House Calendar

Thursday, March 12, 2026

66th DAY OF THE ADJOURNED SESSION

House Convenes at 3:30 P.M.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

ACTION CALENDAR

Action Postponed Until Thursday, March 12, 2026

Third Reading

H. 512 The regulation of the event ticketing market..... 814
Rep. Donahue Amendment 814

New Business

Third Reading

H. 573 The first certification of an emergency examination 814

H. 578 Penalties and procedures for animal cruelty offenses 814

H. 686 Expanding identification of certain lobbying advertisements 814

H. 744 Procedures for arrest without a warrant 814

Favorable with Amendment

H. 753 Utility service disconnections and ratepayer protections
Rep. Torre for Energy and Digital Infrastructure 815

H. 849 A civil action for damages for interference with State or federal constitutional rights by any government official
Rep. LaLonde for Judiciary 816

Action Under Rule 52

J.R.S. 43 Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of six Superior Court Judges 817

Action Postponed Until Friday, March 13, 2026

Third Reading

H. 205 Agreements not to compete 817
Rep. Headrick et al. Amendment 817

NOTICE CALENDAR

Favorable with Amendment

H. 549 Eligibility of detainees to obtain a State-issued nondriver identification card
Rep. Luneau for Corrections and Institutions 818
Rep. Waszazak for Ways and Means 823

H. 588 Professions and occupations regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation
Rep. Nugent for Government Operations and Military Affairs 824
Rep. Branagan for Ways and Means 841
Rep. Mrowicki for Appropriations 842

H. 674 The creation of the Vermont Sister State Program
Rep. Boutin for Commerce and Economic Development 842
Rep. Stevens for Appropriations 847

H. 723 Posting of land
Rep. Satcowitz for Environment 851

H. 762 The County and Regional Governance Study Committee
Rep. Birong for Government Operations and Military Affairs 852
Rep. Mrowicki for Appropriations 854

H. 841 Miscellaneous animal welfare procedures
Rep. Waters Evans for Government Operations and Military Affairs 854
Rep. Masland for Ways and Means 865

H. 887 Crime victim status under the Fair Employment Practices Act
Rep. Krasnow for General and Housing 865

Favorable

H. 542 Terminating testing of schools in Vermont for polychlorinated biphenyls
Rep. Conlon for Education 867
Rep. Kascenska for Appropriations 867

CONSENT CALENDAR FOR NOTICE

H.C.R. 217 Congratulating McNeil & Reedy of Rutland City on 70 years as a superb men's clothing retailer 867

H.C.R. 218 Recognizing April 2026 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont 867

H.C.R. 219 Designating March 2026 as Athletic Trainers' Month in Vermont 867

H.C.R. 220 Welcoming the March 17, 2026, namesake visit of the officers and crew of the U.S. submarine VERMONT (USS VERMONT (SSN 792)) to the State House and designating April 18, 2026, as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont 868

H.C.R. 221 Recognizing March 25, 2026, as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont 868

H.C.R. 222 Honoring the Vermont nonprofit sector and the pivotal leadership and support it receives from Common Good Vermont 868

H.C.R. 223 Honoring former Public Service Board Chair and East Montpelier Town Moderator Michael Dworkin 868

H.C.R. 224 Congratulating the athletes representing Vermont at the 2025 National Senior Games and designating March 18, 2026, as Vermont Senior Games Day at the State House 868

H.C.R. 225 Honoring East Haven Selectboard Chair Kirwin Flanders for his extraordinary municipal public service career 868

H.C.R. 226 Remembering, with great sadness, the historic and interconnected 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters that struck the Tohoku region of Japan 868

S.C.R. 7 Senate concurrent resolution designating October 5, 2026, as Italian American Day in Vermont. 868

S.C.R. 8 Senate concurrent resolution recognizing March 2026 as International Long COVID Awareness Month in Vermont. 868

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACTION CALENDAR

Action Postponed Until Thursday, March 12, 2026

Third Reading

H. 512

An act relating to the regulation of the event ticketing market

Amendment to be offered by Rep. Donahue of Northfield to H. 512:

First: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 2B, in section 2479f, by striking out subdivision (a)(3) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) "Reseller" means a person engaged in the resale of tickets, except that "reseller" does not include an individual reselling a ticket purchased for personal use for a single event.

Second: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 2B, in section 2479f, by striking out subdivision (c)(3) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) This subsection shall not apply to the resale of a ticket under a written contract with the ticket issuer for the resale of tickets at a price greater than 110 percent of the price of the original ticket if the written contract is executed prior to July 1, 2026.

New Business

Third Reading

H. 573

An act relating to the first certification of an emergency examination

H. 578

An act relating to penalties and procedures for animal cruelty offenses

H. 686

An act relating to expanding identification of certain lobbying advertisements

H. 744

An act relating to procedures for arrest without a warrant

Favorable with Amendment

H. 753

An act relating to utility service disconnections and ratepayer protections

Rep. Torre of Moretown, 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. SHORT TITLE

This act may be cited as the "Vermont Energy Equity Law."

Sec. 2. UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS; REPORT

For the purpose of providing policymakers with the data necessary for monitoring and responding to trends in the residential electric and gas sectors, particularly with respect to safeguarding the welfare of ratepayers, the Commissioner of Public Service shall conduct an annual assessment of involuntary residential service disconnections. The assessment shall take into consideration the monthly disconnection reports prepared by electric and gas utilities pursuant to Public Utility Commission, Disconnection of Residential Gas, Electric, and Water Service (CVR 30-000-3300), Rule 3.308(B); relevant consumer assistance records maintained by the Consumer Affairs and Public Information Division; and any other data deemed appropriate by the Commissioner. The Commissioner shall report findings and recommendations related to the assessment to the House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Finance on or before January 15, 2027, and annually thereafter. The report required by this section may be included in the Department's Annual Energy Report to the General Assembly or may be submitted in a standalone report, in the Commissioner's discretion.

Sec. 3. UTILITY SERVICE DISCONNECTIONS; RULEMAKING

On or before January 1, 2028, or upon the initiation of any rulemaking pertaining to Public Utility Commission, Disconnection of Residential Gas, Electric, and Water Service (CVR 30-000-3300), Rule 3.300, whichever occurs first, the Public Utility Commission shall adopt rules that:

(1) curtail electric utility service disconnections during periods of extreme heat, as defined by the Commission, which may include a lower temperature threshold for households comprising persons who are 62 years of age or older;

(2) clarify that, in Rule 3.301(G), a licensed physician assistant or a nurse practitioner may issue a physician's certificate; and

(3) require due consideration of medical judgment regarding the duration of a health hazard indicated in a physician's certificate when establishing the disconnection protection period for a health hazard.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(Committee Vote: 9-0-0)

H. 849

An act relating to a civil action for damages for interference with State or federal constitutional rights by any government official

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. chapter 205 is added to read:

CHAPTER 205. DEPRIVATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

§ 5797. CIVIL ACTION

(a) Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, subjects or causes to be subjected any citizen of the State of Vermont or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution of the United States shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress, except that in any action brought against a judicial officer for an act or omission taken in the officer's judicial capacity, injunctive relief shall not be granted unless a declaratory decree was violated or declaratory relief was unavailable.

(b) For purposes of this section, "color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage" includes color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage of the United States and of any U.S. state or territory or the District of Columbia.

(c) Any defense available to a defendant under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 is likewise and to the same extent available to any defendant in an action brought under subsection (a) of this section. This subsection does not alter, amend, create, or support a qualified or absolute immunity defense in any other action or proceeding brought under any other provision of Vermont law.

(d) It is the intent of the General Assembly that, in construing this section, the courts of this State will be guided by the construction of 42 U.S.C. § 1983, as amended, as interpreted by the courts of the United States.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to a civil action for damages for deprivation of federal constitutional rights by any government official"

(Committee Vote: 6-5-0)

Action Under Rule 52

J.R.S. 43

Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of six Superior Court Judges

(For text, see House Journal of March 11, 2026)

Action Postponed Until Friday, March 13, 2026

Third Reading

H. 205

An act relating to agreements not to compete

Amendment to be offered by Reps. Headrick of Burlington, Casey of Montpelier, Harple of Glover, and McCann of Montpelier to H. 205:

First: In Sec. 2, 21 V.S.A. § 495q, by striking out subdivision (b)(1)(B) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (b)(1)(B) to read as follows:

(B) "Agreement not to compete" does not include:

(i) an agreement that prohibits the disclosure of trade secrets as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 4601 or a nondisclosure agreement that protects confidential business information that does not constitute a trade secret; or

(ii) a nonsolicitation agreement between an employer and an employee, provided that the limitations set forth in the agreement are reasonable in time, geographical area, and the scope of activity to be restrained.

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 3a to read as follows:

Sec. 3a. 16 V.S.A. § 1752 is amended to read:

§ 1752. GROUNDS AND PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

(a) ~~A teacher under contract to teach in a public school who fails, without just cause, to complete the term for which the teacher contracted to teach shall be disqualified to teach in any public school for the remainder of the school year.~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

Third: By striking out Sec. 4, effective date, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 4 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 2 and 3 shall take effect on passage.

(b) Sec. 3a shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

NOTICE CALENDAR

Favorable with Amendment

H. 549

An act relating to eligibility of detainees to obtain a State-issued nondriver identification card

Rep. Luneau of St. Albans City, for the Committee on Corrections and Institutions, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 23 V.S.A. § 115 is amended to read:

§ 115. NONDRIVER IDENTIFICATION CARDS

* * *

(m)(1) An individual who is sentenced to serve a period of imprisonment of six months or more ~~committed to the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections~~ in a correctional facility and who is eligible for a nondriver identification card under the requirements of this section shall, upon proper application and submission of the documentation required for a non-REAL ID or REAL ID identification card and in advance of release from a correctional facility, be provided with a nondriver identification card for a fee of $0.00.

(2) As part of reentry planning, the Department of Corrections shall inquire with the individual to be released about the individual's desire to obtain a nondriver identification card, operator's license, or ~~any driving credential~~ replacement learner's permit, if eligible, and inform the individual about the differences, including any costs to the individual.

(3) If the individual desires a nondriver identification card, the Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide an identification card for the individual at the time of release.

(n)(1) If an individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility is eligible for a nondriver identification card under the requirements of this section, the Department of Corrections, as soon as reasonably practicable, shall obtain the documentation required for a non-REAL ID or REAL ID nondriver identification card and shall provide the individual with the documentation at the time of release.

