

Senate Calendar

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025

SENATE CONVENES AT: 11:30 A.M.

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ACTION CALENDAR

UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025

House Proposal of Amendment

S. 28.

An act relating to access to certain legally protected health care services.

The House proposes to the Senate to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 1 V.S.A. § 150 is amended to read:

§ 150. LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY

* * *

(b)(1) “Legally protected health care activity” means:

* * *

(4) The protections applicable to persons who engage in “legally protected health care activity” shall also apply to a person who has previously undertaken one or more acts or omissions while in another U.S. jurisdiction to aid or encourage, or attempt to aid or encourage, any person in the exercise and enjoyment, or attempted exercise and enjoyment, of rights to reproductive health care services or gender-affirming health care services that would have been protected by this State if they had been undertaken in this State, provided that the acts or omissions were permissible under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the person was located at the time they were undertaken.

* * *

Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 317(c) is amended to read:

(c) The following public records are exempt from public inspection and copying:

* * *

(44) Records held by the Office of Professional Regulation, Board of Medical Practice, or another public agency that issues one or more licenses, certificates, or registrations to engage in a State-regulated profession or occupation if the records contain the telephone number, email address, physical address, or mailing address, or a combination of these, of an individual who has applied for or has been granted a license, certificate, or

registration to practice a profession or occupation in this State, except that the public agency shall disclose any address that the individual has designated as a public address in the record.

Sec. 3. 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.

(2) Advertising, including advertising about health care services, that is intended or has a tendency to deceive or mislead.

* * *

(6) Delegating professional responsibilities, including the delivery of health care services, to a person whom the licensed professional knows, or has reason to know, is not qualified by training, experience, education, or licensing credentials to perform them, or knowingly providing professional supervision or serving as a preceptor to a person who has not been licensed or registered as required by the laws of that person's profession.

* * *

(21) Permitting one's name or license to be used by a person, group, or corporation when not actually in charge of or ~~responsible for~~, or actively overseeing the professional services provided.

* * *

(f)(1) Health care providers. Notwithstanding subsection (e) of this section or any other law to the contrary, no health care provider who is certified, registered, or licensed in Vermont shall be subject to professional disciplinary action by a board or the Director, nor shall a board or the Director take adverse action on an application for certification, registration, or licensure of a qualified health care provider, based solely on:

* * *

(2) Definitions. As used in this subsection:

* * *

(B) “Health care services” means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

* * *

Sec. 4. 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 11 is amended to read:

Subchapter 11. ~~Pregnancy Services Centers~~ Health Care Services

§ 2491. FINDINGS; LEGISLATIVE INTENT

~~(a) Findings.~~ The General Assembly finds that:

~~(1) Centers that seek to counsel clients against abortion, often referred to as crisis pregnancy centers or limited-services pregnancy centers, have become common across the country, including in Vermont. Accurate information about the services that a limited-services pregnancy center performs, in addition to forthright acknowledgement of its limitations, is essential to enable individuals in this State to make informed decisions about their care. This includes individuals being informed of whether they are receiving services from a licensed and qualified health care provider at a limited-services pregnancy center, as this allows individuals to determine if they need to seek medical care elsewhere in order to continue or terminate a pregnancy.~~

~~(2) Although some limited-services pregnancy centers openly acknowledge in their advertising, on their websites, and at their facilities that they neither provide abortions nor refer clients to other providers of abortion services, others provide confusing and misleading information to pregnant individuals contemplating abortion by leading those individuals to believe that their facilities offer abortion services and unbiased counseling. Some limited-services pregnancy centers have promoted patently false or biased medical claims about abortion, pregnancy, contraception, and reproductive health care providers.~~

~~(3) False and misleading advertising by centers that do not offer or refer clients for abortion is of special concern to the State because of the time-sensitive and constitutionally protected nature of the decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy. When a pregnant individual is misled into believing that a center offers services that it does not in fact offer or receives false or misleading information regarding health care options, the individual loses time crucial to the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy and may lose the option to choose a particular method or to terminate a pregnancy at all.~~

~~(4) Telling the truth is how trained health care providers demonstrate respect for patients, foster trust, promote self-determination, and cultivate an~~

environment where best practices in shared decision-making can flourish. Without veracity in information and communication, it is difficult for individuals to make informed, voluntary choices that are essential to one's sense of personal agency and autonomy.

