

# House Calendar

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Friday, March 13, 2026

67th DAY OF THE ADJOURNED SESSION

House Convenes at 9:30 A.M.

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**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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**ACTION CALENDAR**

**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 [Repealed.]~~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.

**New Business**

**Third Reading**

**H. 753**

An act relating to utility service disconnections and ratepayer protections

**H. 849**

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

**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~~ (2) 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

\* \* \*

~~(e)(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 credentialing 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 and when further amended as recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means.

**(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

**Amendment to be offered by Reps. Black of Essex, Berbeco of Winooski, Birong of Vergennes, Cina of Burlington, Critchlow of Colchester, Goldman of Rockingham, Lueders of Lincoln, and McFaun of Barre Town to the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs:**

That the report of the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs be amended by adding a reader assistance heading and a new section to be Sec. 14a to read as follows:

\* \* \* Pharmacists \* \* \*

Sec. 14a. 26 V.S.A. § 2023 is amended to read:

§ 2023. CLINICAL PHARMACY; PRESCRIBING AND TESTING

(a) In accordance with applicable rules adopted by the Board, a pharmacist may engage in the practice of clinical pharmacy, including prescribing as set forth in subsection (b) of this section, provided that a pharmacist shall not:

\* \* \*

(3) initiate antibiotic therapy, except pursuant to a collaborative practice agreement or state protocol.

(b) A pharmacist may prescribe in the following contexts:

\* \* \*

(2) State protocol.

(A) A pharmacist may prescribe, order, or administer in a manner consistent with valid State protocols that are approved by the Commissioner of Health after consultation with the Director of Professional Regulation and the Board and the ability for public comment:

\* \* \*

(x) emergency prescribing of albuterol or glucagon while contemporaneously contacting emergency services;

~~(xi) tests for COVID-19 for individuals by entities holding a Certificate of Waiver pursuant to the Clinical Laboratory Amendments of 1988 (42 U.S.C. § 263a). If a test for COVID-19, prescribed, ordered, or administered by a pharmacist in accordance with this section and the resulting State protocol incidentally detects influenza or human respiratory syncytial virus, a pharmacist shall advise the individual tested that the results indicate influenza or human respiratory syncytial virus infection and recommend to the individual to seek further care from an appropriate health care provider;~~

~~(xii) tests for SARS-CoV for asymptomatic individuals or related serology for individuals by entities holding a Certificate of Waiver pursuant to the Clinical Laboratory Amendments of 1988 (42 U.S.C. § 263a); and~~

~~(xiii)(xi) emergency contraception; and~~

(xii) tests waived under 42 C.F.R. § 493.15 for COVID-19, influenza, and streptococcal pharyngitis and subsequent drug treatment.

\* \* \*

## 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)**

**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)**

**NOTICE CALENDAR**

**Committee Bill for Second Reading**

**H. 927**

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2026 legislative session

**(Rep. Coffin of Cavendish** will speak for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.)

**Favorable with Amendment**

**H. 385**

An act relating to remedies and protections for victims of coerced debt

**Rep. Graning of Jericho**, 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. 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 13 is added to read:

Subchapter 13. Coerced Debt

§ 2495a. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Adequate documentation” means at least one of the following:

(A) a copy of a report filed with a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency that identifies the coerced debt and the circumstances under which the coerced debt was incurred, the filing of which subjects the person filing the report to criminal penalties for filing false information if, in fact, the information in the report is false;

(B) a court order finding that the debt was coerced; or

(C) a sworn certification from a qualified third-party professional regarding the debtor’s claim of coerced debt.

(2) “Coerced debt” means all or a portion of secured or unsecured debt solely or jointly in a debtor’s name that:

(A) was incurred as a result of domestic abuse, human trafficking, or the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult and the perpetrator’s:

(i) use of the debtor’s personal information without the debtor’s knowledge, authorization, or consent; or

(ii) use or threat of force, intimidation, undue influence, fraud, deception, coercion, or other similar means against the debtor;

(B) is not a mortgage loan as defined in 8 V.S.A. § 2101(15); and

(C) is not a commercial loan as defined in 8 V.S.A. § 2101(2).

(3) “Creditor” means a person, or the person’s successor, assignee, or agent, claiming to own or have the right to collect a debt owed by the debtor.

(4) “Debtor” means a person who:

(A) owes coerced debt; and

(B) is a survivor of domestic abuse or human trafficking; or

(C) is a vulnerable adult who is a survivor of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as those terms are defined under 33 V.S.A. chapter 69.

(5) “Domestic abuse” has the same meaning as abuse in 15 V.S.A. § 1101(1).

(6) “Future abuse” means abuse as defined in 15 V.S.A. § 1101(1), except that the abuse need not occur between family or household members.

(7) “Good faith” has the same meaning as provided in 9A V.S.A. § 1—201(b)(20).

(8) “Human trafficking” has the same meaning as in 13 V.S.A. § 2652 or 2653.

(9) “Perpetrator of coerced debt” or “perpetrator” means an individual who causes or is alleged to have caused coerced debt to be incurred by another.

(10) “Qualified third-party professional” means any of the following individuals who do not have a conflict of interest:

(A) an officer of the court or law enforcement personnel;

(B) a court-appointed special advocate;

(C) a crisis worker as defined in 12 V.S.A. § 1614(a)(1) employed at a program that assists survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or abuse of children, and who has relevant training or expertise;

(D) a licensed attorney; or

(E) a health care provider as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9402(7).

(11)(A) “Statement of coerced debt” means a sworn written statement by a debtor provided by mail to a creditor that includes the following information:

(i) identification of the debt, or portion of the debt, alleged to be coerced debt;

(ii) if available, a description of the circumstances under which the coerced debt was allegedly incurred;

(iii) a statement by the debtor disclosing that the debtor did not willingly authorize the use of the debtor’s name or personal information to incur such debt;

(iv) any information known by the debtor, including account information or credit card information and, if applicable, the name of any other individual in whose name such debt was jointly incurred;

(v) the identity of and contact information for the perpetrator, if known, unless the debtor signs a sworn statement that disclosing such information is likely to result in future abuse to the debtor or to a member of the debtor’s immediate family;

(vi) the debtor’s preferred language and contact method and information such as a telephone number, email address, physical address, or safe address for either the debtor or a third party whom the debtor designates to receive information about the coerced debt, which shall be specified by the debtor; and

(vii) any other documents the debtor deems appropriate to support the statement.

(B) As used in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (11), “mail” means certified mail, certificate of mailing, or any other similar first-class mail tracking method used or approved by the U.S. Postal Service, including Intelligent Mail barcode Tracing (IMb Tracing). The term also includes any electronic or digital transmission that provides a verifiable date, timestamp, or tracking capability.

(C) A statement of coerced debt shall be notarized or shall include the following language inserted above the debtor’s signature and date:

“I declare that the above statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if the above statement is false, I will be subject to the penalty of perjury or to other sanctions in the discretion of the court.”

(12) “Sworn certification” means a written statement by a qualified third-party professional in the following form:

CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFIED THIRD-PARTY PROFESSIONAL

I, ..... (name of qualified third-party professional), do hereby certify under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. I am a qualified third-party professional as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2495a(10) who has had in-person contact or face-to-face contact through an electronic medium with ..... (name of debtor).

2. Based on my professional interactions with the debtor and information presented to me in my professional capacity, I have a reasonable basis to believe ..... (name of debtor) is a survivor of domestic abuse or human trafficking or is a vulnerable adult who is a survivor of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and has incurred all or a portion of debt that is coerced debt.

3. Based on my professional interactions with the debtor and on information presented to me, I have reason to believe that the circumstances under which the coerced debt was incurred are as follows:

4. The following debts or portions of the debts have been identified to me as coerced:

I attest that the foregoing is true and correct.

(Printed name of qualified third-party professional)

(Signature of qualified third-party professional)

(Business address and business telephone)

(Date)

§ 2495b. COERCED DEBT PROHIBITED

A person shall not cause another person to incur coerced debt. Substantiated coerced debt is not enforceable against the debtor.

§ 2495c. CREDITOR'S CONDUCT PURSUANT TO A DEBTOR'S

STATEMENT OF COERCED DEBT

(a) Within 10 business days following receipt of a debtor's statement of coerced debt and adequate documentation, a creditor shall:

(1) cease all collection activities and refrain from selling, assigning, or otherwise transferring for consideration such debt;

(2) notify the debtor it has ceased all collection activities pending further review of the claim; and

(3) notify any credit reporting agency to which it furnished adverse information about such debt that the debtor disputes the accuracy of the adverse information.

(b) If a debtor notifies a creditor that a particular debt being collected, or a portion thereof, is coerced debt, but does not provide all the information required under subsection (a) of this section or provides such notice orally, and if such creditor does not cease such collection activities, then within 10 business days after receipt of the debtor's notice of the coerced debt, the creditor shall inform the debtor that additional written information is required and shall provide the debtor with Model Form A-1, as described in subsection (g) of this section.

(c)(1) Within 30 days following receipt of a debtor's statement of coerced debt and adequate documentation, the creditor shall complete a reasonable investigation of the disputed information, which shall include a review of all information provided by the debtor and any other relevant information available to the creditor and, upon completion of the investigation, make a determination as to the accuracy of the debtor's claim of coerced debt.

(2) The 30-day period described in subdivision (1) of this subsection may be extended for up to an additional 15 days if the creditor receives supplementary information from the debtor during that 30-day period that is relevant to the investigation.

(d) Within five business days after making a determination under subsection (c) of this section, the creditor shall notify the debtor of such determination in writing and shall provide a good faith basis for the determination. The notice shall not include personally identifiable information of another person. If the creditor:

(1) determines the disputed debt is coerced debt, the creditor shall notify the debtor that it is ceasing collection activities and contact any consumer reporting agencies to which it furnished adverse information about the debtor's coerced debt and request that such information be deleted from the debtor's file and credit report; or

(2) determines the available information does not establish that the disputed debt is coerced debt, the creditor may recommence collection activities; however, the creditor is prohibited from selling, assigning, or otherwise transferring such debt.

(e) All communications from the creditor to a debtor under this section shall be made using only the debtor's preferred contact method and, in addition, the creditor shall make reasonable efforts to use the debtor's preferred language as identified in the debtor's statement of coerced debt.