(2) The application shall include the post-release mailing address of the individual and proof that the individual is a resident of Vermont following release from the correctional facility.

(3) Upon proper application and submission of all required documentation following release from the correctional facility, an individual who was detained for six months or more in a correctional facility shall be provided with a nondriver identification card for a fee of $0.00.

(4) The Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles regarding the documentation required for an individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility to obtain a non-REAL ID or REAL ID nondriver identification card.

(o) The Commissioner shall provide a form that, upon the individual's execution, shall serve as a document of an anatomical gift under 18 V.S.A. chapter 110. An indicator shall be placed on the nondriver identification card of any individual who has executed an anatomical gift form in accordance with this section.

(p) As used in this section, "correctional facility" has the same meaning as in 28 V.S.A. § 3.

Sec. 2. 23 V.S.A. § 613 is amended to read:

§ 613. REPLACEMENT LICENSE

* * *

(c)(1) An individual who is sentenced to serve a period of imprisonment of six months or more in a correctional facility who holds an unexpired license issued under the provisions of this subchapter or who held a Vermont operator's license that expired not more than three years prior shall:

(A) be eligible to apply for a replacement license pursuant to the provisions of this section; and

(B) upon proper application and submission of the documentation required for a non-REAL ID or REAL ID identification card and in advance of release from a correctional facility, be provided with a replacement operator's license for a fee of $0.00.

(2) The application shall include the post-release mailing address of the individual and proof that the individual will be a resident of Vermont following release from the correctional facility.

(3) As part of reentry planning, the Department of Corrections shall inquire with each individual regarding whether the individual would like to obtain a nondriver identification card, operator's license, or replacement learner's permit, if eligible, and shall provide the individual with information regarding required documentation and any associated costs.

(4) If an individual would like to obtain an operator's license pursuant to the provisions of this section and is eligible, the Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide an operator's license to the individual at the time the individual is released from the correctional facility.

Sec. 3. 23 V.S.A. § 613 is amended to read:

§ 613. REPLACEMENT LICENSE

* * *

(d)(1) An individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility shall be eligible to apply for a replacement license pursuant to the provisions of this section if, at the time the individual submits an application to obtain a replacement license pursuant to this subsection, the individual:

(A) holds an unexpired license issued under the provisions of this subchapter; or

(B) held a Vermont operator's license that expired not more than three years prior.

(2) If an individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility is eligible for a replacement operator's license under the requirements of this section, the Department of Corrections, as soon as reasonably practicable, shall obtain the documentation required for a non-REAL ID or REAL ID operator's license and shall provide the individual with the documentation at the time of release.

(3) The application shall include the post-release mailing address of the individual and proof that the individual is a resident of Vermont following release from the correctional facility.

(4) Upon proper application and submission of all required documentation following release from the correctional facility, an individual who was detained for six months or more in a correctional facility shall be provided with a replacement operator's license for a fee of $0.00.

(5) The Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles regarding the documentation required for an individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility to obtain a non-REAL ID or REAL ID replacement operator's license.

(e) As used in this section, "correctional facility" has the same meaning as in 28 V.S.A. § 3.

Sec. 4. 23 V.S.A. § 617 is amended to read:

§ 617. LEARNER'S PERMIT

* * *

(d)(1) An applicant shall pay $24.00 to the Commissioner for each learner's permit or a duplicate or renewal thereof.

* * *

(4) A replacement learner's permit issued pursuant to subsection (g) of this section shall be issued for a fee of $0.00.

* * *

(g)(1) An individual sentenced to serve a period of imprisonment of six months or more in a correctional facility who holds an unexpired learner's permit issued under the provisions of this section or who held a learner's permit issued under the provisions of this section that expired not more than two years prior shall:

(A) be eligible to apply for a replacement learner's permit pursuant to the provisions of this section; and

(B) upon proper application and submission of all required documentation in advance of release from a correctional facility, be provided with a replacement learner's permit upon release.

(2) The application shall include the post-release mailing address of the individual and proof that the individual will be a resident of Vermont following release from the correctional facility.

(3) As part of reentry planning, the Department of Corrections shall inquire with each individual regarding whether the individual would like to obtain a nondriver identification card, operator's license, or replacement learner's permit, if eligible, and shall provide the individual with information regarding required documentation and any associated costs.

(4) If an individual would like to obtain a replacement learner's permit pursuant to the provisions of this section and is eligible, the Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide a replacement learner's permit to the individual at the time the individual is released from the correctional facility.

Sec. 5. 23 V.S.A. § 617 is amended to read:

§ 617. LEARNER'S PERMIT

* * *

(h)(1) An individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility shall be eligible to apply for a replacement learner's permit pursuant to the provisions of this section if, at the time the individual submits an application to obtain a replacement learner's permit pursuant to this subsection, the individual:

(A) holds an unexpired learner's permit issued under the provisions of this section; or

(B) held a learner's permit issued under the provisions of this section that expired not more than two years prior.

(2) If an individual who is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility is eligible for a replacement learner's permit under the requirements of this section, the Department of Corrections, as soon as reasonably practicable, shall obtain the documentation required for a learner's permit and shall provide the individual with the documentation at the time of release from the correctional facility.

(3) The application shall include the post-release mailing address of the individual and proof that the individual is a resident of Vermont following release from the correctional facility.

(4) Upon proper application and submission of all required documentation following release from the correctional facility, an individual who was detained for six months or more in a correctional facility shall be provided with a replacement learner's permit for a fee of $0.00.

(5) The Department of Corrections shall coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles regarding the documentation required for an individual who

is detained for six months or more in a correctional facility to obtain a replacement learner's permit.

(i) As used in this section, "correctional facility" has the same meaning as in 28 V.S.A. § 3.

Sec. 6. 28 V.S.A. § 102 is amended to read:

§ 102. COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONS; APPOINTMENT; POWERS; RESPONSIBILITIES

* * *

(c) The Commissioner is charged with the following responsibilities:

* * *

(25) To coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide eligible individuals with nondriver identification cards and documentation pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 115(m) and (n), replacement operator's licenses and documentation pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 613(c) and (d), and replacement learner's permits and documentation pursuant to 23 V.S.A. § 617(g) and (h).

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 2 (sentenced individuals' operator's licenses), 4 (sentenced individuals' learner's permits), and 6 (DOC Commissioner responsibilities) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(b) Secs. 1 (nondriver identification cards), 3 (detained individuals' operator's licenses), and 5 (detained individuals' learner's permits) shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to eligibility of sentenced or detained individuals to obtain a State-issued nondriver identification card, replacement operator's license, or replacement learner's permit"

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Waszazak of Barre City, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

H. 588

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

Rep. Nugent of South Burlington, 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:

* * * General Powers * * *

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 123 is amended to read:

§ 123. DUTIES OF OFFICE

(a) The Office shall provide administrative, secretarial, financial, investigatory, inspection, and legal services to the boards. The services provided by the Office shall include:

* * *

(2) Issuing, recording, renewing, and reinstating all licenses as ordered by the boards, an appellate officer, the Director, an administrative law officer, or a court.

(3) Revoking, rescinding, or suspending licenses as ordered by the boards, the Director, an administrative law officer, or a court.

* * *

(14) Adopting rules to establish a program to serve as an alternative to the disciplinary process for regulated professionals with substance use disorders or other professional practice issues as designated by the boards or Director.

* * *

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 129 is amended to read:

§ 129. POWERS OF BOARDS OR OF DIRECTOR IN ADVISOR PROFESSIONS; DISCIPLINE ~~PROCESS~~ AND RESCISSION PROCESSES

* * *

(j) Hearings involving denials or rescissions of licensure or disciplinary matters concerning persons in professions that have advisor appointees shall be heard by an administrative law officer appointed by the Secretary of State.

* * *

Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 129c is added to read:

§ 129c. RESCISSIONS

(a) The Director may rescind a license issued by the Office of Professional Regulation under the following circumstances:

(1) it is discovered that an administrative mistake has occurred resulting in the erroneous issuance of the license;

(2) payment is not remitted for any licensing fee pursuant to section 125 of this title; and

(3) if, within 30 days after the State either completes a withdrawal from any licensure compact described in Title 26 or other time in which a licensure compact described in Title 26 becomes no longer binding on the State, the licensee does not apply for a license to practice in the State.

(b) The rescission process shall be as set forth in this subsection.

(1) License active for less than 30 days.

(A) If the individual's license has been active for less than 30 days, the Director shall initially rescind the license for any reason enumerated in subsection (a) of this section.

(B) The individual shall be immediately notified of the rescission, the reason for rescission, and procedural rights.

(C) The individual shall be provided an opportunity to have the rescission reviewed by either an administrative law officer or the relevant board. In any review, the Director shall have the burden of proving the rescission is merited. Any review shall commence not later than 20 days after the rescission, and a decision in any review shall be rendered within 30 days following the rescission. The decision shall either reverse the Director's rescission, in which case the license shall be immediately reinstated, or affirm the Director's rescission and be deemed a final decision of the administrative law officer or board.

(D) In the event of an administrative law officer or board affirming the Director's rescission, the individual shall be provided notice and the ability to appeal the Director's rescission in accordance with section 130a of this title; however, the individual shall have the burden of proving the rescission is not merited.

(2) License active for 30 days or more.

(A) If the individual's license has been active for 30 days or more, and the Director determines there is a reason for rescission as enumerated in subsection (a) of this section, the Director shall provide notice to the individual that, after 30 days from issuing the notice, the Director intends to rescind the individual's license. The notice shall also include the reason for rescission and the individual's procedural rights.

(B) The individual shall be provided an opportunity to have a hearing to determine the merits of a rescission. The individual shall have 30 days from when the Director's notice was issued to indicate if the individual elects to have a hearing. In the event the individual either elects not to have a hearing or declines to answer within the allotted 30 days, Director shall rescind the individual's license and the individual shall be foreclosed from appealing the decision pursuant to subdivision (D) of this subdivision (b)(2). In the event the individual elects to have a hearing, any rescission shall be stayed until a hearing decision is rendered.

(C) Any hearing shall be held in accordance with section 129 of this title and the resulting decision shall either affirm or reverse the Director's rescission of the individual license.

(D) In the event of a hearing decision finding that the Director's rescission of the individual's license is merited, the individual shall be provided notice and the ability to appeal the Director's rescission in accordance with section 130a of this title; however, the individual shall have the burden of proving the rescission is not merited.

