

House Calendar

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

37th DAY OF THE ADJOURNED SESSION

House Convenes at 3:30 P.M.

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ACTION CALENDAR

Committee of Conference Report

S. 23

An act relating to the use of synthetic media in elections

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Committee of Conference to which were referred the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon Senate Bill entitled:

S. 23 An act relating to the use of synthetic media in elections

Respectfully report that they have met and considered the same and recommends that the Senate recede from its proposal of amendment to the House proposal of amendment and that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 17 V.S.A. chapter 35, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Use of Synthetic Media in Elections

§ 2031. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media” means synthetic media that appears to a reasonable person to be a realistic representation of:

(A) a political candidate that injures the reputation of a political candidate; or

(B) an individual that attempts to unduly influence the outcome of an election, including a public question, by providing materially false information to voters.

(2) “Synthetic media” means an image, an audio recording, or a video recording of an individual’s appearance, speech, or conduct that has been created or intentionally manipulated with the use of digital technology, including artificial intelligence.

§ 2032. DISCLOSURE OF DECEPTIVE AND FRAUDULENT

SYNTHETIC MEDIA

(a) Disclosure. A person shall not, within 90 days before an election in Vermont, publish, communicate, or otherwise distribute synthetic media that

the person knows is deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media unless the person includes a disclosure in the synthetic media stating: “This media has been manipulated or generated by digital technology and depicts speech or conduct that did not occur.”

(1) For deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media consisting of images and video recordings, the text of the disclosure shall appear in a size that is easily readable by the average viewer and inclusive to the greatest extent possible of individuals with disabilities. For video recordings, the disclosure shall appear for the full duration of the video recording.

(2) For deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media consisting of audio recordings only, the disclosure shall be read in a clearly spoken manner and in a pitch and pace that can be easily heard by the average listener and inclusive to the greatest extent possible of individuals with disabilities, at the beginning of the audio recording, at the end of the audio recording, and, if the audio is greater than two minutes in length, interspersed within the audio recording at intervals of not greater than two minutes each.

(b) Exceptions. Subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to:

(1) a radio or television broadcasting station, including a cable or satellite television operator, programmer, or producer, or to a website, streaming platform, or mobile application, that:

(A) broadcasts deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media as part of a bona fide newscast, news interview, news documentary, commentary of general interest, or on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events, provided the broadcast clearly acknowledges through content or a disclosure, in a manner that can be easily heard or read by the average listener or viewer, that there are questions about the authenticity of the deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media;

(B) is paid to broadcast deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media; or

(C) is required by federal law to broadcast advertisements from legally qualified candidates;

(2) a website or a regularly published newspaper, magazine, or other periodical of general circulation, including an internet or electronic publication, that routinely carries news and commentary of general interest, and that publishes deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media, if the publication clearly states that the deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media does not accurately represent the speech or conduct of the represented individual;

(3) a person that produces or distributes deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media constituting satire or parody;

(4) a provider of a telecommunications service or information service, as those terms are defined in the Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 153, for content provided by another person; or

(5) a provider of an interactive computer service, as defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230, for content provided by another person.

§ 2033. PENALTIES

(a) A person that knowingly and intentionally violates a provision of this subchapter shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00, unless:

(1) the person commits the violation with the intent to cause violence or bodily harm, in which case the fine shall be not more than \$5,000.00;

(2) the person commits the violation within five years after one or more prior violations under this section, in which case the fine shall be not more than \$10,000.00; or

(3) the person commits the violation with the intent to cause violence or bodily harm and the person commits the violation within five years after one or more prior violations under this section, in which case the fine shall be not more than \$15,000.00.

(b) A candidate whose appearance, speech, conduct, or environment is misrepresented through the use of deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media in violation of section 2032 of this title may seek injunctive or other equitable relief prohibiting the publication, communication, or other distribution of such deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media.

Sec. 2. 17 V.S.A. chapter 35, subchapter 5 is added to read:

Subchapter 5. Enforcement and Investigation

§ 2041. ENFORCEMENT

In addition to the other remedies provided in this chapter, a State's Attorney or the Attorney General may institute any appropriate action, injunction, or other proceeding to prevent, restrain, correct, or abate any violation of this chapter.

§ 2042. CIVIL INVESTIGATIONS

(a)(1) The Attorney General or a State's Attorney, whenever there is reason to believe any person to be or to have been in violation of this chapter, may examine or cause to be examined by any designated agent or representative any books, records, papers, memoranda, or physical objects of any nature bearing upon each alleged violation and may demand written responses under oath to questions bearing upon each alleged violation.

(2) The Attorney General or a State's Attorney may require the attendance of such person or of any other person having knowledge in the premises in the county where such person resides or has a place of business or in Washington County if such person is a nonresident or has no place of business within the State and may take testimony and require proof material for that person's information and may administer oaths or take acknowledgment in respect of any book, record, paper, or memorandum.