(f) In connection with a statement of coerced debt, the creditor:

(1) shall not disclose the contact information the debtor provides in the statement of coerced debt to any other person, including the perpetrator or joint account holders, without the debtor's express written authorization, unless directed or authorized to do so by court order; and

(2) may request that the debtor provide the identity of and contact information for the perpetrator, if known, unless the debtor signs a sworn statement that disclosing such information is likely to result in abuse to the debtor or to a member of the debtor's immediate family.

(g) Model Form A-1 shall be developed by the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, posted in English and Spanish on a publicly accessible website maintained by the Department of Financial Regulation, and substantially in the following form:

MODEL FORM A-1 FOR CREDITORS TO PROVIDE TO DEBTORS

[Creditor name:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

Website URL where this form can be filled out online]

[Debtor's name]

[Debtor's preferred contact information: debtor may provide a telephone number, email address, physical address, or the address of a third party]

[Debtor's preferred language]

You have given us information about a debt that may have been taken out because someone used your personal information without your permission or because someone intimidated, threatened, forced, or manipulated you into taking out this debt.

For example, an abusive partner could have taken out a credit card or loan in your name without your knowledge or permission or pressured you into taking out credit to buy a car, television, computer, or other item and threatened you with harm if you refused.

Questions: To temporarily or permanently stop collection of this debt, you need to answer the questions below. If you do not know the answer, you can explain why you do not know the answer.

1. Did you sign for or agree to the debt?

2. If you did sign for or agree to the debt, was it because someone threatened you or used intimidation, force, manipulation, theft, or other forms of control to take out the debt in your name? If yes, please describe how it happened.

3. If you did not sign for or agree to the debt, do you know who used your information to take out the debt? If yes, please describe.

4. What is your preferred contact method and contact information? You can provide a telephone number, email address, physical address, safe address, or the contact information of another trusted person you want to receive information for you because you are concerned about your safety.

Supporting Documentation: Please include at least one of the documents below that show that the debt was taken out by someone who threatened you or used intimidation, force, manipulation, theft, or other forms of control to take out the debt in your name. You only need to send one, but you may provide more than one.

1. A copy of a report filed with a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency that identifies the coerced debt and the circumstances under which the coerced debt was incurred, the filing of which subjects the person filing the report to criminal penalties for filing false information if, in fact, the information in the report is false;

2. A court order finding that the debt was coerced; or

3. A sworn certification from a qualified third-party professional you talked with about this debt. The statement should include who the person is, where the person works, the person's contact information, and information you shared with the person about the debt and how it was taken out. The third party may be:

(a) an officer of the court or law enforcement personnel;

(b) a court-appointed special advocate;

(c) a crisis worker as defined in 12 V.S.A. § 1614(a)(1) employed at a program that assists survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or abuse of children, and who has relevant training or expertise;

(d) a licensed attorney; or

(e) a health care provider as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9402(7).

In addition to the required documentation, you may include any other document [such as a divorce decree, restraining order, protection from abuse order or another document] that includes information about the debt and how it was taken out.

We need to receive your answers to the above questions and at least one document supporting your claim before we stop collecting on the debt.

Within 30 days after we receive this information, we will do all of the following:

1. Notify you in writing that we are stopping all attempts to collect the debt from you, pending our review of your claim.

2. Review your claim and make a determination as to whether you should be relieved from liability for the coerced debt.

3. Contact the consumer reporting agencies to which we gave information about you and the coerced debt and request that they remove the information from your file and credit report. Alternatively, we also have the right to challenge your claim of coerced debt in court, subject to legal protections for victims of coerced debt.

Your statement of coerced debt must be notarized or certified as true and accurate by you under penalty of perjury.

If you have questions, please contact us at: [creditor's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address]. If you prefer to communicate with us by email, please confirm with us by telephone our correct email address for submitting information about the debt so we can ensure a timely response.

For more information, see 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 13.

(h) With respect to coerced debt secured by tangible personal property, nothing in this subchapter shall affect a creditor's right to enforce a security interest upon default under 9A V.S.A. Article 9 (Uniform Commercial Code - Secured Transactions), including repossession, surrender, or court-ordered seizure of the subject collateral. However, a creditor is prohibited from collecting or seeking to collect any deficiency from the victim of coerced debt.

#### § 2495d. CIVIL LEGAL REMEDIES

(a)(1) A debtor shall not be liable to a creditor for coerced debt.

(2) In any action initiated by a creditor to seek collection of a debt from a debtor, the debtor may establish a prima facie case that the debt is coerced debt by submitting a statement of coerced debt and adequate documentation. If the debtor establishes a prima facie case of coerced debt, the creditor shall bear the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the debt is not coerced debt.

(b) If a court finds a debt is coerced debt:

(1) the court shall vacate any previous default judgment issued against the debtor on the coerced debt;

(2) the creditor shall have a cause of action against the perpetrator; and

(3) the debtor shall have a cause of action against the perpetrator for any payments made or costs incurred by the debtor in connection with the coerced debt.

(c) This section shall not be construed to limit or infringe upon any other rights or remedies available under common law or any other provision of law or rule.

(d) If a debtor signs a sworn statement that disclosing the identity of and contact information for the perpetrator is likely to result in future abuse to the debtor or a member of the debtor's immediate family, the creditor may file a motion requesting a hearing to determine the danger of future abuse to the

debtor or to a member of the debtor's immediate family. The debtor shall bear the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that, if the debtor discloses the identity of and contact information for the perpetrator, the perpetrator poses a danger of future abuse to the debtor or to a member of the debtor's immediate family. If the court finds that the debtor meets this burden, the debtor shall not be required to disclose the information. If the debtor does not meet this burden, the court shall order the debtor to disclose the identity of, and, if known, the contact information of the perpetrator.

(e) In any action involving an alleged coerced debt, upon motion of the debtor, the court may seal court records in accordance with Rule 9 of the Vermont Rules for Public Access to Court Records, redact personally identifiable information, or direct that any deposition or evidentiary hearing be conducted remotely to protect the debtor or a member of the debtor's immediate family from a perpetrator. A debtor seeking a relief from abuse order or an order against stalking or sexual assault shall do so in accordance with 15 V.S.A. chapter 21 or 12 V.S.A. chapter 178, respectively.

(f) The provisions of this subchapter apply in any action brought in a court of this State, notwithstanding a contractual choice-of-law provision.

(g) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to preclude a creditor from seeking recourse under applicable law for a claim of coerced debt that is knowingly and materially false.

(h) A perpetrator shall not be a necessary party to an action between a creditor and a debtor under this subchapter. However, no finding in such an action shall be binding on a person who was not a party to the action.

(i) An action by a debtor against a perpetrator shall be commenced within six years after the date the debtor discovered or reasonably should have discovered the coerced debt or within six years after the coercion or abuse giving rise to the debt ceased, whichever is later.

(j) An action by a creditor against a perpetrator shall be commenced within six years after the date the creditor received the debtor's statement of coerced debt and adequate documentation or received notice of the identity of the perpetrator, whichever is later.

#### § 2495e. VIOLATIONS

(a) A person who knowingly and materially violates this subchapter commits an unfair and deceptive act in trade and commerce in violation of section 2453 of this title.

(b) The Attorney General has the same authority to make rules, conduct civil investigations, enter into assurances of discontinuance, and bring civil actions as provided under subchapter 1 of this chapter.

§ 2495f. CONFIDENTIALITY

(a) Except as otherwise expressly provided in this subchapter or required by law, any financial and personally identifying information related to a claim of coerced debt that is shared by a debtor pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter shall not be disclosed by the recipient without the express consent of the debtor, unless such disclosure is authorized by court order.

(b) Information or material that is subject to privilege protections under federal or state law that is shared by the debtor pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter shall not be disclosed by the recipient, unless the debtor expressly waives the privilege, or the privilege is waived by an express provision of law.

(c) Any record or information produced or acquired by a public body pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter that contains financial or personally identifiable information related to a claim of coerced debt shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from public inspection or copying under Vermont's Public Records Act. This exemption shall not be subject to 1 V.S.A. § 317(e).

Sec. 2. 9 V.S.A. § 2480d is amended to read:

§ 2480d. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF DISPUTED ACCURACY; COERCED DEBT

(a) If the completeness or accuracy of any item of information contained in the consumer's file is disputed by the consumer and the consumer notifies the credit reporting agency directly of such dispute, the agency shall reinvestigate free of charge and record the current status of the disputed information on or before 30 business days after the date the agency receives notice from the consumer.

(b) On or before five business days after the date a credit reporting agency receives notice of a dispute from a consumer in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, the agency shall provide notice of the dispute to all persons who provided any item of information in dispute.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, a credit reporting agency may terminate a reinvestigation of information disputed by a consumer under such subsection if the agency reasonably determines that such dispute by the consumer is frivolous or irrelevant. Upon making such a determination, a

credit reporting agency shall promptly notify the consumer of such determination and the reasons therefor, by mail, or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by telephone. The presence of contradictory information in the consumer's file does not in and of itself constitute reasonable grounds for determining the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant.

(d) In conducting a reinvestigation under subsection (a) of this section, the credit reporting agency shall review and consider all relevant information submitted by the consumer with respect to such disputed information.

(e) If, after a reinvestigation under subsection (a) of this section of any information disputed by a consumer, the information is found to be inaccurate or cannot be verified, the credit reporting agency shall promptly delete such information from the consumer's file. For purposes of this section, "information" ~~shall~~ does not include other information in the same item that is not disputed by the consumer.

(f) If any information is deleted after a reinvestigation under subsection (a) of this section, the information may not be reinserted in the consumer's file after deletion unless the person who furnishes the information reinvestigates and states in writing or by electronic record to the agency that the information is complete and accurate. Such furnisher shall not provide such statement unless the furnisher reasonably believes that the information is complete and accurate. Upon such reinvestigation and statement by the furnisher, the credit reporting agency shall promptly notify the consumer of any reinsertion.

(g) A credit reporting agency shall provide written notice of the results of any reinvestigation under this subsection within five business days ~~of~~ following the completion of the reinvestigation, by mail or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by telephone. This notice shall include:

- (1) a statement that the reinvestigation is complete;
- (2) a statement of the determination of the agency on the completeness or accuracy of the disputed information;
- (3) a credit report that is based upon the consumer's file as that file is revised as a result of the reinvestigation;
- (4) a description of the manner in which the information disputed by the consumer has been altered, changed, deleted, or modified in the consumer's credit report;
- (5) a description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information, including the name, business address, and, if available, the telephone number of any person contacted in connection with such information; and

(6) a notification that the consumer has the right, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1681i, to add a statement to the consumer's file disputing the accuracy or completeness of the information.