(c) A rescission of a license shall not be recorded as an adverse action taken against the individual or any other misconduct or unprofessional conduct for purposes of the individual's other currently held licenses or future licensure applications.

(d) Upon becoming aware of the State either withdrawing from any licensure compact described in Title 26 or when a licensure compact described in Title 26 becomes no longer binding on the State, the Office of Professional Regulation shall notify as soon as practicable all affected licensees practicing in the State. An individual's license may not be rescinded if the Office fails to provide the notice.

Sec. 4. 3 V.S.A. § 128 is amended to read:

§ 128. DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE

(a)(1) Any hospital, clinic, community mental health center, or other health care institution in which a licensee performs professional services shall report to the Office, along with supporting information and evidence, any

disciplinary action taken by it or its staff that limits or conditions the licensee's privilege to practice or leads to suspension or expulsion from the institution.

* * *

(3) This section shall ~~not~~ apply to cases of resignation, separation from service, or changes in privileges that are ~~unrelated~~ related to:

(A) a disciplinary or adverse action;

(B) an adverse action report to the National Practitioner Data Bank;

(C) an unexpected adverse outcome in the care or treatment of a patient;

(D) misconduct or allegations of misconduct;

(E) the initiation or process of an action to limit, condition, or suspend a licensee's privilege to practice in an institution;

(F) an action to expel the licensee from an institution; or

(G) any other action that could lead to an outcome described in subdivisions (A) through (F) of this subdivision (3).

* * *

Sec. 5. 3 V.S.A. § 129a is amended to read:

§ 129a. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) In addition to any other provision of law, the following conduct by a licensee constitutes unprofessional conduct. When that conduct is by an applicant or person who later becomes an applicant, it may constitute grounds for denial of a license or other disciplinary action. Any one of the following items or any combination of items, whether the conduct at issue was committed within or outside the State, shall constitute unprofessional conduct:

(1) Fraudulent or deceptive procurement or use of a license or attempted fraudulent or deceptive procurement or use of a license by making or causing to be made a false, fraudulent, or forged statement or representation.

* * *

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section or any other law to the contrary, a licensee may, pursuant to rules adopted by the Director, enter into a program serving as an alternative to the disciplinary process for regulated professionals with substance use disorders or other professional practice issues as designated by the boards or Director.

Sec. 6. 3 V.S.A. § 129b is amended to read:

§ 129b. BOARD MEMBER AND ADVISOR APPOINTMENTS

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary relating to terms of office and appointments for members of boards attached to the Office of Professional Regulation, all board members appointed by the Governor shall be the age of majority, appointed for staggered five-year terms, and ~~shall~~ serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Appointments under this section shall not be subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor may remove any member of a board as provided in section 2004 of this title. Vacancies created other than by expiration of a term shall be filled in the same manner that the initial appointment was made for the unexpired portion of the term. Terms shall begin on January 1 of the year of appointment and run through December 31 of the last year of the term. The Governor may request nominations from any source but shall not be bound to select board members from among the persons nominated. As provided in section 2004 of this title, board members shall hold office and serve until a successor has been appointed.

* * *

Sec. 7. 3 V.S.A. § 137 is amended to read:

§ 137. UNIFORM PROCESS FOR FOREIGN CREDENTIAL VERIFICATION

* * *

(d) The provisions relating to ~~preliminary~~ license denials set forth in subsection 129(e) of this subchapter shall apply to a license application that is ~~preliminarily~~ denied for nonequivalence under this section.

* * * Accountants * * *

Sec. 8. 26 V.S.A. § 13 is amended to read:

§ 13. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(11) "Principal place of business" means the office location designated by the licensee for the purposes of ~~substantial equivalency~~ mobility and reciprocity.

* * *

Sec. 9. 26 V.S.A. § 71a is amended to read:

§ 71a. LICENSE BY EXAMINATION

(a) A license as a "certified public accountant" shall be granted by the Board to any person:

(1) who is of good character;

(2) who completes any one of the following requirements for education and experience:

(A) a post-baccalaureate degree from a college or university recognized by the Board with a concentration in accounting or an equivalent and one year of experience in public accounting, meeting the requirements prescribed by Board rule;

(B) 150 or more semester hours of college credit at a college or university recognized by the Board, including a baccalaureate degree and a minimum of 42 semester hours of accounting, auditing, and related subjects as the Board determines to be appropriate, and one year of experience in public accounting, meeting the requirements prescribed by Board rule ~~or other experience or employment that the Board in its discretion considers substantially equivalent~~; ~~and~~ or

(C) a baccalaureate degree from a college or university recognized by the Board with a concentration in accounting or an equivalent and two years of experience in public accounting, meeting the requirements prescribed by Board rule; and

(3) who has passed the examination required under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The Board shall administer an examination using a nationally recognized uniform certified public accountants' examination and advisory grading service.

(c) An applicant who has not yet completed a baccalaureate degree may sit for the exam upon the completion of 120 semester hours at an institution recognized by the Board, including a minimum of 30 semester hours of accounting, auditing, and related subjects as the Board determines to be appropriate.

Sec. 10. 26 V.S.A. § 74c is amended to read:

§ 74c. ~~SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCY~~ MOBILITY

(a) An individual whose principal place of business is not in this State shall ~~be presumed to have qualifications substantially equivalent to this State's~~

~~requirements and shall~~ have the privileges of licensure of this State, without the need to obtain a license under section 72b of this title, if the individual:

(1) holds a valid license as a certified public accountant from ~~a~~ any state ~~the Board determines has licensure requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements of the AICPA/NASBA Uniform Accountancy Act~~; ~~or~~ and

(2) ~~holds a valid license as a certified public accountant from any state, and the individual obtains verification from the NASBA National Qualification Appraisal Service that the individual's qualifications are substantially equivalent to the licensure requirements of the AICPA/NASBA Uniform Accountancy Act. An individual who passed the uniform CPA examination and holds a valid license issued by any state prior to January 1, 2012 shall be exempt from the education requirements of subdivision 5(c)(2) of the Uniform Accountancy Act for purposes of this section.~~ has passed the uniform CPA examination and has met any one of the following requirements for education and experience in accordance with rules adopted by the Board:

(A) a post-baccalaureate degree from a college or university with a concentration in accounting or an equivalent and one year of experience in public accounting;

(B) 150 or more semester hours of college credit at a college or university, including a baccalaureate degree and a minimum of 42 semester hours of accounting, auditing, and related subjects, and one year of experience in public accounting; or

(C) a baccalaureate degree from a college or university with a concentration in accounting or an equivalent and two years of experience in public accounting.

* * *

(g) An individual whose principal place of business is not in this State, who holds a valid active license as a certified public accountant from any state, and who, as of December 31, 2024, had practice privileges in this State under this section shall continue to have all the privileges of licensees in this State without the need to obtain a license under section 71a of this title, pursuant to all other requirements of this chapter.

* * * Dentists * * *

Sec. 11. 26 V.S.A. § 603 is added to read:

§ 603. LIMITED ACADEMIC DENTIST LICENSE

(a) Scope of dentist practice. A limited academic dentist license is a credential that authorizes the practice of dentistry only:

(1) at a teaching facility operated by a dental program that is accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation to grant doctoral degrees in dental medicine or dental surgery; and

(2) under the general supervision of a dentist who is fully licensed in good standing.

(b) Eligibility. To qualify for a limited academic dentist license, an applicant must:

(1) be appointed as a full-time dental instructor of an accredited dental program;

(2) hold a dental degree sufficient for licensure by examination under section 601 of this title; and

(3) complete any courses in emergency office procedures or cardiopulmonary resuscitation required for a licensed dentist.

(c) Specialties unavailable. A limited academic dentist license holder who is not otherwise licensed as a dentist in this State is ineligible for sedation and general anesthesia specialties.

(d) Notification of termination required. A limited academic dentist license holder must notify the Office within 48 hours after any termination as a full-time dental instructor. Continued practice after termination constitutes unauthorized practice under 3 V.S.A. § 127.

(e) Renewal. For license renewal, a limited academic dentist license holder must:

(1) meet all renewal requirements set forth in subsections 661(a)–(d) for a licensed dentist, except no fee is required; and

(2) continue to be a full-time dental instructor of an accredited dental program.

Sec. 12. 26 V.S.A. § 662 is amended to read:

§ 662. FEES

(a) Applicants and persons regulated under this chapter shall pay the following fees:

(1) Application

(A) Dentist $285.00

(B) Limited academic dentist $0.00

(C) Dental therapist $215.00

~~(C)~~(D) Dental hygienist $200.00

~~(D)~~(E) Dental assistant $80.00

(2) Biennial renewal

(A) Dentist $655.00

(B) Limited academic dentist $0.00

(C) Dental therapist $310.00

~~(C)~~(D) Dental hygienist $245.00

~~(D)~~(E) Dental assistant $105.00

(b) The licensing fee for a dentist, dental therapist, or dental hygienist or the registration fee for a dental assistant who is otherwise eligible for licensure or registration and whose practice in this State will be limited to providing pro bono services at a free or reduced-fee clinic or similar setting approved by the Board shall be waived.

* * * Funeral Services * * *

Sec. 13. 26 V.S.A. § 1211 is amended to read:

§ 1211. DEFINITIONS

(a) As used in this chapter, unless a contrary meaning is required by the context:

* * *

(6) "Practice of funeral service" means arranging, directing, or providing for the care, preparation, or disposition of dead human bodies for a fee or other compensation. This includes:

(A) meeting with the public to select a method of disposition or funeral observance and merchandise;

(B) entering into contracts, either at-need or pre-need, for the provision of dispositions, funeral observances, and merchandise;

(C) arranging, directing, or performing the removal or transportation of a dead human body;

(D) securing or filing certificates, permits, forms, or other documents;

(E) supervising or arranging a funeral, memorial, viewing, or graveside observance; ~~and~~

(F) holding oneself out to be a licensed funeral director by using the words or terms "funeral director," "mortician," "undertaker," or any other words, terms, title, or picture that, when considered in context, would imply that such person is engaged in the practice of funeral service or is a licensed funeral director; and

(G) providing for the disposition of dead human bodies by cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, or natural organic reduction.