(3) The Attorney General or a State's Attorney shall serve notice of the time, place, and cause of such examination or attendance or notice of the cause of the demand for written responses personally or by certified mail upon such person at that person's principal place of business or, if such place is not known, to that person's known address. Such notice shall include a statement that a knowing and intentional violation of this chapter is subject to criminal prosecution.

(4) Any book, record, paper, memorandum, or other information produced by any person pursuant to this section shall not, unless otherwise ordered by a court of this State for good cause shown, be disclosed to any person other than the authorized agent or representative of the Attorney General or a State's Attorney or another law enforcement officer engaged in legitimate law enforcement activities unless with the consent of the person producing the same, except that any transcript of oral testimony, written responses, documents, or other information produced pursuant to this section may be used in the enforcement of this chapter, including in connection with any civil action brought under this subchapter or subsection (c) of this section.

(5) Nothing in this subsection is intended to prevent the Attorney General or a State's Attorney from disclosing the results of an investigation conducted under this section, including the grounds for the decision as to whether to bring an enforcement action alleging a violation of this chapter or of any rule made pursuant to this chapter.

(6) This subsection shall not be applicable to any criminal investigation or prosecution brought under the laws of this or any state.

(b)(1) A person upon whom a notice is served pursuant to the provisions of this section shall comply with its terms unless otherwise provided by the order of a court of this State.

(2) Any person that, with intent to avoid, evade, or prevent compliance, in whole or in part, with any civil investigation under this section, removes from any place; conceals, withholds, or destroys; or mutilates, alters, or by any other means falsifies any documentary material in the possession, custody, or

control of any person subject to such notice or mistakes or conceals any information shall be fined not more than \$5,000.00.

(c)(1) Whenever any person fails to comply with any notice served upon that person under this section or whenever satisfactory copying or reproduction of any such material cannot be done and the person refuses to surrender the material, the Attorney General or a State's Attorney may file, in the Superior Court in the county in which the person resides or of that person's principal place of business or in Washington County if the person is a nonresident or has no principal place of business in this State, and serve upon the person a petition for an order of the court for the enforcement of this section.

(2) Whenever any petition is filed under this section, the court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the matter so presented and to enter any order or orders as may be required to carry into effect the provisions of this section. Any disobedience of any order entered under this section by any court shall be punished as a contempt of the court.

(d) Any person aggrieved by a civil investigation conducted under this section may seek relief from Washington Superior Court or the Superior Court in the county in which the aggrieved person resides. Except for cases the court considers to be of greater importance, proceedings before Superior Court as authorized by this section shall take precedence on the docket over all other cases.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

*SEN. BRIAN P. COLLAMORE
SEN. TANYA C. VYHOVSKY
SEN. JOHN S. MORLEY III*

Committee on the part of the Senate

*REP. MATTHEW J. BIRONG Jr.
REP. LISA A. HANGO
REP. CHEA WATERS EVANS*

Committee on the part of the House

NOTICE CALENDAR
Favorable with Amendment
H. 527

An act relating to extending the sunset of 30 V.S.A. § 248a

Rep. Sibilia of Dover, for the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 248a is amended to read:

§ 248a. CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC GOOD FOR COMMUNICATIONS
FACILITIES

* * *

(i) Sunset of Commission authority. Effective on July 1, ~~2026~~ 2030, no new applications for certificates of public good under this section may be considered by the Commission.

* * *

Sec. 2. PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS;
INCREASED PARTICIPATION

(a) The Public Utility Commission shall recommend changes to 30 V.S.A. § 248a to increase transparency, efficiency, fairness, and the ability of individuals and municipalities to participate in the telecommunications siting process. The Commission shall hold at least two workshops on the issue and shall invite, at a minimum, the following: the telecommunications service providers that have used the section 248a process; the Vermont League of Cities and Towns; the regional planning commissions; Vermonters for a Clean Environment; the Department of Public Service; the Department of Public Safety; the Agency of Natural Resources; and any other relevant stakeholders.

(b) The workshops shall address the following topics and procedures:

(1) the advance notice process, including the content of the notice; the length of the notice period; distribution requirements; prepetition hearings and site visits at the municipal or regional planning level; prepetition supplements and amendments; recommendations from municipal entities and regional planning commissions; whether municipalities should be required to hold a public hearing on an application and whether the Department of Public Service should be required to attend; and the effect of failure to file a petition within 180 days following the advance notice date;

(2) procedures for the postpetition comment period, including consideration of comments, motions to intervene, and requests for hearings, as well as for issuing a significant issue determination during the review period pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248a(f);

(3) procedures for contested case proceedings following a Commission’s “significant issue” determination that include scheduling, site visits including visibility determinations, discovery, and motions;

(4) conduct of evidentiary hearings, including allowing for public participation, and streamlining the posthearing briefing process to comply with the applicable review periods under 30 V.S.A. § 248a(f);

(5) evidentiary burdens for section 248a criteria, including rebuttable presumptions of compliance from agency determinations, how and when municipalities are given substantial deference, and if other parties, such as adjoining neighbors, should be given substantial deference;

(6) requirements for supplements and amendments to a pending petition, with express standards for substantial and nonsubstantial changes;

(7) streamlined administrative process for transfers of certificates of public good issued under section 248a in whole or in part; and

(8) any other topics the Commission determines should be addressed through rules or orders following consultation with stakeholders.