~~(5)(2)~~ Advertising strategies and educational information about health care options that lack transparency, use misleading or ambiguous terminology, misrepresent or obfuscate services provided, or provide factually inaccurate information are a form of manipulation that disrespects individuals, undermines trust, broadens health disparity, and can result in patient harm.

~~(b) Intent.~~

~~(1) It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that the public is provided with accurate, factual information about the types of health care services that are available to pregnant individuals in this State. The General Assembly respects the constitutionally protected right of each individual to personal reproductive autonomy, which includes the right to receive clear, honest, and nonmisleading information about the individual's options and to make informed, voluntary choices after considering all relevant information.~~

~~(2) The General Assembly respects the right of limited-services pregnancy centers to counsel individuals against abortion, and nothing in this subchapter should be construed to regulate, limit, or curtail such advocacy.~~

§ 2492. DEFINITIONS DEFINITION

As used in this subchapter:

~~(1) "Abortion" means any medical treatment intended to induce the termination of, or to terminate, a clinically diagnosable pregnancy except for the purpose of producing a live birth.~~

~~(2) "Client" means an individual who is inquiring about or seeking services at a pregnancy services center.~~

~~(3) "Emergency contraception" means any drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a contraceptive method for use after sexual intercourse, whether provided over the counter or by prescription.~~

~~(4) "Health information" means any oral or written information in any form or medium that relates to health insurance or the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of a client.~~

~~(5) "Limited-services pregnancy center" means a pregnancy services center that does not directly provide, or provide referrals to clients for, abortions or emergency contraception.~~

~~(6) “Pregnancy services center” means a facility, including a mobile facility, where the primary purpose is to provide services to individuals who are or may be pregnant and that either offers obstetric ultrasounds, obstetric sonograms, or prenatal care to pregnant individuals or has the appearance of a medical facility. A pregnancy services center has the appearance of a medical facility if two or more of the following factors are present:~~

~~(A) The center offers pregnancy testing or pregnancy diagnosis, or both.~~

~~(B) The center has staff or volunteers who wear medical attire or uniforms.~~

~~(C) The center contains one or more examination tables.~~

~~(D) The center contains a private or semiprivate room or area containing medical supplies or medical instruments.~~

~~(E) The center has staff or volunteers who collect health information from clients.~~

~~(F) The center is located on the same premises as a State-licensed medical facility or provider or shares facility space with a State-licensed medical provider.~~

~~(7) “Premises” means land and improvements or appurtenances or any part thereof “health care services” means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, dental, behavioral health, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication.~~

§ 2493. UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ACT

(a) It is an unfair and deceptive act and practice in commerce and a violation of section 2453 of this title for any ~~limited-services pregnancy center person~~ to disseminate or cause to be disseminated to the public any advertising about the health care services or proposed services performed at that center in this State that is untrue or clearly designed to mislead the public about the nature of the services provided. Advertising includes representations made directly to consumers; marketing practices; communication in any print medium, such as newspapers, magazines, mailers, or handouts; and any broadcast medium, such as television or radio, telephone marketing, or advertising over the ~~Internet~~ internet such as through websites and, web ads advertisements, and social media. For purposes of this chapter, advertising ~~or the provision of services by a limited-services pregnancy center~~ about health care services is an act in commerce.

~~(b) Health care providers certified, registered, or licensed under Title 26 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated who are employed by, contracted to provide services for or on behalf of, or volunteer to provide services at a limited-services pregnancy center shall be responsible for conducting and providing health care services, information, and counseling at the center. The failure of a health care professional certified, registered, or licensed under Title 26 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated to conduct or to ensure that health care services, information, and counseling at the limited-services pregnancy services center are conducted in accordance with State law and professional standards of practice may constitute unprofessional conduct under 3 V.S.A. § 129a and 26 V.S.A. § 1354. [Repealed.]~~

(c) The Attorney General has the same authority to make rules, conduct civil investigations, and bring civil actions with respect to violations of ~~subsection (a)~~ of this section as provided under subchapter 1 of this chapter.