* * *

(c) Notwithstanding this section, owners of a disposition facility and their personnel may engage in the listed activities in subdivision (a)(6) of this section only to the extent such functions are necessary to the performance of their duties. Specifically, personnel at a disposition facility may:

(1) provide for the disposition of dead human bodies by cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, or natural organic reduction and meet with the public to arrange ~~and provide~~ for the disposition;

(2) enter into contracts, without taking prepaid funds, for the ~~provision of dispositions~~ disposition by cremation, alkaline hydrolysis, or natural organic reduction;

(3) arrange, direct, or perform the removal or transportation of a dead human body, provided that removals are performed by licensed removal personnel; and

(4) secure and file certificates, permits, forms, or other documents.

* * * Nursing; Advanced Practice Registered Nurses * * *

Sec. 14. 26 V.S.A. § 1614 is amended to read:

§ 1614. APRN RENEWAL

An APRN license renewal application shall include:

(1) documentation of ~~completion of the APRN practice requirement;~~

~~(2) possession of~~ a current certification by a national APRN specialty certifying organization; and

~~(3)~~(2) a current collaborative provider agreement if required for transition to practice.

* * * Psychologists * * *

Sec. 15. TEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGIST LICENSURE EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENTATION

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of 26 V.S.A. chapter 55, 3 V.S.A. chapter 25, or any contrary rule, the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation may develop and implement temporary policies permitting supplementation of a master's or doctoral degree, pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 3011a(a)(2), for the licensing of psychologists.

(b) Policies adopted pursuant to this section shall be:

(1) developed in consultation with the Board of Psychological Examiners and the Vermont Psychological Association;

(2) consistent with 26 V.S.A. chapter 57; and

(3) made available to the public.

(c) The Director's powers granted pursuant to this section and any temporary policies adopted pursuant to this section shall be in effect only until either July 1, 2029, or when the Board of Psychological Examiners adopts permanent rules regarding supplementation of a master's or doctoral degree, pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 3011a(a)(2), for the licensing of psychologists, whichever occurs first.

(d) On or before July 1, 2029, the Board shall adopt updated rules regarding the supplementation of a master's or doctoral degree, pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 3011a(a)(2), for the licensing of psychologists.

* * * Midwives * * *

Sec. 16. 26 V.S.A. chapter 85 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 85. MIDWIVES

* * *

§ 4185. DIRECTOR; DUTIES

* * *

~~(c)(1) The Director shall appoint an advisory committee to study and report to the Director and to the Commissioner of Health on matters relating to midwifery, including recommendations if necessary for revisions to the administrative rules. The Committee shall focus on improving communication and collaboration among birth providers.~~

~~(2) The Committee shall be composed of at least six members: three midwives licensed under this chapter, two physicians licensed by the Board of Medical Practice or the Board of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, and one advanced practice registered nurse midwife licensed by the Board of Nursing.~~

~~(3) Members of the Committee shall be entitled to compensation at the rate provided in 32 V.S.A. § 1010.~~

* * *

§ 4187. RENEWALS

(a)(1) ~~Biennially, the Director shall forward a renewal form to each licensed midwife~~ A license shall be renewed every two years upon the filing of a renewal application, payment of the required fee, and proof of compliance with renewal requirements. The completed ~~form~~ renewal application shall include verification that during the preceding two years, the licensed midwife has:

(A) completed 20 hours of continuing education approved by the Director by rule;

(B) participated in at least four peer reviews;

(C) ~~submitted individual practice data;~~

~~(D)~~ maintained current cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification; ~~and~~

~~(E)~~(D) filed a timely certificate of birth for each birth at which ~~he or she~~ the licensee was the attending midwife, as required by law; and

(E) maintained current certification by the North American Registry of Midwives.

(2) Upon receipt of the completed form and of the renewal fee, the Director shall issue a renewal license to applicants who qualify under this section.

(b) The Director shall renew a license that has lapsed for a period of three years or less upon receipt of the renewal fee and late renewal penalty, the reinstatement fee, and an application for renewal that shows that the person still meets the eligibility requirements of this chapter and that all the requirements for renewal, including continuing education, have been satisfied. A person shall not be required to pay renewal fees for lapsed years.

(c) The Director may adopt rules to assure that an applicant whose license has lapsed for a period greater than three years may be eligible for licensing,

but such rules shall not establish requirements greater than the eligibility requirements of this chapter.

(d) The Director may, as a condition of license renewal, require that licensed midwives submit individual practice data to the Office or its designee. The required data may include information such as client demographics, complications of labor and delivery, breastfeeding and postpartum health, and such other information as the Director may require.

* * * Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants; Sunrise Report * * *

Sec. 17. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; SUNRISE REVIEW REPORT; SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST ASSISTANTS

On or before November 15, 2026, the Office of Professional Regulation, in consultation with interested stakeholders, shall submit to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations a written report, in accordance with 26 V.S.A. chapter 57, on the advised nature of regulation and suggested level of credentialling for speech-language pathologist assistants practicing in the State.

* * * Massage Therapists, Bodyworkers, and Touch Professionals * * *

Sec. 18. 26 V.S.A. chapter 105 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 105. MASSAGE THERAPISTS, BODYWORKERS, AND TOUCH PROFESSIONALS

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

§ 5401. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(2)~~(A)~~ "Establishment" means any ~~place of business that~~ location:

~~(i)~~(A) ~~offers the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork or where the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork is conducted on the premises of the business~~ where the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork is regularly engaged in; or

~~(ii)~~(B) that represents itself to the public by any title or description of services incorporating the words "touch professional," "bodywork," "massage," "massage therapy," "massage therapist," "massage practitioner," "massagist," "masseur," "masseuse," "energy work," or other words identified by the Director in rules.

~~(B) A "place of business" includes any office, clinic, facility, salon, spa, or other location not otherwise exempted under section 5404 of this chapter where a person or persons engage in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork.~~

* * *

§ 5403. UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE

Any individual who owns or operates an unregistered establishment or who engages in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork without a registration from the Office shall be subject to the penalties provided in 3 V.S.A. § 127 ~~(unauthorized practice)~~.

§ 5404. EXEMPTIONS

* * *

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit a massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional from engaging in or offering the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork at a location that is not ~~an~~ a registered establishment~~,~~ if:

(1) ~~so long as prior to engaging in that practice at that location,~~ the ~~registrant~~ massage therapist and ~~his or her~~ the client agree in advance that the location is acceptable; and

(2) the location is not an establishment as defined in subdivision 5401(2) of this title.

(d) Establishment registration is not required for a location where the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork is provided solely by:

(1) persons exempt from registration; or

(2) a single massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional.

* * *

§ 5411. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

* * *

(b) Rules.

(1) The Director shall adopt rules requiring a massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional to disclose to each new client before the first treatment the following information:

(A) the professional qualifications and experience of the registrant;

(B) actions that constitute unprofessional conduct;

(C) the method for filing a complaint against a registrant; and

(D) the method for making a consumer inquiry with the Office.

(2) The Director shall adopt rules regarding the display of:

(A) the registrations of employed or contracted massage therapists, bodyworkers, or touch professionals at an establishment; and

(B) information regarding unprofessional conduct and filing complaints with the Office.

(3) The rules described in this subsection shall include provisions relating to the manner in which the information disclosed shall be distributed or displayed and a requirement that a massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional and ~~his or her~~ the client sign an acknowledgement that the information was disclosed.

(4) The Director may adopt other rules as necessary to perform ~~his or her~~ the Director's duties under this chapter.

(5) The Director may adopt rules limiting the applicability of this chapter as applied to establishments operated within private homes.

* * *

§ 5423. ESTABLISHMENTS; DESIGNEE AND INSPECTION

(a) An establishment shall ~~designate a massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional to be responsible for ensuring the establishment complies with the requirements of this chapter and the rules adopted by the Director~~ register with the Office of Professional Regulation. The operation of an establishment without registration shall constitute unauthorized practice under 3 V.S.A. § 127.

(b) An establishment is responsible for ensuring its lawful operation, regardless of whether the establishment's owner is on-site or has personal knowledge of its operations. The Office may prosecute an establishment for unprofessional conduct or unauthorized practice occurring at the establishment.

(c) The Director may require that an application for establishment registration include:

(1) the management and ownership of the business;

(2) the name, location, and licensing history of any past or present massage establishment under the same management or ownership;

(3) the location and ownership of the establishment's premises;

(4) proof of business registration with the Secretary of State; and

(5) other information required by the Director in rule.

(d) The Director may deny an establishment registration of a location where unprofessional conduct, as defined in subdivision 5427(2) or (3) of this title, has previously occurred, even if under different ownership or management. A denial on this basis shall follow the same procedures as a denial for unprofessional conduct under 3 V.S.A. § 129.

(e) A person authorized by the Director may enter any establishment for the purpose of inspection ~~when a complaint has been filed with the Office regarding the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork at that establishment~~. The Director may require an establishment to undergo inspection prior to registration. A fee shall not be charged for any inspection under this subsection.

* * *

§ 5426. DISPLAY OF REGISTRATION

~~A massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional shall conspicuously display his or her registration in any establishment where the registrant is engaged in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork~~ An establishment must conspicuously display the registrations of:

(1) the establishment; and

(2) any massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional engaged in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork in the establishment.

§ 5427. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Unprofessional conduct means the conduct set forth in 3 V.S.A. § 129a and the following:

(1) engaging in activities in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2605 (voyeurism);

(2) engaging ~~in a sexual act~~ with a client in sexual conduct as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 2821:

(A) at an establishment; or

(B) while engaging in, offering to engage in, or purporting to engage in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork;

(3) meeting a client at an establishment for the purpose of sexual conduct;

~~(3)~~(4) conviction of a crime committed while engaged in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork;

~~(4)~~(5) performing massage or bodywork that the massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional knows or has reason to know has not been authorized by a client or the client's legal representative; ~~and~~

~~(5)~~(6) engaging in conduct of a character likely to deceive, defraud, or harm the public; and

(7) engaging in the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork at an unregistered establishment.

Sec. 19. 13 V.S.A. § 2638 is amended to read:

§ 2638. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Human trafficking" has the same meaning as in section 2651 of this title.

(2) "Prostitution" has the same meaning as in section 2631 of this title.