(c) On or before December 15, 2027, the Commission shall submit an overview of the process it conducted, the recommendations it has, and a description of any changes the Commission made to the section 248a process after the consultations with stakeholders to the House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee Vote: 5-3-1)

H. 635

An act relating to eliminating Department of Corrections supervisory fees

Rep. Sweeney of Shelburne, for the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

In Sec. 4, effective date, by striking out the word “passage” and inserting in lieu thereof “July 1, 2027”

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Favorable

J.R.S. 37

Joint resolution supporting, in solidarity with national and international ski organizations and numerous skiers across the globe, the introduction of long-overdue gender equality in Nordic combined Olympic competition and urging that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) only introduce new Olympic sports that practice gender equality

Rep. Duke of Burlington, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, recommends that the resolution ought to be adopted in concurrence.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

For Informational Purposes

NOTICE OF JOINT ASSEMBLY

Thursday, February 19, 2026 - 10:30 A.M. – House Chamber – Election of an Adjutant and Inspector General, and of two (2) trustees for the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

Candidates for the positions of Adjutant and Inspector General, and legislative candidates for Vermont State Colleges Corporation trustees must notify the Secretary of State **in writing** of their candidacies not later than Thursday, February 12, 2026, by 4:00 P.M., pursuant to the provisions of 2 V.S.A. §12(b). Otherwise their names will not appear on the ballots for these positions.

The following rules shall apply to the conduct of these elections:

First: All nominations for these offices will be presented in alphabetical order prior to voting.

Second: There will be only one nominating speech of not more than three (3) minutes and not more than two seconding speeches of not more than one (1) minute each for each nominee.

**ANNOUNCEMENT: JOINT PUBLIC HEARING ON
THE GOVERNOR’S RECOMMENDED FY 2027 BUDGET**

The Vermont House and Senate Committees on Appropriations will hold two **joint public hearings on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 1:45 p.m. and Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.** in Room 11 of the State House. Interested parties may attend the hearing in person or virtually.

The Committees will take testimony on the Governor’s recommended budget at the above dates and times. **Anyone interested in testifying must sign up in advance of the hearings through the following online form not later than 10:00 a.m. on February 12, 2026, for the first hearing, and 10:00 a.m. on February 19, 2026, for the second hearing.** Registration will be first-come, first-served and will be limited to 40 people on each date. For those planning to testify, instructions on how to access and participate in the hearing will be sent once you have signed up for the hearing.

Online sign-up form: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/links/public-hearing-on-fy27-budget>

For those not planning to testify, the hearings will be available to watch live on YouTube at the following link:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/streaming/house-appropriations>

Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted electronically through email at testimony@vtleg.gov or mailed to the House Committee on Appropriations, c/o Autumn Crabtree, 115 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05633. For more information about the format of these events, contact Autumn Crabtree at Autumn.Crabtree@vtleg.gov or Elle Oille-Stanforth at Elle.Oille-Stanforth@vtleg.gov

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 13, 2026**, 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 13, 2026**.
- (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**

20, 2026, 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 or email 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 communicate 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 sign-out sheet will also be included.
4. Please submit a final sponsor list (with all sponsors listed) to Counselor Chernick by paper *or* electronically, but not both.
5. The final list of sponsors needs to be submitted, by email *or* on a paper sign-out sheet, to Counselor Chernick **not later than 1:00 p.m. the Wednesday 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, meaning it must have been adopted through the House Consent

Calendar not later than the week prior to your requested ceremonial reading date. Contact Second Assistant Clerk Courtney Reckord to confirm your requested ceremonial reading date.

9. A Note: If there is a **specific date, week, or month that your resolution must be read** (e.g. to designate a specified period of time or to recognize a group on a certain day), please inform Second Assistant Clerk Courtney Reckord as soon as possible, so she can reserve that date in advance. You do not need to have the resolution drafted by then.

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 #3271: \$218,385.00 to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services from the U.S. Department of Justice. Funds will be used to consolidate data into one case management system. *[Received January 27, 2026]*

JFO #3272: \$195,053,740.00 to the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Central Office from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Participation in the Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) will help to ensure long-term health care system sustainability in Vermont. This grant includes two (2) limited-service positions (LSP): one (1) Health Care Reform Integration Manager to the Office of Health Care Reform and one (1) Financial Manager II to the Agency of Human Services Central Office. Both limited positions are expected to last through 9/30/2031. *[Received January 27, 2026]*