(h) If a consumer provides notice to a consumer reporting agency that a debt or any portion of a debt is coerced debt and provides the consumer reporting agency either a court order finding that the debt was coerced or a statement of coerced debt and adequate documentation, as those terms are defined in subchapter 13 of this chapter, the consumer reporting agency shall reinvestigate the debt pursuant to this section. If, after the reinvestigation, the credit reporting agency determines that the debt was coerced, the consumer reporting agency shall remove any reference to the debt, or any portion of the debt determined to be coerced debt, from the consumer's file and credit report.

Sec. 3. 9 V.S.A. § 2480k is amended to read:

#### § 2480k. COMPLAINTS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

A person who has learned or reasonably suspects that ~~his or her~~ the person's personal identifying information has been unlawfully used by another, as described in 13 V.S.A. § ~~2030(a)~~ 2030, may make a complaint about the unlawful use of personal identifying information to the State Police or to the person's local law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agency shall take the complaint and provide the complainant with a copy of the complaint, the name of the law enforcement officer taking the complaint, and an incident number or case number assigned to the complaint by the law enforcement agency. If the suspected crime was committed in a different jurisdiction, the law enforcement agency shall take the complaint and provide the complainant with a copy of the complaint, the name of the law enforcement officer taking the complaint, and an incident number or case number assigned to the complaint by the law enforcement agency and refer the complaint to a law enforcement agency in that different jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. 8 V.S.A. chapter 200, subchapter 8 is added to read:

#### Subchapter 8. Protection from Financial Exploitation

##### § 10801. FINDINGS AND INTENT

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) A covered entity has a duty imposed by law and contract to conduct customer-directed transactions in a timely manner and in accordance with a customer's instructions.

(2) Customers are increasingly being induced to authorize transactions that are not in their best interests.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

(1) ensure customers have ready access to their funds; and

(2) provide a covered entity with the tools and protections to intervene in a customer-directed transaction when the covered entity reasonably believes the transaction presents potential significant risk of harm to the customer.

(c) It is not the intent of the General Assembly to impose a duty on a covered entity to contravene the valid instructions of a customer, and nothing in this chapter creates such a duty.

#### § 10802. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Account” means any deposit, share, custodial, trust, or transaction account, whether held individually or jointly, and whether checking, savings, money market, certificate of deposit, prepaid, or similar, that is established, maintained, or administered by a covered entity, through which the covered entity accepts, holds, disburses, or transfers funds of a customer. The term includes accounts held for the benefit of another, including fiduciary, guardianship, conservatorship, power of attorney, and representative payee accounts, to the extent the account is maintained by a covered entity.

(2) “Associated third party” means:

(A) a parent, spouse, adult child, sibling, or other family member of a customer whom a covered entity reasonably believes is closely associated with the customer;

(B) an individual the customer has authorized to be contacted by the customer’s covered entity;

(C) a co-owner, additional authorized signatory, or beneficiary on a customer’s account or an agent for the customer under a power of attorney; or

(D) a licensed attorney, trustee, conservator, guardian, or other fiduciary selected by a court or governmental agency to manage some or all of the financial affairs of the customer.

(3) “Covered entity” means a bank, trust company, or savings institution as defined in subdivision 11101(32) of this title or a credit union as defined in subdivision 30101(5) of this title. The term also includes the subsidiaries and affiliates that provide financial services for such entity, as well as the directors, officers, employees, or agents of such entity.

(4) “Customer” means any person who establishes, maintains, or is a beneficiary of an account with a covered entity, including any person who

owns, controls, or has a present or contingent legal or beneficial interest in funds held in the account, whether acting directly or through an agency, fiduciary, or representative.

(5) “Financial exploitation” means:

(A) the wrongful or unauthorized taking, withholding, appropriation, transfer, expenditure, or use of a customer’s money, assets, or property; or

(B) any act or omission by a person, including by a fiduciary or other representative of the customer, whether acting under a power of attorney, guardianship, conservatorship, trust, or similar authority, that:

(i) obtains or attempts to obtain control over the customer’s money, assets, or property through deception, intimidation, coercion, or undue influence, for the purpose or effect of depriving the customer of the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of the customer’s money, assets, or property; or

(ii) converts or misuses the customer’s money, assets, or property so as to deprive the customer of the ownership, use, benefit, or possession of the customer’s money, assets, or property.

#### § 10803. PROTECTIVE ACCOUNT ACTION

(a) If a covered entity reasonably believes that a customer is or has been the victim of financial exploitation or attempted financial exploitation, and such belief is based on information either individually observed or received from a State, local, or law enforcement agency, the covered entity may take one or more of the following measures to protect a customer’s account:

(1) delay or refuse one or more transactions with or involving the customer;

(2) delay or refuse to permit the withdrawal or disbursement of funds contained in the customer’s account;

(3) prevent a change in ownership of the customer’s account;

(4) prevent a transfer of funds from the customer’s account to an account owned wholly or partially by another person;

(5) refuse to comply with instructions given to the covered entity by an agent or person acting for or with an agent under a power of attorney signed or purported to have been signed by the customer; or

(6) prevent or change the designation of the beneficiaries to receive any property, benefit, or contract rights for the customer.

(b) A covered entity is not required to take protective action under this section with regard to a customer's account but may use its sole discretion to determine whether taking such action is warranted based on the information available to it at the time.

(c)(1) The authority to delay a transaction under this section expires at the earlier of:

(A) 15 business days after the date on which the covered entity initiated the delay;

(B) when the covered entity is satisfied within its sole discretion that the transaction will not likely result in financial exploitation; or

(C) upon a court order directing the release of funds.

(2) Unless otherwise directed by a court order, the covered entity may extend the duration of the delay for up to an additional 15 days based on a reasonable belief that the financial exploitation or attempted financial exploitation of the customer may continue.

(d) Any refusal, delay, or other protective action taken by a covered entity in good faith under this section to prevent the financial exploitation of a customer shall:

(1) not constitute wrongful dishonor under 9A V.S.A. § 4—402;

(2) constitute reasonable grounds under the federal Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act, 12 U.S.C. § 5001 et seq., the Expedited Funds Availability Act, 12 U.S.C. § 4001 et seq., or related regulations, without imposing a duty to review every deposit or check individually; and

(3) not constitute a violation of 9A V.S.A. Article 4A (fund transfers) or related funds transfer laws, and any delayed payment order is deemed received only when the hold is removed and the covered entity submits the order for processing.

#### § 10804. ASSOCIATED THIRD PARTY; NOTIFICATIONS

(a) A covered entity may notify an associated third party, if any, if it reasonably believes that the financial exploitation or attempted financial exploitation of a customer is occurring or has occurred and such disclosure is in the best interests of the customer.

(b) A covered entity may choose not to notify an associated third party if it reasonably believes that the third party is, was, or may be engaged in the financial exploitation or attempted financial exploitation of the customer.

(c) A covered entity shall limit disclosures to an associated third party to only information necessary to convey its suspicion that the customer was or may be the victim or intended victim of financial exploitation.

(d) Any disclosure by a covered entity pursuant to this section is exempt from the financial privacy protections specified under subchapter 2 of this chapter and, to the extent permitted by federal law, under the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, 15 U.S.C. § 6801 et seq., as those laws may be amended.

#### § 10805. IMMUNITY

When carrying out protective actions authorized by this subchapter, a covered entity shall be protected from civil, criminal, and administrative liability for any act or omission within the scope of its duties and authorized by this subchapter, provided the act or omission is in good faith and does not amount to gross negligence or willful misconduct.

#### § 10806. CONSTRUCTION

This subchapter shall be liberally construed to encourage covered entities to take reasonable protective actions to prevent the financial exploitation of their customers.

### Sec. 5. SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTION HOLDS; DATA COLLECTION; REPORT

The Commissioner of Financial Regulation shall consult, at least annually, with representatives from the Vermont Bankers Association and the Association of Vermont Credit Unions, and any other relevant party determined by the Commissioner, for the purpose of collecting data about the number and dollar amount of suspicious transaction holds implemented by a covered entity pursuant to Sec. 4 of this act and report such information in aggregated form to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance on or before January 15, 2027, and annually thereafter.

### Sec. 6. COERCED DEBT; DATA COLLECTION; REPORT

(a) Beginning on July 1, 2028, the Commissioner of Financial Regulation shall study the utilization of the coerced debt protections and remedies codified in 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 13. In conducting such study, the Commissioner shall consult with representatives from the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Vermont Bankers Association, the Association of Vermont Credit Unions, the Office of the Attorney General, Vermont Legal Aid, and any other person deemed appropriate by the

Commissioner. Among other things, the study shall include an assessment of coerced debt claims with regard to:

- (1) their frequency;
- (2) creditor investigations;
- (3) the presence of fraudulent or illegitimate claims;
- (4) any challenges experienced by debtors or creditors in exercising their rights under the applicable subchapter; and
- (5) any other matters deemed relevant and appropriate by the Commissioner.

(b) On or before November 15, 2029, the Commissioner shall report the Commissioner's findings and recommendations in draft form to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Finance.

#### Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATES; APPLICATION

(a) This section, Sec. 3 (complaints regarding claims of identity theft), Sec. 4 (suspicious banking transactions), and Sec. 5 (report on suspicious banking transactions) shall take effect on passage.

(b) Sec. 1 (coerced debt, creditor conduct, civil legal remedies), Sec. 2 (duty of credit reporting agency to reinvestigate coerced debt), and Sec. 6 (report on coerced debt) shall take effect on July 1, 2028, and shall apply to all outstanding coerced debt, including coerced debt incurred prior to July 1, 2028.

**(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

### H. 519

An act relating to authorizing officers of the Town of Randolph Police Department to enroll in Group C of the Vermont State Employees' Retirement System

**Rep. Hooper of Randolph**, 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. 3 V.S.A. § 455 is amended to read:

#### § 455. DEFINITIONS

- (a) As used in this subchapter:

\* \* \*

(11) “Member” means any employee included in the membership of the Retirement System under section 457 of this title.