(b) A person who, in good faith and in a timely manner, reports to law enforcement that the person is a victim of or a witness to a crime that arose from the person's involvement in prostitution or human trafficking shall not be cited, arrested, or prosecuted for a violation of the following offenses:

(1) section 2632 of this title (prostitution);

(2) section 2601a of this title (prohibited conduct);

(3) 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a)(1)–(3) (cannabis possession);

(4) 18 V.S.A. § 4231(a)(1) and (2) (cocaine possession);

(5) 18 V.S.A. § 4232(a)(1) and (2) (LSD possession);

(6) 18 V.S.A. § 4233(a)(1) and (2) (heroin possession);

(7) 18 V.S.A. § 4234(a)(1) and (2) (depressant, stimulant, and narcotic drugs possession);

(8) 18 V.S.A. § 4234a(a)(1) and (2) (methamphetamine possession);

(9) 18 V.S.A. § 4235(b)(1) (hallucinogenic drugs possession); ~~and~~

(10) 18 V.S.A. § 4235a(a)(1) (Ecstasy possession); and

(11) 26 V.S.A. § 5403 (unauthorized practice of massage or bodywork).

* * *

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 20. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section, Secs. 1–10 (general powers, accountants), Secs. 13–17 (funeral services, advanced practice registered nurses, psychologists, midwives, speech-language pathologist assistants report) shall take effect on passage.

(b) Secs. 11 and 12 (dentists) shall take effect on September 1, 2026.

(c) Sec. 18 (massage therapists, bodyworkers, and touch professionals) and Sec. 19 (13 V.S.A. § 2638) shall take effect on December 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 Government Operations and Military Affairs be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 18, 26 V.S.A. chapter 105, preceding section 5426 (display of registration), by adding the following:

§ 5425. FEES

(a) Applicants and persons regulated under this chapter shall pay those fees set forth in 3 V.S.A. § 125(b).

(b) An establishment where the practice of massage or the practice of bodywork is provided by only two massage therapists, bodyworkers, or touch professionals shall pay reduced fees set forth in 3 V.S.A. § 125(b).

Second: By adding a new section to be Sec. 18a to read as follows:

Sec. 18a. 3 V.S.A. § 125 is amended to read:

§ 125. FEES

* * *

(b) Unless otherwise provided by law, the following fees shall apply to all professions regulated by the Director in consultation with advisor appointees under Title 26:

(1) Application for registration, $100.00, except application for:

* * *

(D) Massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional, $90.00.

(E) Massage establishment qualifying for a reduced fee under 26 V.S.A. § 5425(b), $50.00.

(2) Application for licensure or certification, $115.00, except application for:

* * *

(M) ~~Massage therapist, bodyworker, or touch professional, $90.00.~~ [Repealed.]

* * *

(4) Biennial renewal, $275.00, except biennial renewal for:

* * *

(Y) Massage establishment qualifying for a reduced fee under 26 V.S.A. § 5425(b), $75.00.

(5) Limited temporary license or work permit, $60.00.

(6) Radiologic evaluation, $125.00.

(7) Annual renewal for appraisal management company registration, $345.00.

(8) Real estate appraiser trainee, $115.00.

(9) Apprenticeship application, $50.00.

(10) Specialty or endorsement to existing license application, $100.00.

(11) Disciplinary action surcharge, $250.00.

* * *

Third: In Sec. 20, effective dates, subsection (a), preceding "shall take effect on passage" by adding ", 18a (3 V.S.A. § 125)"

(Committee Vote: 9-0-2)

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, when further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 674

An act relating to the creation of the Vermont Sister State Program

Rep. Boutin of Barre City, for the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 2479 is added to read:

§ 2479. VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM

(a) Creation and purpose.

(1) The Vermont Sister State Program is created within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The Agency shall provide support to the Program and to the Sister State Program Committee as required.

(2) The purpose of the Program is to strengthen Vermont's international engagement and to foster mutually beneficial relationships with national and subnational governments abroad, with a goal of promoting cultural exchange, economic development, educational cooperation, and diplomatic collaboration.

(b) Program oversight.

(1) The Sister State Program Committee, composed of the following members, shall oversee the Program:

(A) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee;

(B) a member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(C) a member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(D) the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Council on World Affairs or designee;

(E) the Vermont Adjutant General or designee;

(F) the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vermont Arts Council or designee; and

(G) three members, as follows:

(i) one member with expertise in cultural exchange or in Peace Corps operations, appointed by the Governor;

(ii) one member representing a private institution of higher education, appointed by the Committee on Committees; and

(iii) one member representing a public institution of higher education, appointed by the Speaker.

(2) Members of the Committee shall serve two-year terms, provided that members appointed pursuant to subdivision (1)(G) of this subsection shall

serve initial terms of three years each to establish staggered terms. Members may be reappointed.

(3) The Committee shall elect a chair and vice chair from among its members that shall each serve a two-year term.

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

(c) Meetings.

(1) All meetings shall be called by the Chair, but in the event that the Committee does not have a chair, a meeting may be called by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee.

(2) The Committee shall meet:

(A) at least once quarterly, for the purpose of:

(i) evaluating current Program agreements;

(ii) proposing new Program agreements;

(iii) preparing its annual report; or

(iv) discussing any other matter that the Committee deems relevant to its work; and

(B) to review and score an eligible Program application not later than 30 days after the Committee receives the application from the Agency, pursuant to subdivision (d)(3) of this section.

(d) Program application, review, and approval procedures.

(1) Development of application process. The Agency, in consultation with the Committee, shall develop a process by which an entity can apply and be considered for admission as a partner to the Program. This process shall include the development of:

(A) an official application to be in the Program;

(B) a confidential internal review procedure to be used by the Agency to review Program applicants for sensitive political, legal, ethical, and strategic factors;

(C) minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for the Program;

(D) a fixed-scoring system, including a rubric, to be uniformly applied by the Committee to evaluate all eligible applications; and

(E) a memorandum of understanding template to be used and signed by the State and an approved Program partner.

(2) Agency initial verification.

(A) When a Program application has been received by the Agency pursuant to this section, the Agency shall, before the Committee may meet to review the application:

(i) verify that the application meets the Program's minimum eligibility requirements; and

(ii) conduct a confidential internal review of the applicant.

(B) Not later than 10 days after completion of the Agency's initial verification and review of an application pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (2), the Agency shall send the Committee a copy of the application along with a summary of the Agency's analysis.

(C) The confidential internal review process conducted in subdivision (A)(ii) of this subdivision (2), along with any and all documents reviewed during that process, shall be exempt from public inspection and copying.

(3) Committee review and recommendation.

(A) The Committee, upon receiving an application that has received preliminary approval from the Agency, shall meet to review the application pursuant to subdivision (c)(2)(B) of this section not later than 30 days after receipt of the application from the Agency.

(B) If the Committee recommends that an application reviewed pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3) be approved, the Committee shall submit its recommendation to the Governor along with a copy of the application not later than 30 days after completing its review of the application.

(4) Governor's review.

(A) The Governor shall have the sole authority to issue final approval or disapproval of a Sister State Program application that the Committee recommended be approved. The Governor shall not review or approve of a Program application that the Committee recommended be disapproved. The Governor shall send written notice of the Governor's decision to the Agency not later than 10 days after the Governor's decision.

(B) If the Governor disapproves a Program application, the Governor's notice in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (4) shall include a written explanation of why the Governor did not follow the recommendation of the Committee.

(C) Upon the Agency's receipt of the Governor's decision pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (4), the Agency shall notify the applicant of the Governor's decision not later than 30 days after the Agency receives notice of the Governor's decision.

(D) If the application is approved by the Governor, the Agency shall finalize a memorandum of understanding between the State and the Sister State Program applicant.

(e) Reporting. The Committee shall submit an annual report not later than January 15 of each year to the Governor and to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs that includes the following:

(1) an executive summary of key development and outcomes of the Program;

(2) a description of Committee activities, including a summary of attendance and decisions at its meetings;

(3) updates on the Program, including an evaluation of sister state applications, new partners, significant developments, metrics of success, and challenges;

(4) a description of stakeholder engagement with the Program;

(5) a financial overview, including a summary of funding sources and expenditures; and

(6) an outlook for the Program, which shall include strategic objectives, potential new agreements, and growth opportunities for the next year.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee serving in the member's capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than eight meetings per year.

(2) Other members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings per year.

(3) Payments to members of the Committee authorized under this subsection shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Sec. 2. REPEAL

2025 Acts and Resolves No. 65, Secs. 4 (9 V.S.A. chapter 111B), 5 (initial appointment deadline for Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission), and 6 (repeal; Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission) are repealed.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Stevens of Waterbury, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, in subsection (a), by striking out subdivision (2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (2) to read as follows:

(2) The purpose of the Program is to strengthen Vermont's international engagement and to foster mutually beneficial relationships with national and subnational governments abroad, with a goal of promoting cultural exchange, economic development, and educational cooperation.

Second: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, in subdivision (d)(1), by striking out subdivisions (D) and (E) in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof three new subdivisions to be subdivisions (D), (E), and (F) to read as follows:

(D) a fixed-scoring system, including a rubric, to be uniformly applied by the Committee to evaluate all eligible applications;

(E) a memorandum of understanding template to be used and signed by the State and an approved Program partner that shall include a termination date; and

(F) any other necessary Program parameters, including the length of time for partner agreements to be in effect.

Third: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, in subdivision (d)(3), by striking out subdivision (B) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (B) to read as follows:

(B) If the Committee recommends that an application reviewed pursuant to subdivision (A) of this subdivision (3) be approved, the Committee shall submit its recommendation to the Governor along with a copy of the application not later than 30 days after completing its review of the application. The Committee shall not send to the Governor an application that the Committee does not recommend be approved.

Fourth: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, in subdivision (d)(4)(A), by striking out the following sentence:

The Governor shall not review or approve of a Program application that the Committee recommended be disapproved.

Fifth: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, in subsection (d), by adding a new subdivision to be subdivision (5) to read as follows:

(5) Termination. The Committee shall have the sole authority to terminate an active Sister State Program partnership upon a majority vote of Committee members at a Committee meeting.

Sixth: In Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A. § 2479, by striking out subsection (f) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (f) to read as follows:

(f) Compensation and reimbursement.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee serving in the member's capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than eight meetings per year. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

(2) Other members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings per year. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Seventh: By striking out Sec. 2, repeal, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. chapter 111B is amended to read:

CHAPTER 111B. TRADE COMMISSIONS

§ 4129. VERMONT-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION

(a) The Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission is established within the State Treasurer's office to advance bilateral trade and investment between Vermont and Ireland. The Commission shall consist of ~~seven~~ nine members as follows:

(1) two members, appointed by the Governor;

(2) two members, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) two members, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees; ~~and~~

(4) the State Treasurer or designee;

(5) the Commissioner of Economic Development or designee; and

(6) the President of the University of Vermont or designee.