Sec. 5. 12 V.S.A. § 7306 is amended to read:

§ 7306. NONCOOPERATION

(a) No public agency or employee, appointee, officer or official, or any other ~~person~~ individual acting on behalf of a public agency may knowingly provide any information or expend or use time, money, facilities, property, equipment, personnel, or other resources in furtherance of any interstate or federal investigation or proceeding seeking to impose civil or criminal liability upon ~~a person~~ an individual or entity for:

(1) the provision, seeking or receipt of, or inquiring about legally protected health care activity that is legal in this State; or

(2) assisting any ~~person~~ individual or entity providing, seeking, receiving, or responding to an inquiry about legally protected health care activity that is legal in this State.

(b) This section shall not apply to:

(1) any investigation or proceeding where the conduct subject to potential liability under the investigation or proceeding would be subject to liability under the laws of this State if committed in this State;

(2) ~~any action taken by the Judicial Branch in judicial proceedings~~ order issued by a Vermont State court or a federal court; or

(3) a public agency or employee, appointee, officer or official, or any other individual acting on behalf of a public agency who, in the course of normal business, is responding to a warrant or extradition demand on the good faith belief that the warrant or demand is valid in this State.

Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. § 1881 is amended to read:

§ 1881. DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION
PROHIBITED

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Business associate” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(2) “Covered entity” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(3) “Legally protected health care activity” has the same meaning as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

(4) “Protected health information” has the same meaning as in 45 C.F.R. § 160.103.

(5) “Telehealth” has the same meaning as in 26 V.S.A. § 3052.

(b) A covered entity or business associate shall not disclose protected health information unless the disclosure is permitted under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

(c)(1) ~~In~~ Notwithstanding any provision of subsection (b) of this section to the contrary, in order to protect patients and providers who engage in legally protected health care activity and except as set forth in in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a covered entity or business associate shall not disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity:

(A) to any government entity other than the State of Vermont or its political subdivisions or instrumentalities if the covered entity or business associate has reason to believe that the information will be used:

(i) to conduct a criminal, civil, administrative, or professional disciplinary investigation into any individual for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating a legally protected health care activity;

(ii) to impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action on any individual for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating a legally protected health care activity; or

(iii) to identify any individual for any of the activities described in subdivision (i) or (ii) of this subdivision (A); or

(B) for use in a civil or criminal action; a proceeding preliminary to a civil or criminal action; or a probate, legislative, or administrative proceeding unless.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of subdivision (1) of this subsection to the contrary, a covered entity or business associate may disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions:

~~(1)(A)~~ The disclosure is authorized by the patient or the patient's conservator, guardian, or other authorized legal representative.

~~(2) The disclosure is specifically required by federal law, Vermont law, or rules adopted by the Vermont Supreme Court.~~

~~(3)(B)~~ The disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to federal law, Vermont law, or rules adopted by the Vermont Supreme Court. ~~At~~ A State court order compelling disclosure under this subdivision (B) shall include the court's determination that good cause exists to require disclosure of the information related to the information will not be used to impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action on any individual based solely on the fact that the person sought, obtained, provided, or facilitated a legally protected health care activity.

~~(4)(C)~~ The disclosure is to be made to a ~~person~~ business associate designated by the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate and will be used solely in the defense of the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate against a claim that has been made, or there is a reasonable belief will be made, against the covered entity or the covered entity's business associate in a civil or criminal action; a proceeding preliminary to a civil or criminal action; or a probate, legislative, or administrative proceeding.

~~(5)(D)~~ The disclosure is to Vermont's Board of Medical Practice or Office of Professional Regulation, as applicable, in connection with a bona fide investigation in Vermont of a licensed, certified, or registered health care provider or a bona fide investigation of whether an individual who is not licensed, certified, or registered to practice a health care profession in Vermont engaged in unauthorized practice in this State, whether in person or through telehealth.

~~(6)(E)~~ The disclosure is to the Vermont Department of Health or the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, or both, in connection with a bona fide investigation of a licensed health care facility in Vermont.

(F) Subject to the limitations set forth in 12 V.S.A. § 7306, the disclosure is required in the ordinary course of business of Vermont's Medicaid program.

(d) A covered entity or business associate shall not be subject to any civil, criminal, or administrative liability or professional disciplinary action for refusing to disclose protected health information that is identifiable or susceptible to reidentification and is related to a legally protected health care activity, in accordance with subsection (c) of this section.

