* * *

(g) Credit allocation.

(1) In any fiscal year, the allocating agency may award up to:

(A) \$400,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations to all applicants for rental housing projects, for an aggregate limit of \$2,000,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (A).

(B) \$675,000.00 in total first-year credit allocations for loans or grants for owner-occupied unit financing or down payment loans as provided in subdivision (b)(2) of this section consistent with the allocation plan, including for new construction and manufactured housing, for an aggregate limit of \$3,375,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (B). Of the total first-year credit allocations made under this subdivision (B), \$250,000.00 shall be used each fiscal year for manufactured home purchase and replacement.

~~(C) \$250,000.00 in total in total first-year credit allocations for grants to first-time homebuyers who are also first-generation homebuyers as provided in subdivision (b)(3)(D) of this section, for an aggregate limit of \$1,250,000.00 over any given five-year period that credits are available under this subdivision (C). [Repealed.]~~

* * *

Third: By striking out Sec. 16, 24 V.S.A. § 1539, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 16 to read as follows:

Sec. 16. [Deleted.]

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 22, effective dates, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 22 to read as follows:

Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that:

(1) Secs. 4 (Universal Design Study Committee) and 17 (repeal; Act 181 prospective landlord certificate changes) and this section shall take effect on passage; and

(2) Sec. 6A (repeal; First-Generation Homebuyer tax credits) shall take effect on July 1, 2030.

(Committee Vote: 10-1-0)

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends to substitute an amendment for the report of the Committee on Ways and Means to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 4, universal design study committee, by striking out subsection (h) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (h) to read as follows:

(h) Intent to appropriate. Notwithstanding subsection (g) of this section, per diems for the cost of attending meetings shall only be available in the event an appropriation is made in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund to the Department of Housing and Community Development for that purpose.

Second: By striking out Sec. 6, 32 V.S.A. § 5930u, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 16, 24 V.S.A. § 1539, and its reader assistance heading in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 16 to read as follows:

Sec. 16. [Deleted.]

Fourth: In Sec. 19, VHFA off-site construction report, in subsection (a), by striking out the following: “The sum of \$250,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 to the Department of Housing and Community Development granted to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency to further develop recommendations from the 2025 “Opportunities to Utilize Off-Site Construction to Meet Vermont’s Housing, Workforce and Climate Goals” report.”

Fifth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 19a to read as follows:

Sec. 19a. VHFA OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION REPORT;

IMPLEMENTATION

The duty to implement Sec. 19 of this act is contingent upon an appropriation of funds in fiscal year 2026 from the General Fund to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency for the development and issuance of the report required in that section.

Sixth: By striking out Secs. 20, DHCD positions, and 21, appropriations, and their corresponding reader assistance heading in their entireties and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 488

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

(Rep. Walker of Swanton will speak for the Committee on Transportation.)

Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Rep. Kascenska of Burke, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out Sec. 13, EVSE, one-time appropriation, and its reader assistance heading in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 13. [Deleted.]

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Favorable

H. 17

An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown

Rep. Coffin of Cavendish, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

H. 472

An act relating to professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation

(Rep. Nugent of South Burlington will speak for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.)

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-1-0)

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

For Informational Purposes

CROSSOVER DATES

The Joint Rules Committee established the following crossover dates:

(1) All **Senate/House** bills must be reported out of the last committee of reference (including the Committees on Appropriations and Finance/Ways and Means, except as provided below in (2) and the exceptions listed below) on or before **Friday, March 14, 2025**, and filed with the Secretary/Clerk so they may be placed on the Calendar for Notice the next legislative day – Committee bills must be voted out of Committee by **Friday, March 14, 2025**.

(2) All **Senate/House** bills referred pursuant to Senate Rule 31 or House Rule 35(a) to the Committees on Appropriations and Finance/Ways and Means must be reported out by the last of those committees on or before **Friday, March 21, 2025**, and filed with the Secretary/Clerk so they may be placed on the Calendar for Notice the next legislative day.

Exceptions to the foregoing deadlines include the major money bills (the general Appropriations bill (“The Big Bill”), the Transportation Capital bill, the Capital Construction bill, and the Fee/Revenue bills).

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION (H.C.R.) PROCESS

Joint Rules 16a–16d provide the procedure for the General Assembly to adopt concurrent resolutions pursuant to the Consent Calendar. Here are the steps

for Representatives to introduce an H.C.R. and to have it ceremonially read during a House session:

1. Meet with Legislative Counselor Michael Chernick regarding your H.C.R. draft request. Come prepared with an idea and any relevant supporting documents.
2. Have a date in mind if you want a ceremonial reading. You should meet with Counselor Chernick at least two weeks prior to the week you want your ceremonial reading to happen.
3. Counselor Chernick will draft your H.C.R., and Resolutions Editor and Coordinator Jill Pralle will edit it. Upon completion of this process, a paper or electronic copy will be released to you. If a paper copy is released to you, a sponsor signout sheet will also be included.
4. Please submit the sponsor list to Counselor Chernick by paper *or* electronically, but not both.
5. The final list of sponsors needs to be submitted to Counselor Chernick not later than 12:00 noon the Thursday of the week prior to the H.C.R.'s appearance on the Consent Calendar.
6. The Office of Legislative Counsel will then send your H.C.R. to the House Clerk's Office for incorporation into the Consent Calendar and House Calendar Addendum for the following week.
7. The week that your H.C.R. is on the Consent Calendar, any presentation copies that you requested will be mailed or available for pickup on Friday, after the House and Senate adjourn, which is when your H.C.R. is adopted pursuant to Joint Rules.
8. Your H.C.R. can be ceremonially read during a House session once it is adopted. If you would like to schedule a ceremonial reading, contact Second Assistant Clerk Courtney Reckord to confirm your requested ceremonial reading date.

JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE NOTICES

Grants and Positions that have been submitted to the Joint Fiscal Committee by the Administration, under 32 V.S.A. §5(b)(3)(D):

JFO #3244: \$2,335,401.00 to the Agency of Human Services, Department of Health from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Funds support continued crisis counseling assistance

and training in response to the July 2024 flood event. *[Received February 7, 2025]*

JFO #3245: \$250,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services, Department of Health from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. Funds used to provide trainings for crisis staff and to make improvements to the State's crisis system dispatch platform. *[Received February 7, 2025]*