* * *

(c) The members of the Commission~~, except for the State Treasurer or designee,~~ appointed pursuant to subdivisions (a)(1)–(3) of this section:

(1) shall be appointed for terms of four years each and shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed, except that in order to achieve staggered terms, the two members appointed by the Governor shall serve initial terms of two years each and the two members appointed by the Speaker of the House shall serve initial terms of three years each~~.~~;

(2) ~~Members~~ may be reappointed~~.~~ upon the expiration of the member's term;

(3) ~~A member serves~~ serve at the pleasure of the member's appointing authority~~.~~; and

(4) ~~Not~~ shall consist of not more than two members ~~serving on the Commission may be members~~ of the General Assembly.

* * *

(f) The Commission, in coordination with the State Treasurer's office, shall submit a written report with its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly within one year ~~of~~ following its initial organizational meeting and on or before December 1 of each succeeding year for the activities of the current calendar year. The report shall also include a:

(1) disclosure listing any in-kind contributions received by specific members of the Commission through their work in the Commission in the current calendar year; and

(2) detailed accounting from the State Treasurer's office of the:

(A) administrative expenses that have been paid with funds raised by the Commission, pursuant to subsection (g) of this section; and

(B) funds raised and donations, grants, and bequests received through the Commission including the name, country of residence, and amount donated of each contributor.

(g)(1) The Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission is authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone or with other groups, and accept donations, grants, and bequests from individuals,

corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions, to defray the Commission's administrative expenses ~~and to carry out its purposes as set forth in this chapter~~.

(2) The funds, donations, grants, or bequests received pursuant to ~~this chapter~~ subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be deposited in a bank account and allocated ~~annually~~ by the State Treasurer's office to defray the Commission's administrative expenses ~~and carry out its purposes~~. Any monies so withdrawn shall not be used for any purpose other than the payment of administrative expenses ~~under~~ incurred pursuant to this ~~chapter~~ section and shall be itemized and tracked for reporting purposes by the State Treasurer's office. Interest earned shall remain in the bank account. The State Treasurer shall include the balance of the account in the annual reporting required pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

(3) For purposes of this section, "administrative expenses" does not include any:

(A) expenses related to:

(i) campaign or election activity; or

(ii) food or beverages provided at official Commission meetings; or

(B) other expense that is not specific to the administrative functions of the Commission.

(h) Members of the Commission shall not receive any compensation or be entitled to reimbursement of expenses by the State of Vermont or from the fund managed by the State Treasurer pursuant to subsection (g) of this section for their service on the Commission.

Eighth: By adding a new section to be Sec. 2a to read as follows:

Sec. 2a. REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF THE VERMONT-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION

On or before December 1, 2029, the Vermont-Ireland Trade Commission shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs with the following information:

(1) a summary of the accomplishments of the Commission since its inception;

(2) a detailed analysis as to how the Commission has served its legislative purposes pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 4129(b); and

(3) an accounting on funds raised and details on gifts received pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 4129(g) since the Commission's inception.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 723

An act relating to posting of land

Rep. Satcowitz of Randolph, for the Committee on Environment, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 5201 is amended to read:

§ 5201. NOTICES; POSTING

(a)(1) An owner, or a person having the exclusive right to take game upon land or the waters thereon, who desires to protect ~~his or her~~ the owner's land or private pond or propagation farm over which ~~he or she~~ the owner has exclusive control may maintain notices stating that:

(A) the ~~shooting~~ hunting, trapping, or taking of game or wild animals is prohibited or is by permission only;

(B) fishing or the taking of fish is prohibited or is by permission only; or

(C) fishing, hunting, trapping, or taking of game or wild animals is prohibited or is by permission only.

(2) "Permission only signs" authorized under this section shall contain the owner's name and a method by which to contact the property owner or a person authorized to provide permission to hunt, fish, or trap on the property.

(b) ~~Notices prohibiting the taking of game~~ Notice signs shall be erected upon or near the boundaries of lands to be affected with notices at each corner and not over 400 feet apart along the boundaries thereof. ~~Legible~~ Notice signs ~~must~~ shall be maintained at all times ~~and shall be dated each year~~. ~~These~~ Notice signs shall be of a standard size and design as the Commissioner shall specify.

(c) The owner or person posting the lands shall record this posting annually in the town clerk's office of the town in which the land is located. The posting shall be valid and enforceable for 365 days after the date the posting is recorded. The recording form shall be furnished by the Commissioner and shall be filled out in triplicate, one copy to be retained by the town clerk, one copy to the Commissioner, and one copy to be retained by the person having the right to post the lands. The forms shall contain the information as to the

approximate number of acres posted, location in town, date of posting, and signature of person so posting the lands. The town clerk shall file the record, and it shall be open to public inspection. The town clerk shall retain a fee of $5.00 for this recording.

(d) Land posted and recorded as provided in ~~subsection (b) of~~ this section shall be enclosed land for the purposes herein. Accidental or unintentional deviations from the requirements of subdivisions (a) and (b) of this section shall still be deemed effective to prohibit or permit by permission only hunting, fishing, trapping, or taking of game or wild animals if the notice signs would lead a reasonable person to believe that hunting, fishing, trapping, or taking of game or wild animals is prohibited on the land. Property owners with actual notice that their notice signs deviate from the requirements of this section shall take reasonable steps to ensure their notice signs comply with this section.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

H. 762

An act relating to the County and Regional Governance Study Committee

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:

Sec. 1. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 118, Sec. 1 is amended to read:

Sec. 1. COUNTY AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

(a) Legislative intent and ~~Creation~~ creation of Committee.

(1) Legislative intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly that existing direct coordination and communication between the State and Vermont municipalities should be retained or strengthened. County or regional governance should enhance the work of local and State governments and not become a procedural barrier between the State and municipalities.

(2) Creation of Committee. There is created the County and Regional Governance Study Committee to address local government capacity challenges, enhance and optimize public safety, regional collaboration and planning, efficient, equitable, and transparent public resource allocation, and effective regional public services for individuals and municipalities.

(b) Membership. The Committee shall be, to the extent possible, composed of members from geographically diverse regions of the State. The Committee shall elect its chair from among its members. The Committee shall be composed of the following members:

(1) three current members of the House of Representatives, who shall not all be from the same political party~~, the first of whom shall be the Chair of the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,~~ and ~~the second and third of whom~~ shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(2) three current members of the Senate, who shall not all be from the same political party~~, the first of whom shall be the Chair of the Senate Committee on Government Operations,~~ and ~~the second and third of whom~~ shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees.

(c) Powers and duties.

(1) The Committee shall study and make recommendations to the General Assembly on how to improve the structure and organization of county and regional government, including:

(A) ~~enhancement~~ coordination and optimization of ~~public safety services~~ regional government provided by State, regional, and local agencies, including for public safety, emergency management, and public health purposes;

(B) enhancement of regional collaboration and planning and implementation;

(C) coordination, increased transparency, potential efficiencies, and service improvements of nongovernmental agencies providing regional public services, including but not limited to designated mental health agencies and public transit providers;

(D) efficient, equitable, and transparent allocation of public resources;

~~(D)~~(E) promotion of effective regional public services for individuals and municipalities;

~~(E)~~(F) ~~clarification of~~ review the role and ~~oversight~~ authority of elected county officials and their departments;

~~(F)~~(G) reduction of duplicated or conflicting public services and promotion of opportunities for intermunicipal collaboration;

~~(G)~~(H) balance of availability and cost of services across municipalities in each county;

~~(H)~~(I) review of mechanisms of county and regional government structures in other states; ~~and~~

~~(I)~~(J) impact of climate change and resiliency on the maintenance of public infrastructure, delivery of regional government services, and coordination of regional emergency planning; and

(K) the role of Department of Public Safety and Vermont Emergency Management in responding to all hazards events.

* * *

(e) Report. On or before ~~November 1, 2025~~ December 15, 2026, the Committee shall report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

* * *

(4) The Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, ~~2026~~ 2028.

* * *

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

H. 841

An act relating to miscellaneous animal welfare procedures

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. 20 V.S.A. chapter 190 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 190. DIVISION OF ANIMAL WELFARE

§ 3201. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Animal" has the same meaning as in 13 V.S.A. § 351, provided that the animals or activities regulated under this chapter shall not apply to:

(A) activities regulated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Part 4;

(B) scientific research governed by accepted procedural standards subject to review by an institutional animal care and use committee;

(C) livestock and poultry husbandry practices for the raising, management, and use of domestic animals;

(D) veterinary medical or surgical procedures; and

(E) the killing of an animal as authorized pursuant to sections 3809 and 3545 of this title.

(2) "Director" means the Director of Animal Welfare and includes the Director's designee.

(3) "Division" means the Division of Animal Welfare.

(4) "Domestic animal" has the same meaning as in 6 V.S.A. § 1151(2).

§ 3202. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIVISION OF ANIMAL WELFARE; POWERS AND DUTIES

(a)(1) The Division of Animal Welfare is established within the Department of Public Safety. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall appoint a Director of Animal Welfare who shall be in immediate charge of the Division. The Director shall be qualified by education and professional experience to perform the duties of the position. The Director shall have at least the following minimum qualifications:

(A) experience in interpreting or knowledge of animal welfare laws and rules;

(B) knowledge of animal welfare stakeholders in the State and regionally; and

(C) knowledge of the causes and characteristics of animal welfare and animal cruelty issues.

(2) The Director position shall be a classified service position in the Department of Public Safety.

(b)(1) The Director shall develop a comprehensive plan for the development, implementation, and enforcement of the animal welfare laws of the State. In developing the comprehensive plan, the Director shall first review the 2023 Report on Unification of Animal Welfare and Related Public

Safety Function and similar reports and proposed legislation. The plan shall include:

(A) how the Director shall oversee investigation and response to animal cruelty complaints in the State in order to provide the best services to Vermont's animals statewide;

(B) how the Director shall coordinate administration and enforcement of animal welfare laws in the State in a collaborative manner with those law enforcement officers and municipalities that retain authority to enforce animal cruelty requirements in the State;

(C) how the State should address the extent and scope of any deficiencies in Vermont's system of investigating and responding to animal cruelty complaints;

(D) how the State should ensure that investigations of animal cruelty complaints are conducted according to systematic and documented written standard operating procedures and checklists;

(E) a proposal to house and care for animals seized in response to complaints of animal cruelty, including how to pay for the care of seized animals;

(F) a proposal for funding animal welfare administration and enforcement in the State, including potential sources of public and private funding; and

(G) recommended amendments to animal welfare statutes or rules, including standards of care for animals housed or imported by animal shelters or rescue organizations.