Sec. 7. 18 V.S.A. § 4999 is amended to read:

§ 4999. DEFINITIONS

As used in this part:

* * *

(2) "Licensed health care professional," as used in 18 V.S.A. chapter 107, means a physician, a physician assistant, a naturopathic physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse. As used in chapter 107 of this part only, the term also includes a naturopathic physician.

* * *

Sec. 8. 18 V.S.A. § 5200 is amended to read:

§ 5200. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(4) "Licensed health care professional" means a physician, a physician assistant, a naturopathic physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse.

(5) "Natural organic reduction" has the same meaning as in section 5302 of this title.

Sec. 9. 18 V.S.A. § 5222 is amended to read:

§ 5222. REPORTS

(a)(1) The following fetal deaths shall be reported by the hospital, ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional, or funeral director directly to the Commissioner within seven days after delivery on forms prescribed by the Department:

(1)(A) All fetal deaths of 20 or more weeks of gestation or, if gestational age is unknown, of 400 or more grams, 15 or more ounces, fetal weight shall be reported.

~~(2)~~(B) All therapeutic or induced abortions, as legally authorized to be performed, of any length gestation or weight shall be reported.

~~(3)~~(2) Spontaneous abortions and ectopic pregnancies of less than 20 weeks gestation are not required to be reported.

(b) The ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional who treats a ~~woman patient~~ as a result of a miscarriage or abortion shall report the fetal death if it is not known to be previously reported under subsection (a) of this section. If there is evidence of violence or other unusual or suspicious circumstances, the medical examiner shall be immediately notified, and ~~he or she~~ the medical examiner shall complete at least the medical items on the report. If a funeral director is to be involved, the ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional may delegate to the funeral director the responsibility for completing items other than those of a medical nature. Similarly, the ~~physician~~ licensed health care professional may delegate the responsibility for completion of nonmedical items to appropriate personnel having access to records containing the information.

(c) If a fetal death occurs on a moving conveyance, the place of occurrence shall be given as the town or city where removal from the vehicle took place.

~~(d) Fetal death reports~~ Reports made pursuant to this section are for statistical purposes only and are not public records. They shall be kept confidential; shall not be disclosed or discoverable in any civil, criminal, administrative, or other proceeding; and shall be destroyed after five two years.

Sec. 10. 26 V.S.A. § 1354 is amended to read:

§ 1354. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) Prohibited conduct. The Board shall find that any one of the following, or any combination of the following, whether the conduct at issue was committed within or outside the State, constitutes unprofessional conduct:

* * *

(2) all advertising ~~of~~ about health care services or a medical business that is intended or has a tendency to mislead or deceive the public or impose upon credulous or ignorant persons and so be harmful or injurious to public morals or safety;

* * *

(21) permitting one's name or license to be used by a person, group, or corporation when not actually in charge of, ~~or~~ responsible for, or actively overseeing the treatment given or other health care services provided;

* * *

(29) delegation of professional responsibilities, including delivery of any health care services, to a person whom the licensed professional knows, or has reason to know, is not qualified by training, experience, education, or licensing credentials to perform them;

* * *

(33)(A) providing, prescribing, dispensing, or furnishing medical services or prescription medication or prescription-only devices to a person in response to any communication transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means, when the licensee fails to take the following actions to establish and maintain a proper physician-patient relationship:

(i) a reasonable effort to verify that the person requesting medication is in fact the patient, and is in fact who the person claims to be;

(ii) establishment of documented diagnosis through the use of accepted medical practices; and

(iii) maintenance of a current medical record;

(B) for the purposes of this subdivision (33), an electronic, ~~on-line~~ online, or telephonic evaluation by questionnaire is inadequate for the initial evaluation of the patient, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (C)(iv) of this subdivision (33);

(C) the following would not be in violation of this subdivision (33) if transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means:

(i) initial admission orders for newly hospitalized patients;

(ii) prescribing for a patient of another physician for whom the prescriber has taken the call;

(iii) prescribing for a patient examined by a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or other advanced practitioner authorized by law and supported by the physician;

(iv) in furtherance of 18 V.S.A. chapter 223, prescribing medication for an individual to terminate the individual's pregnancy based on an adaptive questionnaire developed by or in consultation with health care providers with clinically appropriate expertise that allows the licensee to obtain additional medical history and ask follow-up questions as needed;

(v) continuing medication on a short-term basis for a new patient, prior to the patient's first appointment; or

~~(v)~~(vi) emergency situations where life or health of the patient is in imminent danger;

* * *

(b) Failure to practice competently. The Board may also find that failure to practice competently by reason of any cause on a single occasion or on multiple occasions constitutes unprofessional conduct. Failure to practice competently includes, as determined by the Board:

(1) performance of unsafe or unacceptable patient care; or

(2) failure to conform to the essential standards of acceptable and prevailing practice.