\* \* \*

(F) “Group G member” means:

(i) the following employees who are first employed in the positions listed in this subdivision (F)(i) on or after July 1, 2023, or who are members of the System as of June 30, 2022, and make an irrevocable election to prospectively join Group G on or before June 30, 2023, pursuant to the terms set by the Board: facility employees of the Department of Corrections, as Department of Corrections employees who provide direct security and treatment services to offenders under supervision in the community, employees of a facility for justice-involved youth, and employees of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital or its successor in interest, who provide direct patient care; and

(ii) the following employees who are first employed in the positions listed in this subdivision (F)(ii) or first included in the membership of the System on or after January 1, 2025, or who are members of the System as of December 31, 2024, and make an irrevocable election to join Group G on or before December 31, 2024, pursuant to the terms set by the Board:

(I) all sheriffs; and

(II) deputy sheriffs who:

(aa) are employed by county sheriff’s departments that participate in the Vermont Employees’ Retirement System;

(bb) have attained Level II or Level III law enforcement officer certification from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council;

(cc) are required to perform law enforcement duties as the primary function of their employment; and

(dd) are not full-time deputy sheriffs compensated by the State of Vermont whose primary function is transports as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 290(b) and eligible for Group C pursuant to subdivision (9)(B) of this subsection (a); and

(iii) the following employees who are first employed in the positions listed in this subdivision (F)(iii) or first included in the membership of the System on or after January 1, 2027, or who are members of the System as of December 31, 2026, and make an irrevocable election to join Group G on or before December 31, 2026, pursuant to the terms set by the Board and who:

(I) are employed by a municipal employer that participates in the Vermont Employees' Retirement System;

(II) have attained Level II or Level III law enforcement officer certification from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council; and

(III) are required to perform law enforcement duties as the primary function of their employment.

\* \* \*

(13) "Normal retirement date" means:

\* \* \*

(E) with respect to a Group G member:

\* \* \*

(v) for all sheriffs and those deputy sheriffs who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision (11)(F)(ii) of this subsection (a), who were first included in the membership of the System on or after July 1, 2008, who were employed as of December 31, 2024, and who made an irrevocable election to prospectively join Group G on or before January 1, 2025, pursuant to the terms set by the Board, the first day of the calendar month next following the earlier of:

(I) 65 years of age and following completion of five years of creditable service;

(II) attainment of 87 points reflecting a combination of the age of the member and number of years of service; or

(III) 55 years of age and following completion of 20 years of creditable service; ~~or~~

(vi) for all sheriffs and those deputy sheriffs who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision (11)(F)(ii) of this subsection (a), who first become a Group G member after January 1, 2025, the first day of the calendar month next following the earlier of:

(I) attainment of 55 years of age and following completion of 20 years of creditable service; or

(II) 65 years of age and following completion of five years of creditable service;

(vii) for all municipal law enforcement officers who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision (11)(F)(iii) of this subsection (a), who were first included in the membership of the System on or before June 30,

2008, who were employed as of December 31, 2026, and who made an irrevocable election to prospectively join Group G on or before January 1, 2027, pursuant to the terms set by the Board, the first day of the calendar month next following the earlier of:

(I) 62 years of age and following completion of five years of creditable service;

(II) completion of 30 years of creditable service; or

(III) 55 years of age and following completion of 20 years of creditable service;

(viii) for all municipal law enforcement officers who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision (11)(F)(iii) of this subsection (a), who were first included in the membership of the System on or after July 1, 2008, who were employed as of December 31, 2026, and who made an irrevocable election to prospectively join Group G on or before January 1, 2027, pursuant to the terms set by the Board, the first day of the calendar month next following the earlier of:

(I) 65 years of age and following completion of five years of creditable service;

(II) attainment of 87 points reflecting a combination of the age of the member and number of years of service; or

(III) 55 years of age and following completion of 20 years of creditable service; or

(ix) for all municipal law enforcement officers who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision (11)(F)(iii) of this subdivision (a) who first become a Group G member after January 1, 2027, the first day of the calendar month next following the earlier of:

(I) attainment of 55 years of age and following completion of 20 years of creditable service; or

(II) 65 years of age and following completion of five years of creditable service.

\* \* \*

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 459 is amended to read:

§ 459. NORMAL AND EARLY RETIREMENT

\* \* \*

(b) Normal retirement allowance.

\* \* \*

(6)(A) Upon normal retirement pursuant to subdivisions 455(a)(13)(E)(i), (iii), (iv), ~~and (vi)~~, ~~(vii)~~, and ~~(ix)~~ of this chapter, a Group G member shall receive a normal retirement allowance equal to two and one-half of a percent of the member's average final compensation times years of membership service in Group G. The maximum retirement allowance shall be 50 percent of average final compensation.

(B) Upon normal retirement pursuant to subdivisions 455(a)(13)(E)(ii) ~~and (v)~~, and ~~(viii)~~ of this chapter, a Group G member shall receive a normal retirement allowance equal to two and one-half of a percent of the member's average final compensation times years of membership service in Group G. The maximum retirement allowance shall be 60 percent of average final compensation.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 489 is amended to read:

#### § 489. BENEFITS

Persons who become members of the Vermont State Retirement System under this subchapter and on behalf of whom contributions are paid as provided in this subchapter shall be entitled to benefits under the Vermont State Retirement System as though they were employees of the State of Vermont. These employees shall be considered "Group F members" as defined in subdivision 455(a)(11)(E) of this title, except that:

(1) elected municipal employees shall not be subject to mandatory retirement requirements; ~~and~~

(2) sheriffs and those deputy sheriffs who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision 455(a)(11)(F)(ii) of this chapter shall be considered members of Group G; ~~and~~

(3) municipal law enforcement officers who meet the requirements pursuant to subdivision 455(a)(11)(F)(iii) of this chapter shall be considered members of Group G.

#### Sec. 4. ONE-TIME IRREVOCABLE ELECTION FOR MUNICIPAL LAW

##### ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

(a) Subject to the restrictions set forth in subdivision (b)(1) of this section, on or before September 1, 2026, the Office of the State Treasurer, in consultation with participating eligible municipalities, shall establish a list of

positions newly eligible for Group G of the Vermont Employees' Retirement System, which shall be limited to municipal law enforcement officers who:

(1) are employed by a municipal employer that participates in the Vermont Employees' Retirement System;

(2) have a Level II or Level III law enforcement officer certification from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council; and

(3) are required to perform law enforcement duties as the primary function of their employment.

(b)(1) A municipal law enforcement officer who qualifies for Group G Membership pursuant to this act and that has a current Level II or Level III law enforcement officer certification from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council shall have a one-time option to transfer to Group G on or before December 1, 2026. Municipal law enforcement officers without a current Level II or Level III law enforcement officer certification from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council shall not be eligible to transfer to Group G membership. For a municipal law enforcement officer who qualifies for Group G membership who is first employed on or after December 1, 2026, but before January 1, 2027, election to join Group G under this section shall be made as soon as possible but shall be within 30 days following the employee's date of hire.

(2) Election to join the Group G plan under this section shall be irrevocable.

(c) The effective date of participation in a new group plan for those employees covered under this section and who elect to transfer to Group G shall be January 1, 2027. All past service accrued through the date of transfer shall be calculated based upon the plan in which it was accrued, with all provisions and penalties, if applicable, applied.

(d) A municipal employer employing a law enforcement officer participating in the Vermont Employees' Retirement System shall notify the Office of the State Treasurer of changes in a law enforcement officer's eligibility for Group G within 30 days after the change in eligibility pursuant to subdivision 455(11)(F)(iii) of this title.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be read to extend postretirement health or other insurance benefits to Group G municipal law enforcement officers who work for a municipal employer that participates in the Vermont Employees' Retirement System.

## Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

**(Committee Vote: 9-0-2)**

**Rep. Canfield of Fair Haven**, for the Committee on Ways and Means, 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. 556**

An act relating to exceptions to applicability of State minimum wage

**Rep. Bartley of Fairfax**, 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. § 383 is amended to read:

§ 383. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Labor or designee.

(2) “Employee” means any individual employed or permitted to work by an employer except:

\* \* \*

(H) outside salespersons; and

(I) students working during all or any part of the school year or regular vacation periods; and

(J) elected and appointed municipal officers.

\* \* \*

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

**(Committee Vote: 9-0-2)**

**H. 559**

An act relating to the Parole Board

**Rep. Greer of Bennington**, 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. 28 V.S.A. § 403 is amended to read:

§ 403. POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSIONER  
REGARDING PAROLE

The Commissioner is charged with the following powers and responsibilities regarding the administration of parole:

\* \* \*

(6) To provide regular training for the Parole Board, at least annually, in collaboration with the Parole Board Director and the Chair of the Parole Board, on topics related to criminogenic behavior, mental health disorders, substance use treatment, trauma-informed work with victims of crime, and serious crime rehabilitation.

Sec. 2. 28 V.S.A. § 451 is amended to read:

§ 451. CREATION OF BOARD

(a)(1) A Parole Board of ~~five~~ seven members is created. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ~~five regular~~ members and ~~two alternates~~ for terms of three years in such a manner that not more than three terms shall expire annually. Initial terms may be less than three years. Each member ~~and alternate~~ shall hold office until a successor is appointed and qualified. The Governor shall designate the Board's chair.

(2) Upon notification of a vacancy, the Governor shall consult with the Parole Board Director and the Chair of the Parole Board. As far as practicable, the Governor shall appoint as members persons who have knowledge of and experience in ~~correctional treatment, crime prevention, or human relations~~ criminogenic behavior, mental health treatment, substance use disorder, or serious crime rehabilitation, and shall give consideration, as far as practicable, to geographic representation of the State and a balance of different knowledge and experience.

(3) The Board shall select one of its members to serve as Vice Chair of the Board. If the Chair resigns or is otherwise permanently unable to serve on the Board, the Vice Chair shall serve as interim chair until the Governor designates a new chair pursuant to this section. ~~The Chair or the executive director may assign alternates to serve on the Board in the absence of a regular member and such alternates shall have all the powers and authority of a regular member when so assigned.~~

(b) Three members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of a meeting. Notwithstanding 1 V.S.A. § 172, the concurrence of a majority of members present at a Parole Board meeting shall be necessary and sufficient for Board action.

(c) The Chair of the Parole Board shall be entitled to compensation in the amount of \$20,500.00 annually, effective on the first pay period in fiscal year 2006, which shall be in lieu of any per diem otherwise authorized by law. If the Vice Chair assumes the duties of the Chair for a period in excess of 30 consecutive days, the compensation otherwise payable to the Chair during ~~his or her~~ the Chair's absence shall be paid to the Vice Chair.