(2) The Director of Animal Welfare shall submit the comprehensive plan required by this subsection and any revisions thereto to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations not later than eight months after the date of hiring of the Director.

(c) The Director of Animal Welfare shall consult with other State agencies that respond to animal welfare complaints or with animal welfare responsibilities to estimate the number and type of animal welfare complaints received by State agencies and to quantify the amount of time State agency staff expend in fulfilling animal welfare responsibilities, including the costs to agencies of fulfilling the responsibilities.

(d) The Director of Animal Welfare shall be the sole employee of the Division of Animal Welfare until the comprehensive plan required under

subdivision (b)(2) of this section is completed and the General Assembly enacts legislation, as needed, to implement the comprehensive plan.

(e)(1) The Division of Animal Welfare may adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement the provisions of this chapter.

(2) The Division of Animal Welfare shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement a certified rabies vaccinator program pursuant to the following standards:

(A) The Director shall consult with Vermont veterinarians for purposes of developing the rules and administering the program.

(B) The program shall permit licensed veterinarians to train and authorize veterinary and animal shelter staff to administer rabies vaccinations under the veterinarian's direct or indirect supervision.

(C) The program shall authorize the Director of Animal Welfare, in consultation with Vermont veterinarians, to establish a program to train humane officers as certified rabies vaccinators.

(D) The program shall include training in properly storing and administering rabies vaccines, issuing rabies certificates, record-keeping requirements, and providing information to owners and keepers of animals to be vaccinated.

(f)(1) The Director of Animal Welfare shall require that animal shelters, rescue organizations, dog breeders, and any other person importing domestic pets into the State of Vermont for adoption, sale, other transfer, or breeding shall register with the Division of Animal Welfare. The registration required by this subsection shall include information on animal intake, production, inventory, and disposition. No fee shall be charged for the registration.

(2) If a person fails to register as required by subdivision (1) of this subsection the Director shall:

(A) for a first violation, issue the person a warning; and

(B) for a second or subsequent violation, issue a fine and a cease and desist order to the same extent that the Secretary and municipal legislative bodies have authority to issue such orders under chapter 193 of this title.

(3) This subsection shall not apply to an individual importing a domestic pet for personal purposes.

§ 3203. ANIMAL WELFARE FUND

(a) The Animal Welfare Fund is established within the Department of Public Safety to fund the expenses incurred by the Division of Animal Welfare

in implementing the requirements of this chapter. The Director of Animal Welfare shall administer the Fund.

(b) The Fund shall consist of:

(1) 67 percent of the revenue collected from the surcharge assessed under subsection 3581(f) of this title; ~~and~~

(2) appropriations made by the General Assembly;

(3) any donations, grants, or gifts made to the Fund; and

(4) revenue from the Animal Welfare Fund checkoff under 32 V.S.A. § 5862g.

(c) All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned by the Fund shall remain in the Fund.

Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 3552 is added to read:

§ 3552. SEXUAL STERILIZATION OF STRAY CATS WITH NO KNOWN OWNER

An animal shelter or rescue organization that, pursuant to a contract with a municipal legislative body, impounds a stray cat with no known owner may have the cat sexually sterilized not sooner than one day after the impound.

Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 3581 is amended to read:

§ 3581. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

(a)(1) A person who is the owner of a dog or wolf-hybrid more than six months old shall annually on or before April 1 cause it to be registered, numbered, described, and licensed on a form approved by the Secretary for one year from that day in the office of the clerk of the municipality in which the dog or wolf-hybrid is kept. A person who owns a working farm dog and who intends to use that dog on a farm pursuant to the exemptions in section 3549 of this title shall cause the working farm dog to be registered as a working farm dog and shall, in addition to all other fees required by this section, pay $5.00 for a working farm dog license. The owner of a dog or wolf-hybrid shall cause it to wear a collar and attach a license tag issued by the municipal clerk to the collar. Dog or wolf-hybrid owners shall pay for the license $4.00 for each neutered dog or wolf-hybrid, and $8.00 for each unneutered dog or wolf-hybrid. If the license fee for any dog or wolf-hybrid is not paid on or before April 1, its owner or keeper may thereafter procure a license for that license year by paying a fee of 50 percent in excess of that otherwise required.

(2) A person shall not own more than 35 dogs. When calculating the number of dogs permitted under this subsection, dogs less than four months old and dogs that have been sexually sterilized shall not be counted.

(b) Before a person shall be entitled to obtain a license for a neutered dog or wolf-hybrid, ~~he or she~~ the person shall exhibit to the clerk a certificate signed by a duly licensed veterinarian showing that the dog or wolf-hybrid has been sexually sterilized.

* * *

(d)(1) Before obtaining a license for a dog or wolf-hybrid ~~six months of age or older~~, a person shall deliver to the municipal clerk a certificate or a certified copy thereof issued by a duly licensed veterinarian, stating that the dog or wolf-hybrid has received a current preexposure rabies vaccination with a vaccine approved by the Secretary, and the person shall certify that the dog or wolf-hybrid described in the certificate or copy is the dog or wolf-hybrid to be licensed. The municipal clerk shall keep the certificates or copies thereof on file. The Secretary shall prescribe the size and format of rabies certificates. The owner of any such dog or wolf-hybrid shall maintain a copy of the rabies vaccination form and provide it to State or municipal officials upon request.

(2) Before obtaining a license for a wolf-hybrid, a person shall deliver to the municipal clerk a certificate or a certified copy thereof, issued by a duly licensed veterinarian, stating that the wolf-hybrid has been sexually sterilized.

* * *

Sec. 4. 20 V.S.A. § 3583 is amended to read:

§ 3583. ~~DOMESTIC PETS AND WOLF-HYBRIDS KEPT FOR BREEDING PURPOSES~~

~~(a) The owner or keeper of domestic pets and wolf-hybrids kept for breeding purposes may take out annually, on or before April 1, a special license for the domestic pets or wolf-hybrids, provided:~~

~~(1) He or she keeps the domestic pets or wolf-hybrids within a proper enclosure. A proper enclosure is a locked fence or structure of sufficient height and sufficient depth into the ground to prevent the entry of young children and to prevent the animal from escaping. A proper enclosure also provides humane shelter for the animal.~~

~~(2) The domestic pets or wolf-hybrids at all times have a current vaccination against rabies.~~

~~(3) When the number of domestic pets or wolf-hybrids so kept does not exceed ten, the fee shall be $30.00 and for each additional domestic pet or wolf-hybrid so kept, an annual fee of $3.00.~~

~~(b) Domestic pets and wolf-hybrids covered by the special license pursuant to this section shall be exempt from other license fees, and all licenses under this section are exempt from the surcharge enacted under subsection (c) of section 3581 of this title.~~

~~(c) If the license fee is not paid by April 1, the owner or keeper may thereafter procure a license for that license year by paying a fee of 50 percent in excess of that otherwise required. These license fees are in addition to any fees required for the operation of a kennel under subchapter 3 of this chapter.~~ [Repealed.]

Sec. 5. 20 V.S.A. § 3682 is amended to read:

§ 3682. INSPECTION OF PREMISES

(a) The pet dealer's premises may be inspected upon the issuance of the pet dealer permit or at any time the pet dealer permit is in effect. Inspections may be conducted by a municipal animal control officer, a law enforcement officer as that term is defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4(11), or a representative of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The inspector may, at ~~his or her~~ the inspector's discretion and with the approval of the municipality, be accompanied by a veterinarian or an officer or agent of a humane society incorporated in Vermont. This section shall not create an obligation on the part of any municipal legislative body to conduct inspections.

* * *

Sec. 6. 20 V.S.A. § 3814 is amended to read:

§ 3814. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds:

(1) The supply of dogs, cats, and wolf-hybrids in Vermont is a major concern.

(2) There are insufficient resources in this State to care for or provide homes for these animals.

(3) Many of these animals are ultimately euthanized or become victims of accidents, starvation, or disease.

(4) Pet owners who have limited economic resources have great difficulty affording the cost of professional ~~spaying and neutering~~ sexual sterilization services.

Sec. 7. 20 V.S.A. § 3815 is amended to read:

§ 3815. DOG, CAT, AND WOLF-HYBRID ~~SPAYING AND NEUTERING~~ SEXUAL STERILIZATION PROGRAM

(a) The Agency of Human Services shall administer a dog, cat, and wolf-hybrid ~~spaying and neutering~~ sexual sterilization program providing reduced-cost ~~spaying and neutering~~ sexual sterilization services and presurgical immunization for dogs, cats, and wolf-hybrids owned or cared for by individuals with low income. The Agency ~~shall~~ may implement the program through an agreement with a qualified organization consistent with the applicable administrative rules.

(b) The program shall reimburse veterinarians who voluntarily consent to ~~spay or neuter~~ sexually sterilize dogs, cats, and wolf-hybrids under the auspices of the program. The reimbursement shall be less any co-payment by the owner of a dog, cat, or wolf-hybrid for the cost of each ~~spaying or neutering~~ sexual sterilization procedure.

* * *

Sec. 8. 20 V.S.A. § 3816 is amended to read:

§ 3816. ANIMAL ~~SPAYING AND NEUTERING~~ SEXUAL STERILIZATION FUND; CREATION

(a) There is created, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, in the Agency of Human Services the Dog, Cat, and Wolf-Hybrid ~~Spaying and Neutering~~ Sexual Sterilization Special Fund to finance the costs of the dog, cat, and wolf-hybrid ~~spaying and neutering~~ sexual sterilization program established in section 3815 of this title.

(b) Revenue for the Fund shall be derived from:

(1) the surcharge payment paid to a municipality pursuant to subdivision 3581(c)(1) of this title;

(2) gifts from private donors; and

(3) any appropriation that the General Assembly makes to the Fund.

(c) Interest earned on the Fund shall be retained in the Fund.

(d) The Agency of Human Services shall use the revenue in the Fund created in subsection (a) of this section for administering the dog, cat, and wolf-hybrid ~~spaying and neutering~~ sexual sterilization program.

Sec. 9. 20 V.S.A. § 3903 is amended to read:

§ 3903. ANIMAL SHELTERS AND RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

(a) [Repealed.]