(c) Burden of proof. The burden of proof in a disciplinary action shall be on the State to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the person has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

(d)(1) Health care providers. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, no health care provider who is certified, registered, or licensed in Vermont shall be subject to professional disciplinary action by the Board, nor shall the Board take adverse action on an application for certification, registration, or licensure of a qualified health care provider, based solely on:

(A)(1) the health care provider providing or assisting in the provision of legally protected health care activity; or

(B)(2) a criminal, civil, or disciplinary action in another state against the health care provider that is based solely on the provider providing or assisting in the provision of legally protected health care activity.

(2)(c) Definitions. As used in this ~~subsection~~ section:

(A)(1) “Health care provider” means a person who provides professional health care services to an individual during that individual’s medical care, treatment, or confinement.

(B)(2) “Health care services” means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

(C)(3) “Legally protected health care activity” has the same meaning as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

Sec. 11. 26 V.S.A. § 1615 is amended to read:

§ 1615. ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES;
REGULATORY AUTHORITY; UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) In addition to the provisions of 3 V.S.A. § 129a and section 1582 of this chapter, the Board may deny an application for licensure, renewal, or reinstatement or may revoke, suspend, or otherwise discipline an advanced practice registered nurse upon due notice and opportunity for hearing if the person engages in the following conduct:

* * *

(6) Providing Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, providing, prescribing, dispensing, or furnishing medical services or prescription medication or prescription-only devices to a person in response to any communication transmitted or received by computer or other electronic means when the licensee fails to take the following actions to establish and maintain a proper provider-patient relationship:

(A) a reasonable effort to verify that the person requesting medication is in fact the patient and is in fact who the person claims to be;

(B) establishment of documented diagnosis through the use of accepted medical practices; and

(C) maintenance of a current medical record.

* * *

(b)(1) For the purposes of subdivision (a)(6) of this section, an electronic, online, or telephonic evaluation by questionnaire is inadequate for the initial evaluation of the patient, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (2)(D) of this subsection.

(2) The following would not be in violation of subdivision (a)(6) of this section:

(A) initial admission orders for newly hospitalized patients;

(B) prescribing for a patient of another provider for whom the prescriber has taken call;

(C) prescribing for a patient examined by a licensed APRN, physician assistant, or other practitioner authorized by law and supported by the APRN;

(D) in furtherance of 18 V.S.A. chapter 223, prescribing medication for an individual to terminate the individual's pregnancy based on an adaptive questionnaire developed by or in consultation with health care providers with clinically appropriate expertise that allows the licensee to obtain additional medical history and ask follow-up questions as needed;

(E) continuing medication on a short-term basis for a new patient prior to the patient’s first appointment; or

(E)(F) emergency situations where the life or health of the patient is in imminent danger.

* * *

Sec. 12. 26 V.S.A. § 1736 is amended to read:

§ 1736. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(a) The following conduct and the conduct described in section 1354 of this title by a licensed physician assistant shall constitute unprofessional conduct; when that conduct is by an applicant or person who later becomes an applicant, it may constitute grounds for denial of licensure:

* * *

(2) occupational advertising or advertising about health care services that is intended or has a tendency to mislead or deceive the public;

(3) exercising undue influence on or taking improper advantage of a person using the individual’s services, or promoting the sale of professional goods or services in a manner that exploits a person for the financial gain of the practitioner or of a third party;

(4) failing to comply with provisions of federal or state statutes or rules governing the profession;

(5) conviction of a crime related to the profession; and

(6) conduct that evidences unfitness to practice in the profession.

* * *

(d) As used in this section, “health care services” means services for the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, cure, or relief of a physical or mental health condition, including counseling, procedures, products, devices, and medications.

Sec. 13. 26 V.S.A. § 2024 is added to read:

§ 2024. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PRESCRIBER AND PHARMACIST
INFORMATION ON MEDICATIONS FOR LEGALLY
PROTECTED HEALTH CARE ACTIVITY

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Gender-affirming health care services” and “reproductive health care services” have the same meanings as in 1 V.S.A. § 150.