(d) At least annually, each member of the Parole Board shall attend trainings designated by the Parole Board Director in collaboration with the Chair of the Parole Board.

Sec. 3. 28 V.S.A. § 455 is amended to read:

§ 455. DIRECTOR

(a) The position of Parole Board Director is created. The Director shall be appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Board.

(b) The Director shall serve for a term of four years commencing on March 1 and continuing until ~~his or her~~ a successor is appointed.

(c) The Director shall be exempt from classified State service.

(d) The Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Parole Board and the Department of Human Resources, shall establish the minimum and preferred qualifications, duties, and compensation of the Director.

(e) The Director shall be responsible for the overall function of the Parole Board, ensuring legal compliance, developing and implementing all policies and procedures of the Board, and developing and providing training to the Board, in collaboration with the Commissioner and the Chair of the Parole Board.

Sec. 4. PAROLE BOARD LEGAL COUNSEL PILOT PROJECT

(a) There is created the Parole Board Legal Counsel Pilot Project to provide external legal support for:

(1) annual training to the Board, including on topics related to due process and parole violations; and

(2) legal advice to the Board as needed related to Board hearings.

(b) The Office of the Attorney General shall coordinate with the Board and the Agency of Human Services to identify and contract with external legal support.

(c) As part of the fiscal year 2028 budget development process, the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Corrections shall coordinate with

the Parole Board Director to evaluate the pilot project and determine resources needed for Board external legal support for fiscal year 2028.

(d) On or before November 15, 2026, the Parole Board Director shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions detailing the operation of the pilot project. The report shall include a recommendation regarding legal support for the Board going forward and the resources needed.

#### Sec. 5. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FISCAL YEAR 2026

##### CARRYFORWARD

The \$25,000.00 General Fund appropriated to the Department of Corrections for third-party legal services in 2025 Acts and Resolves No. 27, Sec. B.336 shall carry forward into fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of hiring external legal counsel pursuant to Sec. 4 of this act.

#### Sec. 6. APPROPRIATION

The sum of \$50,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of hiring external legal counsel pursuant to Sec. 4 of this act.

#### Sec. 7. PAROLE BOARD BUDGET SUBMISSION IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND FISCAL YEAR 2029

(a) As part of the fiscal year 2028 and fiscal year 2029 budget development processes, the Parole Board Director shall submit a proposed budget to the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections and Secretary of the Agency of Human Services.

(b) On or before December 15, 2027, the Parole Board Director shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions detailing the budget development process. The report shall include a recommendation regarding the Parole Board submitting an annual budget to the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections.

#### Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

#### **(Committee Vote: 10-0-1)**

**Rep. Squirrell of Underhill**, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Corrections and Institutions.

#### **(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

**H. 757**

An act relating to manufactured homes and limited equity cooperatives

**Rep. Pezzo of Colchester**, 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:

\* \* \* Manufactured Homes \* \* \*

Sec. 1. 9 V.S.A. chapter 72 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 72. MOBILE HOMES

§ 2601. DEFINITIONS

(a) As used in this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise, “mobile home” means:

(1) A mobile home as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6201.

(2) An unmotorized vehicle, other than a travel or recreational trailer, designed to be towed and designed or equipped for use as sleeping, eating, or living quarters.

(b) A mobile home remains a mobile home for purposes of this chapter even though it may be used for advertising, sales, display, or promotion of merchandise or services, or for any other commercial purposes except the transportation of property.

(c) A mobile home that was financed as residential real estate shall be defined as residential real estate.

(d) “Permanently sited” means the mobile home has become affixed to the land. Factors that tend to show a mobile home is permanently sited include one or more of the following:

(1) The mobile home has been set up on blocks or otherwise stabilized so that the wheels do not form a major part of the structural support.

(2) The mobile home has been connected to utilities such as electricity, sewage, water, gas, or oil.

(3) Skirting has been installed around the base of the mobile home.

(4) The wheels or axles have been removed.

(5) The mobile home has been situated in a place that makes removal unlikely.

\* \* \*

§ 2604. REAL ESTATE DEEDS FOR MOBILE HOMES

(a) Any mobile home purchased from a mobile home dealer on or after July 1, 2008, that is financed as residential real estate pursuant to subsection 2603(b) of this title shall be conveyed by a warranty deed ~~drafted in substantially the form provided in subsection (e) of this section.~~

(b) An owner of a mobile home ~~shall that is permanently sited may~~, upon financing or refinancing a mobile home as residential real estate or selling a mobile home that has been financed as residential real estate or will be so financed by the grantee, issue to the grantee either a warranty deed or a quitclaim deed ~~that is drafted in substantially the form provided in subsection (e) or (d) of this section.~~

(c) A warranty deed that is substantially in the form provided in this subsection shall, when duly executed and delivered, have the force and effect of a deed in fee simple to the grantee, the heirs, successors, and assigns, to their own use, with covenants on the part of the grantor, for the grantor, the grantor's heirs, executors, and administrators that, at the time of the delivery of the deed, the grantor was lawfully seized in fee simple of the mobile home; that the mobile home was free from all encumbrances, except as stated; that the grantor had good right to sell and convey the same to the grantee, the grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns; and that the grantor and the grantor's heirs, executors, and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the grantee and the grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons except as stated. ~~No owner of land on which a mobile home is sited shall unreasonably withhold the consent required by this statutory form~~ A warranty deed described in this subsection may take the following form.

Form for Mobile Home Warranty Deed

\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_, ("Grantor"), for consideration paid, grants to \_\_\_\_\_ of Street, Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ ("Grantee"), with warranty covenants, the \_\_\_\_\_ (description of mobile home being conveyed: name of manufacturer, model and serial number, and encumbrances, exceptions, reservations, if any) which mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, at \_\_\_\_\_ (state name of park, if any, and street address), Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of Vermont. The tract or parcel of land upon which the mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, is owned by \_\_\_\_\_ by deed dated and recorded at Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_ in the land records of the Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (wife) (husband) of said Grantor, releases to said Grantee all rights and other interests therein.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

\_\_\_\_\_, owner of the tract or parcel of land upon which the aforesaid mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, hereby consents to the conveyance of the mobile home.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

[ ] Check box if the mobile home has been relocated from one site to another within Vermont, and attach a Relocation Statement in the form provided in section 2606 of this title.

(d) A quitclaim deed ~~that is substantially in the form provided in this subsection~~ shall, when duly executed and delivered, have the force and effect of a deed in fee simple to the grantee, the heirs, successors, and assigns, to their own use subject to encumbrances of record. ~~No owner of land on which the mobile home is sited shall unreasonably withhold consent required by this statutory form~~ A warranty deed described in this subsection may take the following form.

#### Form for Mobile Home Quitclaim Deed

\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ (“Grantor”), for consideration paid, grants to \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Street, Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ (“Grantee”), with quitclaim covenants, the (description of mobile home being conveyed: name of manufacturer, model and serial number, and encumbrances, exceptions, reservations, if any) which mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, at \_\_\_\_\_ (state name of park, if any, and street address), Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of Vermont.

The tract or parcel of land upon which the mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, is owned by \_\_\_\_\_ by deed dated \_\_\_\_\_ and recorded at Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_, in the land records of the Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (wife) (husband) of said Grantor releases to said Grantee all rights and other interest therein.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

\_\_\_\_\_, owner of the parcel of land upon which the aforesaid mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, hereby consents to the conveyance of the mobile home.

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

[ ] Check box if the mobile home has been relocated from one site to another within Vermont, and attach a relocation statement in the form provided in section 2606 of this title.

(e) Nothing in this section shall prevent a mobile home owner from conveying a mobile home by a bill of sale pursuant to section 2602 of this title or financing or refinancing a mobile home pursuant to section 2603 of this title, notwithstanding whether the mobile home was previously conveyed, financed, or refinanced as residential real estate.

#### ~~§ 2605. MOBILE HOME BILL OF SALE CONVERSION PROCESS~~

~~The owner of any mobile home that was initially financed pursuant to a motor vehicle loan, motor vehicle retail installment contract, or another form of chattel mortgage shall, if the mobile home is subsequently financed as residential real estate pursuant to subsection 2603(b) of this title, file a request for purging of the security interest with the clerk of the municipality where the chattel mortgage for the mobile home was last recorded.~~

~~(1) A request to purge the security interest of a mobile home shall include the most recent Vermont uniform bill of sale or certificate of origin, the terminated UCC financing statement or statements, and an executed warranty or quitclaim deed, which shall be drafted substantially in the form provided in section 2604 of this title.~~

~~(2) Upon the filing of a request to purge the security interest of a mobile home with the clerk of the municipality where the chattel mortgage for the mobile home was last recorded, and upon the owner's procuring the consent of the holders of any security interest in the mobile home shown to be unreleased, the mobile home shall become residential real estate.~~

~~(3) Upon receiving a request to purge the security interest of a mobile home, the municipal clerk shall mark or stamp the originally filed Vermont uniform bill of sale or certificate of origin with the word "converted."~~

~~(4) A mobile home that has been converted to residential real estate shall not be converted or redefined as personal property. [Repealed.]~~

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Limited Equity Cooperatives \* \* \*

Sec. 2. 11 V.S.A. § 1583 is amended to read:

§ 1583. DEFINITIONS

The definitions contained in Title 11A shall apply to this chapter. As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated, unless the context otherwise requires:

\* \* \*

(16) “Mobile home park” has the same meaning as in 10 V.S.A. § 6201.

Sec. 3. 11 V.S.A. § 1598 is amended to read:

§ 1598. LIMITED EQUITY COOPERATIVES

(a) A cooperative housing corporation may organize as a limited equity cooperative in order to fulfill the public purpose of providing and preserving housing for persons and households of low and moderate income at the time that they purchase their memberships. In addition to safeguarding the foregoing public purpose, a limited equity cooperative shall meet the following requirements:

(1) The articles of incorporation shall require that cooperative interests be sold at not more than a transfer value determined by a limited equity formula contained in the articles. That value shall be consistent with the object of maintaining long-term affordability of cooperative interests for persons or households of low and moderate income.

(2) A limited equity formula, once established by a cooperative housing corporation in its articles of incorporation, may be amended only if that amendment does not make the cooperative membership unaffordable for the class of low- or moderate-income households for which the cooperative housing corporation was originally incorporated, as determined and certified by the Commissioner of Housing and Community Affairs Development. A cooperative housing corporation once organized under this section may not reorganize as other than a limited equity cooperative without first dissolving.