(b) Animal intake. An animal shelter or rescue organization as defined by section 3901 of this title shall ~~make every effort to~~ collect the following information, if available, about an animal it accepts and report the information to the Director of Animal Welfare: the name and address of the person transferring the animal and, if known, the name of the animal; its vaccination history; and other information concerning the background, temperament, and health of the animal.

* * *

Sec. 10. 20 V.S.A. § 3907 is amended to read:

§ 3907. DENIAL OR REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION OR LICENSE

Issuance of a certificate of registration may be denied to any animal shelter, rescue organization, pet dealer, or fair, or a license may be denied to any public auction or pet shop or any certificate or license previously granted under this chapter may be revoked by the Secretary if, after public hearing, it is determined that the housing facilities or primary enclosures are inadequate for the purposes of this chapter or if the feeding, watering, sanitizing, and housing practices of the animal shelter, rescue organization, fair, public auction, or pet shop, as the case may be, are not consistent with this chapter or with rules adopted under this chapter.

Sec. 11. 20 V.S.A. § 3911 is amended to read:

§ 3911. PENALTIES

(a) Any person licensed or registered under this chapter who fails to provide animals under the person's care or custody with adequate food or adequate water, as defined in section 3901 of this title, or who fails to house animals in the person's care or custody in a manner that is adequate for their welfare, shall be fined not more than $500.00.

(b) Any person who operates a fair or public auction or who transacts business as a pet shop, animal shelter, pet dealer, or rescue organization without being duly licensed or without possessing a proper certificate of registration, as the case may be, as required under this chapter, or who violates any provision of this chapter or of any rule lawfully adopted under its authority for which no other penalty is provided shall be fined not more than $300.00 or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both.

(c) The Secretary may assess administrative penalties under 6 V.S.A. §§ 15–17, not to exceed $1,000.00, for violations of this chapter.

Sec. 12. 20 V.S.A. § 3915 is amended to read:

§ 3915. HEALTH CERTIFICATE FOR TRANSPORT INTO STATE

(a) A dog, cat, ferret, or wolf-hybrid imported into the State for sale, resale, exchange, or donation shall be accompanied by an official health certificate or similar certificate of inspection for the dog, cat, ferret, or wolf-hybrid issued by a veterinarian licensed in the state or country of origin. The certificate shall certify that:

(1) the dog, cat, ferret, or wolf-hybrid has been inspected and is free of visible signs of infections or contagious or communicable disease; ~~and~~

(2) if the dog, cat, ferret, or wolf-hybrid is more than three months of age, the dog, cat, ferret, or wolf-hybrid has a current rabies vaccination or is a specific breed for which a rabies vaccination is not age-appropriate; and

(3) if the wolf-hybrid is more than four months of age, the wolf-hybrid has been sexually sterilized.

(b) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets may adopt rules regarding the issuance and contents of any certificate required under subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 13. 20 V.S.A. § 3916 is added to read:

§ 3916. INSURANCE

Pet dealers, animal shelters, rescue organizations, and keepers of animals for breeding purposes shall, as a condition of their licenses or certificates of registration, be required to obtain and maintain a commercially reasonable level of general liability insurance.

Sec. 14. 20 V.S.A. § 3917 is added to read:

§ 3917. ADVERTISING

(a) All advertisements of domestic pets for adoption or sale in Vermont shall contain:

(1) the current location of the domestic pet;

(2) the municipality and state in which the domestic pet was located at the time the advertisement was placed;

(3) the advertiser's rescue or shelter license number, if any; and

(4) the advertiser's license number, if any.

(b) For purposes of advertising on social media accounts, subsection (a) of this section shall only apply to advertisers located in Vermont or transferring or offering to transfer domestic pets in the State of Vermont.

Sec. 15. 32 V.S.A. § 5862g is added to read:

§ 5862g. VERMONT ANIMAL WELFARE FUND CHECKOFF

(a) Returns filed by individuals shall include, on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Taxes, an opportunity for the taxpayer to designate funds to the Animal Welfare Fund established by 20 V.S.A. § 3203.

(b) Amounts designated under subsection (a) of this section shall be deducted from refunds due to, or an overpayment made by, the designating taxpayer. All amounts so designated and deducted shall be deposited in an account by the Commissioner of Taxes for payment to the Animal Welfare Fund. If at any time after the payment of amounts so designated to the account it is determined that the taxpayer was not entitled to all or any part of the amount so designated, the Commissioner may assess, and the account shall then pay to the Commissioner, the amount received, together with interest at the rate prescribed by section 3108 of this title, from the date the payment was made until the date of repayment.

(c) The Commissioner of Taxes shall explain to taxpayers the purpose of the account and how to contribute to it. The Commissioner shall provide notice in the instructions for the State individual income tax return as to how to obtain a copy of the annual income and expense report of the Animal Welfare Fund.

(d) If amounts paid with respect to a return are insufficient to cover both the amount owed on the return under this chapter and the amount designated as a contribution to the Animal Welfare Fund, the payment shall first be applied to the amount owed on the return under this chapter, and the balance, if any, shall be deposited in the Fund.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Commissioner to collect any amount designated as a contribution to the Animal Welfare Fund.

Sec. 16. REPORT

On or before December 15, 2026, the Director of Animal welfare shall report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations on the next steps necessary for the creation of a comprehensive animal welfare program in Vermont. The Director shall consult with stakeholders and registrants for purposes of preparing the report required by this section.

Sec. 17. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)

Rep. Masland of Thetford, 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. 1, 20 V.S.A. chapter 190, by striking out section 3203 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

§ 3203. ANIMAL WELFARE FUND

(a) The Animal Welfare Fund is established within the Department of Public Safety to fund the expenses incurred by the Division of Animal Welfare in implementing the requirements of this chapter. The Director of Animal Welfare shall administer the Fund.

(b) The Fund shall consist of:

(1) 67 percent of the revenue collected from the surcharge assessed under subsection 3581(f) of this title; ~~and~~

(2) ~~appropriations~~ transfers made by the General Assembly; and

(3) any donations, grants, or gifts made to the Fund.

(c) All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned by the Fund shall remain in the Fund.

Second: By striking out Sec. 15 in its entirety.

and by renumbering the remaining sections to be numerically correct.

(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)

H. 887

An act relating to crime victim status under the Fair Employment Practices Act

Rep. Krasnow of South Burlington, for the Committee on General and Housing, recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 21 V.S.A. § 495d is amended to read:

§ 495d. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

* * *

(15) "Crime victim" means any of the following:

(A) a person who has obtained a relief from abuse order issued under 15 V.S.A. § 1103;

(B) a person who has obtained an order against stalking or sexual assault issued under 12 V.S.A. chapter 178;

(C) a person who has obtained an order against abuse of a vulnerable adult issued under 33 V.S.A. chapter 69; ~~or~~

(D)(i) a victim as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301, provided that the victim is identified as a crime victim in an affidavit filed by a law enforcement official with a prosecuting attorney of competent state or federal jurisdiction; and

(ii) shall include the victim's child, foster child, parent, spouse, stepchild or ward of the victim who lives with the victim, or a parent of the victim's spouse, provided that the individual is not identified in the affidavit as the defendant; or

(E) a person who is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who has supporting documentation from any one of the following sources:

(i) a court or law enforcement or other government agency;

(ii) a domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking assistance program;

(iii) a legal, clerical, medical, or other professional from whom the person has received counseling or other assistance concerning domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

(iv) a self-attestation by the person describing the circumstances supporting the person's status as a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking for which no further corroboration shall be required unless otherwise mandated by law.

* * *

(18) "Domestic violence" has the same meaning as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151 and includes the definition of "abuse" in 15 V.S.A. § 1101.

(19) "Sexual assault" has the same meaning as in 12 V.S.A. § 5131.

(20) "Stalking" has the same meaning as in 12 V.S.A. § 5131.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(Committee Vote: 8-1-2)

Favorable

H. 542

An act relating to terminating testing of schools in Vermont for polychlorinated biphenyls

Rep. Conlon of Cornwall, for the Committee on Education, recommends that the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 9-2-0)

Rep. Kascenska of Burke, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill ought to pass.

(Committee Vote: 10-1-0)

CONSENT CALENDAR FOR NOTICE

Concurrent Resolutions for Adoption Under Joint Rules 16a - 16d

The following concurrent resolutions have been introduced for approval by the Senate and House and will be adopted automatically unless a Senator or Representative requests floor consideration in that member's chamber prior to adjournment of the next legislative day. Requests for floor consideration in either chamber should be communicated to the Senate Secretary's Office or the House Clerk's Office, as applicable. For text of resolutions, see Addendum to House Calendar and Senate Calendar.

H.C.R. 217

House concurrent resolution congratulating McNeil & Reedy of Rutland City on 70 years as a superb men's clothing retailer

H.C.R. 218

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2026 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont

H.C.R. 219

House concurrent resolution designating March 2026 as Athletic Trainers' Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 220

House concurrent resolution welcoming the March 17, 2026, namesake visit of the officers and crew of the U.S. submarine VERMONT (USS VERMONT (SSN 792)) to the State House and designating April 18, 2026, as USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 221

House concurrent resolution recognizing March 25, 2026, as National Medal of Honor Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 222

House concurrent resolution honoring the Vermont nonprofit sector and the pivotal leadership and support it receives from Common Good Vermont

H.C.R. 223

House concurrent resolution honoring former Public Service Board Chair and East Montpelier Town Moderator Michael Dworkin

H.C.R. 224

House concurrent resolution congratulating the athletes representing Vermont at the 2025 National Senior Games and designating March 18, 2026, as Vermont Senior Games Day at the State House

H.C.R. 225

House concurrent resolution honoring East Haven Selectboard Chair Kirwin Flanders for his extraordinary municipal public service career

H.C.R. 226

House concurrent resolution remembering, with great sadness, the historic and interconnected 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters that struck the Tohoku region of Japan

S.C.R. 7

Senate concurrent resolution designating October 5, 2026, as Italian American Day in Vermont.

S.C.R. 8

Senate concurrent resolution recognizing March 2026 as International Long COVID Awareness Month in Vermont.

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 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 #3273: $29,303,666.00 to the Public Service Department, Office of Economic Opportunity from the U.S. Department of Energy. The Home Energy Rebate Program funds will be used to weatherize low-income homes. The first-year distribution is $14,133.00 with subsequent yearly awards through May 31, 2029, for a total of $29,303,666.00. *[Received March 9, 2026]*