(2) “Noncontrolled medication” means a medication that is not a controlled substance as defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802.

(b)(1) Upon the request of a prescribing practitioner and to the extent not expressly required under federal law, a pharmacist or other licensed member of the pharmacy staff shall redact or otherwise remove the practitioner’s name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(2) A pharmacist may, or, upon the pharmacist’s request, another licensed member of the pharmacy staff shall, redact or otherwise remove the pharmacist’s name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(3) If a prescribing practitioner dispenses medication directly to patients for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, or both, the practitioner may redact or otherwise remove the practitioner’s own name or initials from a fulfilled prescription for a noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services, and from any accompanying printed materials.

(c) Nothing in this chapter or the rules governing the pharmacy profession shall be construed to require a pharmacist or other licensed member of a pharmacy’s staff to list the prescribing practitioner’s or pharmacist’s name or initials on a fulfilled prescription for noncontrolled medication for gender-affirming health care services or reproductive health care services.

(d) A pharmacist or other licensed member of a pharmacy’s staff shall be immune from civil and administrative liability for failing to redact or remove the name of a prescriber or pharmacist when requested to do so pursuant to subdivision (b)(1) or (2) of this section; provided, however, that this immunity shall not apply to gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct by a pharmacist or other licensed member of the pharmacy staff.

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

NEW BUSINESS

Third Reading

S. 131.

An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms.

H. 218.

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

Second Reading

Favorable with Proposal of Amendment

H. 96.

An act relating to increasing the monetary thresholds for certificates of need.

Reported favorably with recommendation of proposal of amendment by Senator Douglass for the Committee on Health and Welfare.

The Committee recommends that the Senate propose to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 9434 is amended to read:

§ 9434. CERTIFICATE OF NEED; GENERAL RULES

(a) A health care facility ~~other than a hospital~~ shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a “new health care project” ~~includes~~ means any of the following:

(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a health care facility, for which the capital cost exceeds ~~\$1,500,000.00~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(2) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.

(3) The offering of any home health service, or the transfer or conveyance of more than a 50 percent ownership interest in a health care facility other than a hospital or nursing home.

(4) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of ~~\$1,000,000.00~~ \$5,000,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health

care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board's determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(5) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds ~~\$500,000.00~~ \$3,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the health care facility within the previous three fiscal years.

~~(6) The construction, development, purchase, lease, or other establishment of an ambulatory surgical center. [Repealed.]~~

~~(b) A hospital shall not develop or have developed on its behalf a new health care project without issuance of a certificate of need by the Board. For purposes of this subsection, a "new health care project" includes the following:~~

~~(1) The construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, or any capital expenditure by or on behalf of a hospital, for which the capital cost exceeds \$3,000,000.00.~~

~~(2) The purchase, lease, or other comparable arrangement of a single piece of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for which the cost, or in the case of a donation the value, is in excess of \$1,500,000.00. For purposes of this subdivision, the purchase or lease of one or more articles of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment that are necessarily interdependent in the performance of their ordinary functions or that would constitute any health care facility included under subdivision 9432(8)(B) of this title, as determined by the Board, shall be considered together in calculating the amount of an expenditure. The Board's determination of functional interdependence of items of equipment under this subdivision shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.~~

~~(3) The offering of a health care service or technology having an annual operating expense that exceeds \$1,000,000.00 for either of the next two budgeted fiscal years, if the service or technology was not offered or employed, either on a fixed or a mobile basis, by the hospital within the previous three fiscal years.~~

~~(4) A change from one licensing period to the next in the number of licensed beds of a health care facility through addition or conversion, or through relocation from one physical facility or site to another.~~

~~(5) The offering of any home health service. [Repealed.]~~

(c) In the case of a project that requires a certificate of need under this section, expenditures for which are anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00, the applicant first shall secure a conceptual development phase certificate of need, in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter, that permits the applicant to make expenditures for architectural services, engineering design services, or any other planning services, as defined by the Board, needed in connection with the project. Upon completion of the conceptual development phase of the project, and before offering or further developing the project, the applicant shall secure a final certificate of need in accordance with the standards and procedures established in this subchapter. Applicants shall not be subject to sanctions for failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection if such failure is solely the result of good faith reliance on verified project cost estimates issued by qualified persons, which cost estimates would have led a reasonable person to conclude the project was not anticipated to be in excess of ~~\$30,000,000.00~~ \$50,000,000.00 and therefore not subject to this subsection. The provisions of this subsection notwithstanding, expenditures may be made in preparation for obtaining a conceptual development phase certificate of need, which expenditures shall not exceed ~~\$1,500,000.00 for non-hospitals or \$3,000,000.00 for hospitals~~ \$10,000,000.00.