(3) A limited equity cooperative shall not sell all or substantially all of its assets if such sale is intended to circumvent the public purposes of this section.

(4) The articles of incorporation shall require that the cooperative housing corporation shall have the first right to repurchase a member’s cooperative interest.

(5) The articles of incorporation shall require that the total distribution out of capital to a member shall not exceed that transfer value.

(6) The articles of incorporation shall require that upon dissolution of the cooperative housing corporation, any assets remaining after retirement of corporate debts and distribution to members shall be distributed to a charitable organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, a public agency, or another limited equity cooperative whose formula for determining transfer value shall be not less restrictive than that of the cooperative housing corporation being dissolved.

(7) The articles of incorporation shall require that no sublease of a unit shall provide for monthly payments by the sublessee in excess of 110 percent of monthly payments for the unit provided for in the proprietary lease.

(8) Notwithstanding subdivision (7) of this subsection (a), for a mobile home park organized as a limited equity cooperative, the articles of incorporation shall:

(A) prohibit the subleasing of a unit, unless:

(i) a member demonstrates a hardship, in which case the board of directors may by an affirmative vote of the majority grant an exemption from the prohibition; and

(ii) the unit is subleased to an individual of low or moderate income; and

(B) require that a unit owner shall not sublease a unit under this subdivision (8) for a higher amount than necessary to cover the costs of the unit to the member, including the costs of the monthly payment for the unit provided for in the proprietary lease, the costs of any mortgage for the unit owner, and any costs of utilities passed on to the sublessee.

(b) A mobile home park organized as a limited equity cooperative shall be treated for the purposes of State funding and grants as if it were incorporated as a State nonprofit corporation for a public purpose and public benefit under the laws of this State. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to alter or change specific funding or grant requirements, including the definition of low or moderate income, as outlined in any program, funding, or grant source.

\* \* \* Municipal Zoning \* \* \*

Sec. 4. 24 V.S.A. § 4412 is amended to read:

§ 4412. REQUIRED PROVISIONS AND PROHIBITED EFFECTS

Notwithstanding any existing bylaw, the following land development provisions shall apply in every municipality:

(1) Equal treatment of housing and required provisions for affordable housing.

\* \* \*

(B) Except as provided in subdivisions 4414(1)(E) and (F) of this title, no bylaw shall have the effect of excluding mobile homes, modular housing, or prefabricated housing from any district that allows year-round residential development in the municipality, except upon the same terms and conditions as conventional housing is excluded. A municipality may establish specific site standards in the bylaws to regulate individual sites within preexisting mobile home parks with regard to distances between structures and other standards as necessary to ensure public health, safety, and welfare, provided the standards do not have the effect of prohibiting the replacement of mobile homes on existing lots.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Sales and Use Tax Exemption \* \* \*

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. § 9706(s) is amended to read:

(s) The statutory purpose of the exemption for sales of mobile homes and modular housing in subdivision 9741(32)(A) of this title is to create equity between mobile and modular housing and traditional residential construction by providing an exemption for the estimated portion of the cost attributable to labor (versus materials). The statutory purpose of the exemption for sales of mobile homes in subdivision 9741(32)(B) of this title is to ensure that all sales of mobile homes, as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6201, are treated similarly for purposes of the property transfer tax imposed under chapter 231 of this title.

Sec. 6. 32 V.S.A. § 9741 is amended to read:

§ 9741. SALES NOT COVERED

Retail sales and use of the following shall be exempt from the tax on retail sales imposed under section 9771 of this title and the use tax imposed under section 9773 of this title:

\* \* \*

(32)(A) Forty percent of the receipts from sales of mobile homes, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2601(a)(2), and modular housing, when they are sold as tangible personal property.

(B) Sales of mobile homes, as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6201, when sold as tangible personal property.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Property Transfer Tax \* \* \*

Sec. 7. 32 V.S.A. § 9601 is amended to read:

§ 9601. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter unless the context requires otherwise:

\* \* \*

(5) “Transfer” includes a grant, assignment, conveyance, will, trust, decree of court, transfer or acquisition of a direct or indirect controlling interest in any person with title to property, or any other means of transferring title to property or vesting title to property in any person. In the case of a mobile home sold as tangible personal property, “transfer” includes a sale.

(6)(A) “Value” means:

(i) in the case of any transfer of title to property that is not a gift and that is not made for a nominal or no consideration, the amount of the full actual consideration for such transfer, paid or to be paid, including the amount of any liens or encumbrances on the property existing before the transfer and not removed thereby;

(ii) in the case of a gift, or a transfer for nominal or no consideration, the fair market value of the property transferred; ~~and~~

(iii) in the case of a controlling interest in any person that has title to property, the fair market value of the property, apportioned based on the percentage of the ownership interest transferred or acquired in the person; ~~and~~

(iv) in the case of a mobile home sold as tangible personal property, the amount of the full actual consideration for such sale, paid or to be paid, including the amount of any liens or encumbrances on the tangible personal property existing before the sale and not removed thereby.

\* \* \*

(10) “Property” means real property and, in the case of a mobile home sold as tangible personal property, tangible personal property. The term does not include personal property transferred with real property other than a mobile home.

\* \* \*

(13) “Mobile home” has the same meaning as in 10 V.S.A. § 6201.

Sec. 8. 32 V.S.A. § 9602 is amended to read:

§ 9602. TAX ON TRANSFER OF TITLE TO PROPERTY

A tax is hereby imposed upon the transfer by deed of title to property located in this State, ~~or~~ a transfer or acquisition of a controlling interest in any person with title to property in this State, or the sale of a mobile home as tangible personal property in this State. The amount of the tax equals 1.25 percent of the value of the property transferred, or \$1.00, whichever is greater, except as follows:

\* \* \*

Sec. 9. 32 V.S.A. § 9605 is amended to read:

§ 9605. PAYMENT OF TAX

(a) The tax imposed by this chapter shall be paid to the Commissioner within 30 days after transfer of title to property subject to the tax ~~or~~; in the case of a transfer or acquisition of a controlling interest in a person with title to property for which a deed is not given, within 30 days after transfer or acquisition; or, in the case of a sale of a mobile home as tangible personal property, within 30 days after sale.

\* \* \*

Sec. 10. 32 V.S.A. § 9606 is amended to read:

§ 9606. PROPERTY TRANSFER RETURN

(a)(1) In the case of property transfer by deed, a property transfer return complying with this section shall be delivered to a town clerk at the time a deed evidencing a transfer of title to property is delivered to the clerk for recording.

(2) In the case of transfer or acquisition of a controlling interest in a person with title to property for which a deed is not given, a property transfer return complying with this section shall be delivered to the Commissioner within 30 days after the transfer or acquisition.

(3) In the case of sale of a mobile home as tangible personal property, a property transfer return complying with this section shall be delivered to a town clerk at the time an executed mobile home uniform bill of sale is filed with the clerk.

\* \* \*

(e)(1) In the case of property transferred by deed, the Commissioner of Taxes is authorized to disclose to any person any information appearing on a

property transfer tax return, including statistical information derived therefrom, and such information derived from research into information appearing on property transfer tax returns as is necessary to determine if the property being transferred is subject to 10 V.S.A. chapter 151, except the Commissioner shall not disclose the Social Security number, federal identification number, ~~e-mail~~ email address, or telephone number of any person pursuant to this subsection.

(2) In the case of transfer or acquisition of a controlling interest in a person with title to property for which a deed is not given or the sale of a mobile home as tangible personal property, the return submitted to the Commissioner shall be treated as a tax return and tax return information under section 3102 of this title.

Sec. 11. 32 V.S.A. § 9607 is amended to read:

#### § 9607. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RETURN AND TAX PAYMENT

Upon the receipt by a town clerk of a property transfer return and certificate and the fee required under subdivision 1671(a)(6) of this title, the clerk shall forthwith mail or otherwise deliver to the transferee of title to property or purchaser of a mobile home as tangible personal property with respect to which such return was filed a signed and written acknowledgment of the receipt of that return and certificate. A copy of that acknowledgment, or any other form of acknowledgment approved by the Commissioner, shall be affixed to the deed evidencing the transfer of property, ~~or~~ the document evidencing the transfer or acquisition of a direct or indirect controlling interest in any person with title to property, or the mobile home uniform bill of sale with respect to which the return and certificate was filed. The acknowledgment so affixed to a deed, ~~or~~ document, or bill of sale, however, shall not disclose the amount of tax paid with respect to any return or transfer.

\* \* \* MHLEC Appraisals \* \* \*

Sec. 12. MOBILE HOME LIMITED EQUITY COOPERATIVES;

#### APPRAISED VALUE; REPORT

On or before November 15, 2026, the Department of Taxes shall submit a written report to the House Committees on General and Housing and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Finance with an inventory and analysis of the current appraised value of each mobile home park registered as a limited equity cooperative under 11 V.S.A. chapter 14. The report shall include:

(1) a description of the different appraisal methods used across the State;

- (2) an examination of any justifications for differences in approach; and
- (3) recommendations for ensuring consistent and appropriate appraisal, taking into consideration the limitations under 11 V.S.A. § 1598.

\* \* \* Secretary of State Business Registration \* \* \*

#### Sec. 13. SECRETARY OF STATE BUSINESS REGISTRATION

The Secretary of State may, upon request from a limited equity cooperative organized in accordance with 11 V.S.A. § 1598, update the limited equity cooperative's registration to ensure proper reflection of the limited equity cooperative's corporate business organization structure within the Secretary of State's systems.

\* \* \* Conforming Revisions \* \* \*

#### Sec. 14. CONFORMING REVISIONS

When preparing the Vermont Statutes Annotated for publication, the Office of Legislative Counsel shall replace "mobile home" with "manufactured home" throughout the statutes as needed for consistency with this act, provided the revisions have no other effect on the meaning of the affected statutes.

\* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

#### Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

#### **(Committee Vote: 8-0-3)**

**Rep. Waszazak of Barre City**, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the report of the Committee on General and Housing be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

\* \* \* Manufactured Homes \* \* \*

Sec. 1. 9 V.S.A. chapter 72 is amended to read:

#### CHAPTER 72. MOBILE HOMES

#### § 2601. DEFINITIONS

(a) As used in this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise, "mobile home" means:

- (1) A mobile home as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6201.

(2) An unmotorized vehicle, other than a travel or recreational trailer, designed to be towed and designed or equipped for use as sleeping, eating, or living quarters.

(b) A mobile home remains a mobile home for purposes of this chapter even though it may be used for advertising, sales, display, or promotion of merchandise or services, or for any other commercial purposes except the transportation of property.

(c) A mobile home that was financed as residential real estate shall be defined as residential real estate.

(d) “Permanently sited” means the mobile home has become affixed to the land. Factors that tend to show a mobile home is permanently sited include one or more of the following:

(1) The mobile home has been set up on blocks or otherwise stabilized so that the wheels do not form a major part of the structural support.

(2) The mobile home has been connected to utilities such as electricity, sewage, water, gas, or oil.

(3) Skirting has been installed around the base of the mobile home.

(4) The wheels or axles have been removed.

(5) The mobile home has been situated in a place that makes removal unlikely.

\* \* \*

#### § 2604. REAL ESTATE DEEDS FOR MOBILE HOMES

(a) Any mobile home purchased from a mobile home dealer on or after July 1, 2008, that is financed as residential real estate pursuant to subsection 2603(b) of this title shall be conveyed by a warranty deed drafted in substantially the form provided in subsection (c) of this section.

(b) An owner of a mobile home shall, upon financing or refinancing a mobile home as residential real estate or selling a mobile home that has been financed as residential real estate or will be so financed by the grantee, issue to the grantee either a warranty deed or a quitclaim deed that is drafted in substantially the form provided in subsection (c) or (d) of this section.

(c) A warranty deed that is substantially in the form provided in this subsection shall, when duly executed and delivered, have the force and effect of a deed in fee simple to the grantee, the heirs, successors, and assigns, to their own use, with covenants on the part of the grantor, for the grantor, the grantor’s heirs, executors, and administrators that, at the time of the delivery

of the deed, the grantor was lawfully seized in fee simple of the mobile home; that the mobile home was free from all encumbrances, except as stated; that the grantor had good right to sell and convey the same to the grantee, the grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns; and that the grantor and the grantor's heirs, executors, and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the grantee and the grantee's heirs, successors, and assigns, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons except as stated. ~~No owner of land on which a mobile home is sited shall unreasonably withhold the consent required by this statutory form.~~

#### Form for Mobile Home Warranty Deed

\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_, ("Grantor"), for consideration paid, grants to \_\_\_\_\_ of Street, Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ ("Grantee"), with warranty covenants, the \_\_\_\_\_ (description of mobile home being conveyed: name of manufacturer, model and serial number, and encumbrances, exceptions, reservations, if any) which mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, at \_\_\_\_\_ (state name of park, if any, and street address), Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of Vermont. The tract or parcel of land upon which the mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, is owned by \_\_\_\_\_ by deed dated and recorded at Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_ in the land records of the Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (~~wife~~) (~~husband~~ spouse) of said Grantor, releases to said Grantee all rights and other interests therein.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

\_\_\_\_\_, owner of the tract or parcel of land upon which the aforesaid mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, hereby consents to the conveyance of the mobile home.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

[ ] Check box if the mobile home has been relocated from one site to another within Vermont, and attach a Relocation Statement in the form provided in section 2606 of this title.

(d) A quitclaim deed that is substantially in the form provided in this subsection shall, when duly executed and delivered, have the force and effect of a deed in fee simple to the grantee, the heirs, successors, and assigns, to

their own use subject to encumbrances of record. ~~No owner of land on which the mobile home is sited shall unreasonably withhold consent required by this statutory form.~~

Form for Mobile Home Quitclaim Deed

\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ (“Grantor”), for consideration paid, grants to \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Street, Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of \_\_\_\_\_ (“Grantee”), with quitclaim covenants, the (description of mobile home being conveyed: name of manufacturer, model and serial number, and encumbrances, exceptions, reservations, if any) which mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, at \_\_\_\_\_ (state name of park, if any, and street address), Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of Vermont.

The tract or parcel of land upon which the mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, is owned by \_\_\_\_\_ by deed dated \_\_\_\_\_ and recorded at Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_, in the land records of the Town (City) of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ (wife) ~~(husband spouse)~~ of said Grantor releases to said Grantee all rights and other interest therein.

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

\_\_\_\_\_, owner of the parcel of land upon which the aforesaid mobile home is situated, or is to be situated, hereby consents to the conveyance of the mobile home.

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

(Here add acknowledgment)

[ ] Check box if the mobile home has been relocated from one site to another within Vermont, and attach a relocation statement in the form provided in section 2606 of this title.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Limited Equity Cooperatives \* \* \*

Sec. 2. 11 V.S.A. § 1583 is amended to read:

§ 1583. DEFINITIONS

The definitions contained in Title 11A shall apply to this chapter. As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated, unless the context otherwise requires:

\* \* \*

(16) “Mobile home park” has the same meaning as in 10 V.S.A. § 6201.

Sec. 3. 11 V.S.A. § 1598 is amended to read:

§ 1598. LIMITED EQUITY COOPERATIVES

(a) A cooperative housing corporation may organize as a limited equity cooperative in order to fulfill the public purpose of providing and preserving housing for persons and households of low and moderate income at the time that they purchase their memberships. In addition to safeguarding the foregoing public purpose, a limited equity cooperative shall meet the following requirements:

\* \* \*

(6) The articles of incorporation shall require that upon dissolution of the cooperative housing corporation, any assets remaining after retirement of corporate debts and distribution to members shall be distributed to a charitable organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, a public agency, or another limited equity cooperative whose formula for determining transfer value shall be not less restrictive than that of the cooperative housing corporation being dissolved.

(7) The articles of incorporation shall require that no sublease of a unit shall provide for monthly payments by the sublessee in excess of 110 percent of monthly payments for the unit provided for in the proprietary lease.

(8) Notwithstanding subdivision (7) of this subsection, for a mobile home park organized as a limited equity cooperative, the articles of incorporation shall:

(A) prohibit the subleasing of a unit, unless:

(i) a member demonstrates a hardship, in which case the board of directors may by an affirmative vote of the majority grant an exemption from the prohibition; and

(ii) the unit is subleased to an individual of low or moderate income; and

(B) require that a unit owner shall not sublease a unit under this subdivision (8) for a higher amount than necessary to cover the costs of the unit to the member, including the costs of the monthly payment for the unit provided for in the proprietary lease, the costs of any mortgage for the unit owner, and any costs of utilities passed on to the sublessee.

(b)(1) A mobile home park organized as a limited equity cooperative shall be treated for the purposes of State funding and grants as if it were incorporated as a State nonprofit corporation for a public purpose and public benefit under the laws of this State. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to alter or change specific funding or grant requirements, including the definition of low or moderate income, as outlined in any program, funding, or grant source.

(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to impact or alter the tax treatment of a mobile home park organized as a limited equity cooperative.

\* \* \* Municipal Zoning \* \* \*

Sec. 4. 24 V.S.A. § 4412 is amended to read:

§ 4412. REQUIRED PROVISIONS AND PROHIBITED EFFECTS

Notwithstanding any existing bylaw, the following land development provisions shall apply in every municipality:

(1) Equal treatment of housing and required provisions for affordable housing.

\* \* \*

(B) Except as provided in subdivisions 4414(1)(E) and (F) of this title, no bylaw shall have the effect of excluding mobile homes, modular housing, or prefabricated housing from any district that allows year-round residential development in the municipality, except upon the same terms and conditions as conventional housing is excluded. A municipality may establish specific site standards in the bylaws to regulate individual sites within preexisting mobile home parks with regard to distances between structures and other standards as necessary to ensure public health, safety, and welfare, provided the standards do not have the effect of prohibiting the replacement of mobile homes on existing lots.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* Sales and Use Tax Exemption \* \* \*

Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. § 9706 is amended to read:

§ 9706. STATUTORY PURPOSE

\* \* \*

(s) The statutory purpose of the exemption for sales of mobile homes and modular housing in subdivision 9741(32) of this title is to create equity between mobile and modular housing and traditional residential construction

by providing an exemption for the estimated portion of the cost attributable to labor (versus materials).

\* \* \*

(pp) The statutory purpose of the exemption for new energy-efficient mobile homes in subdivision 9741(57) of this title is to create parity with the tax treatment of new energy-efficient mobile homes treated as real property.

Sec. 6. 32 V.S.A. § 9741 is amended to read:

§ 9741. SALES NOT COVERED

Retail sales and use of the following shall be exempt from the tax on retail sales imposed under section 9771 of this title and the use tax imposed under section 9773 of this title:

\* \* \*

(32) Forty Ninety percent of the receipts from sales of mobile homes, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2601, and modular housing, when they are sold as tangible personal property.

\* \* \*

(57) New mobile homes, as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6201, that:

(A) bear a label evidencing, at a minimum, greater energy efficiency under the ENERGY STAR Program established in 42 U.S.C. § 6294a; or

(B) are certified as a Zero Energy Ready Home by the U.S. Department of Energy.

\* \* \* Secretary of State Business Registration \* \* \*

Sec. 7. SECRETARY OF STATE BUSINESS REGISTRATION

The Secretary of State may, upon request from a limited equity cooperative organized in accordance with 11 V.S.A. § 1598, update the limited equity cooperative's registration to ensure proper reflection of the limited equity cooperative's corporate business organization structure within the Secretary of State's systems.

\* \* \* Conforming Revisions \* \* \*

Sec. 8. CONFORMING REVISIONS

When preparing the Vermont Statutes Annotated for publication, the Office of Legislative Counsel shall replace "mobile home" with "manufactured home" throughout the statutes as needed for consistency with this act, provided the revisions have no other effect on the meaning of the affected statutes.

\* \* \* Effective Dates \* \* \*

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, except that Secs. 5 and 6 (sales and use tax exemption) shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

**(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

**H. 814**

An act relating to neurological rights and the use of artificial intelligence technology in health and human services

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

Sec. 1. INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

(1) protect human rights, promote equity, increase efficiency, enhance accessibility, create transparency, and guarantee accountability in health care and human services through the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence technology;

(2) maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of the use of artificial intelligence in health care and human services;

(3) promote the ethical and responsible use of augmented intelligence in service delivery, coverage determinations, and access to health care and human services;

(4) prevent harm from the use of augmented and other artificial intelligence in health care and human services;

(5) improve the experience of patients, providers, and payers through the use of augmented and other artificial intelligence; and

(6) improve quality of care, drive positive health outcomes, and cultivate population health through the use of augmented and other artificial intelligence.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 42C is added to read:

CHAPTER 42C. NEUROLOGICAL RIGHTS

§ 1891. PURPOSE; INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

The State of Vermont recognizes that each individual has the right to:

- (1) mental and neural data privacy;
- (2) the freedom of thought;
- (3) nondiscrimination in the development and application of neurotechnologies;
- (4) change an individual's decision regarding neurotechnology and the right to determine by what means to change that decision;
- (5) be afforded protection from neurotechnological interventions of the mind and from unauthorized access to or manipulation of an individual's brain activity; and
- (6) be afforded protection from unauthorized neurotechnological alterations in mental functions critical to personality.

Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 5023 is amended to read:

§ 5023. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

(a) Advisory Council. There is established the Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council to provide advice and counsel to the Director of the Division of Artificial Intelligence with regard to the Division's responsibilities to review all aspects of artificial intelligence systems developed, employed, or procured in State government. The Advisory Council, in consultation with the Director of the Division, shall also engage in public outreach and education on artificial intelligence.

(b) Members.

(1) Members. The Advisory Council shall be composed of the following members:

\* \* \*

(F) one member with experience in the field of ethics and human rights, appointed by the ~~Governor~~ National Association of Social Workers, Vermont Chapter;

(G) one member who is an academic at a postsecondary institute, appointed by the Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering;

(H) the ~~Commissioner of Health~~ Secretary of Human Services or designee;

(I) one member with experience in health care, appointed by the Vermont Medical Society;

(J) one member with experience in public education, appointed by the Vermont-National Education Association;

(K) the Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee; and  
(J)(L) the Attorney General or designee;  
(M) the State Treasurer or designee; and  
(N) one member with relevant knowledge and expertise, appointed  
by the Governor.

\* \* \*

(h) Repeal. This section shall be repealed on June 30, ~~2027~~ 2030.

Sec. 4. RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL USE OF ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE IN HEALTH CARE, HUMAN SERVICES, AND  
EDUCATION; REPORT

(a) The Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council, in coordination with the  
Director of the Division of Artificial Intelligence and in consultation with  
interested stakeholders, shall:

(1) review guidelines and recommendations from the American Medical  
Association, National Association of Social Workers, National Education  
Association, and other relevant professional organizations regarding the use of  
artificial intelligence in the fields of health care, human services, education,  
public participation, and public finance;

(2) research existing and potential uses of artificial intelligence in public  
participation processes and in public finance; and

(3) create opportunities for public education and engagement in the  
development of artificial intelligence policy.

(b) On or before January 15, 2027, the Artificial Intelligence Advisory  
Council, in coordination with the Director of the Division of Artificial  
Intelligence, shall submit a written report to the General Assembly:

(1) recommending any additional statutory changes necessary to further  
the purposes of this act, including:

(A) protections for neurological rights and in relation to  
neurotechnologies;

(B) guidance on the use of generative artificial intelligence by  
regulated professions; and

(C) regulating the use of artificial and augmented intelligence in  
health insurance utilization review processes;

(2) summarizing any additional ways that government can promote the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence technology in health and human services and in education;

(3) proposing pilot projects that improve public engagement in public finance using ethical and responsible artificial intelligence technology; and

(4) identifying any reasons for further delaying or removing the new 2030 sunset of the Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council as set forth in Sec. 4 of this act.

#### Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

**(Committee Vote: 9-1-1)**

**Rep. Feltus of Lyndon**, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommends that the bill ought to pass when amended as recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

**(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

### H. 816

An act relating to regulating the use of artificial intelligence in the provision of mental health services

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

#### Sec. 1. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this act to safeguard individuals seeking mental health services in Vermont by:

(1) ensuring that therapeutic judgment, clinical decision making, and therapeutic communication remain the responsibility of mental health professionals and are not delegated to artificial intelligence systems;

(2) respecting individual choice in selecting mental health services, including community, peer, and faith-based options; and

(3) allowing the responsible use of artificial intelligence for administrative, operational, documentation, and quality-improvement functions that support access, efficiency, and innovation in mental health services.

Sec. 2. 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:

\* \* \*

(30) For any mental health professional, misuse of artificial intelligence pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 7101.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 7115 is added to read:

§ 7115. PROHIBITED USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Artificial intelligence” means an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer from the input it receives how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments. “Artificial intelligence” includes generative artificial intelligence.

(2) “Generative artificial intelligence” means an artificial intelligence that can generate derived synthetic content, including text, images, video, and audio, that emulates the structure and characteristics of the system’s training data.

(3) “Mental health services” means support, counseling, therapy, or psychotherapy services provided by a mental health professional to diagnose or treat an individual’s mental or behavioral health or provide ongoing recovery support, excluding religious counseling.

(4) “Therapeutic communication” means a written or spoken interaction intended to diagnose or treat any type of mental or behavioral health concern, provide ongoing recovery support, or provide any advice related to diagnosis, treatment, or recovery.

(b) A person, corporation, or other entity shall not offer, provide, or advertise mental health services in the State that represent artificial intelligence as providing therapeutic judgment, diagnosis, treatment, or therapeutic communication. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the use or disclosure

of the use of artificial intelligence for administrative, documentation, operational, or quality-improvement purposes when a mental health professional retains clinical responsibility as authorized pursuant to 26 V.S.A. § 7101.

(c)(1) A violation of this section shall be deemed a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63. The Attorney General has the same authority to make rules, conduct civil investigations, enter into assurances of discontinuance, and bring civil actions, and private parties have the same rights and remedies as provided under 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 1.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude or supplant any other statutory or common law remedies.

Sec. 4. 26 V.S.A. chapter 120 is added to read:

CHAPTER 120. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN REGULATED PROFESSIONS

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

§ 7001. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Artificial intelligence” means an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer from the input it receives how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments. “Artificial intelligence” includes generative artificial intelligence.

(2) “Generative artificial intelligence” means an artificial intelligence that can generate derived synthetic content, including text, images, video, and audio, that emulates the structure and characteristics of the system’s training data.

Subchapter 2. Use of Artificial Intelligence by Mental Health Professionals

§ 7101. PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THERAPEUTIC SETTINGS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Administrative support” means a task performed to assist a mental health professional in the professional’s delivery of mental health services,

such as scheduling, billing, and general logistics, but excluding therapeutic communication.

(2) “Clinical responsibility” means the duty of a mental health professional to review, approve, and remain legally accountable for any use of artificial intelligence in connection with the provision of mental health services.

(3) “Consent” means an explicit, affirmative act by an individual that communicates in writing voluntary, informed, and revocable agreement. “Consent” does not include acceptance of broad terms-of-use agreements, passive actions, or deceptive practices.

(4) “Mental health professional” means an individual licensed, certified, or rostered, respectively, to provide mental health services as a physician pursuant to chapter 23 or 33 of this title, an advance practice registered nurse specializing in psychiatric mental health pursuant to chapter 28 of this title, a psychologist pursuant to chapter 55 of this title, a peer support provider or peer recovery support specialist pursuant to chapter 60 of this title, a social worker pursuant to chapter 61 of this title, an alcohol and drug abuse counselor pursuant to chapter 62 of this title, a clinical mental health counselor pursuant to chapter 65 of this title, a marriage and family therapist pursuant to chapter 76 of this title, a psychoanalyst pursuant to chapter 77 of this title, or an applied behavior analyst pursuant to chapter 95 of this title, and a nonlicensed or noncertified psychotherapist, noncertified psychoanalyst, or any other professional that provides mental health services except as exempted in subsection (e) of this section.

(5) “Mental health services” means support, counseling, therapy, or psychotherapy services provided by a mental health professional to diagnose or treat an individual’s mental or behavioral health or provide ongoing recovery support, excluding religious counseling or peer support.

(6) “Peer support” means support services provided by an individual with lived experience of a mental health condition or substance use disorder who is not certified under chapter 60 of this title.

(7) “Religious counseling” means counseling provided by clergy, pastoral counselors, or other religious leaders acting within the scope of the individual’s duties if explicitly faith-based and not represented as clinical services.

(8) “Supplementary support” means a task performed to assist a mental health professional in the professional’s delivery of mental health services, excluding therapeutic communication and administrative support.

(9) “Therapeutic communication” means a written or spoken interaction intended to diagnose or treat any type of mental or behavioral health concern, provide ongoing recovery support, or provide any advice related to diagnosis, treatment, or recovery.

(10) “Therapeutic decision” means the final clinical determination regarding diagnosis or selection, modification, or termination of treatment or care. “Therapeutic decision” does not include algorithmic risk scoring, data analytics, or other clinical decision support tools when used under the supervision and authority of a licensed mental health professional.

(b) Permitted uses. A mental health professional may use artificial intelligence systems for administrative support, supplementary support, and operational or quality-improvement functions, provided the professional retains sole responsibility for therapeutic decisions. Permitted uses include scheduling, billing, coding, and claims processing; transcription and documentation support; preparation and maintenance of clinical records; deidentified data analysis for quality improvement; and workforce and capacity planning where the mental health professional reviews, modifies where necessary, and approves the final product.

(c) Confidentiality and consent.

(1) Any administrative support or supplementary support tasks conducted using artificial intelligence, including transcription and recording, shall be subject to the disclosure prohibitions in 18 V.S.A. §§ 1881 and 7103.

(2) Consent by a patient or client is required when artificial intelligence is used to record identifiable therapeutic communications.

(d) Prohibited uses.

(1) A mental health professional shall not use artificial intelligence in a manner that allows the artificial intelligence to independently make therapeutic decisions, independently diagnose, independently determine treatment, or independently generate treatment plans.

(2) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a mental health professional from disclosing or describing the mental health professional’s use of artificial intelligence for administrative support or supplementary support purposes to a prospective, current, or former patient or client.

(e) Exceptions. Nothing in this section shall apply to:

(1) religious counseling;

(2) peer support provided by an individual who is not certified pursuant to chapter 60 of this title; and

(3) generalized educational and self-help resources that do not purport to offer mental health services.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

**(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. 917**

An act relating to military affairs

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

**Rep. Page of Newport City**, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommends that the bill ought to pass.

**(Committee Vote: 11-0-0)**

## CONSENT CALENDAR FOR ACTION

### 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 before today's adjournment. 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 of March 11, 2026.

**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]*