(d) If the Board determines that a person required to obtain a certificate of need under this subchapter has separated a single project into components in order to avoid cost thresholds or other requirements under this subchapter, the person shall be required to submit an application for a certificate of need for the entire project, and the Board may proceed under section 9445 of this title. The Board's determination under this subsection shall have the effect of a final decision and is subject to appeal under section 9381 of this title.

(e) The Board may periodically adjust the monetary jurisdictional thresholds contained in this section. In doing so, the Board shall reflect the same categories of health care facilities, services, and programs recognized in this section. Any adjustment by the Board shall not exceed an amount calculated using the cumulative Consumer Price Index rate of inflation.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9435 is amended to read:

§ 9435. EXCLUSIONS

* * *

(f)(1) Excluded from this subchapter are routine replacements of:

(A) medical equipment that is fully depreciated; and

(B) nonmedical equipment and fixtures, including furnaces, boilers, refrigeration units, kitchen equipment, heating and cooling units, and similar items, regardless of their remaining useful life.

(2) These The replacements described in subdivision (1) of this subsection and purchased by a hospital shall be included in the hospital's budget and may be reviewed in the budget process set forth in subchapter 7 of this chapter.

* * *

(i) Excluded from this subchapter are emergency and nonemergency ground ambulance services, affiliated agencies, and equipment and supplies used by emergency medical personnel, as those terms are defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651.

(j) Excluded from this subchapter are the offering of a health care service, or the construction, development, purchase, renovation, or other establishment of a health care facility, that is owned or operated by the State of Vermont or is funded in whole or in substantial part by a contract or grant awarded by the State of Vermont; provided, however, that the State agency sponsoring the project or awarding the contract or grant shall inform the Green Mountain Care Board prior to commencing the project or within 30 days following the execution of the contract or grant.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage and shall apply to all new health care projects initiated on or after that date. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on the date of passage of this act for which one or more persons have been granted interested party status, the jurisdictional thresholds and exclusions in place at the time the application was filed shall continue to apply until a final decision is made on the application. For applications for a certificate of need that are already in process on the date of passage of this act for which no person has been granted interested party status, the applicant may withdraw the application in accordance with Board rules.

(Committee vote: 5-0-0)

(No House Amendments)

Reported favorably by Senator Gulick for the Committee on Finance.

The Committee recommends that the bill ought to pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Health and Welfare.

(Committee vote: 7-0-0)

House Proposal of Amendment

S. 27.

An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports.

The House proposes to the Senate to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. STATE TREASURER; MEDICAL DEBT RELIEF;
APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the State Treasurer from the General Fund in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of contracting with a nonprofit entity to acquire and repay certain medical debts incurred by Vermont residents as set forth in this section.

(b) The State Treasurer shall ensure that the entity with which the Treasurer contracts under this section will:

(1) purchase the medical debt of eligible debtors from health care providers at fair market value;

(2) abolish the debt with no cost or tax consequences for the debtor;

(3) coordinate with the health care provider or collections agency to ensure that any adverse information resulting from the medical debt is removed from the debtor's consumer credit report following the contractor's purchase and abolition of the debt; and

(4) notify each individual whose medical debt was abolished pursuant to this section:

(A) the amount of the individual's medical debt that was abolished and the name of the health care provider or providers from whom the entity purchased the individual's debt;

(B) the estimated percentage of the federal poverty level that corresponds to the individual's household income; and

(C) that financial assistance policies are available at all Vermont hospitals in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 9482, including the following minimum discounts:

(i) a 100 percent discount for individuals with household income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level; and

(ii) at least a 40 percent discount for individuals with household income between 250 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

(c) In order to be eligible for repayment of medical debt under this section, the following conditions must be met:

(1) the debtor shall be a Vermont resident who either has a household income that is at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level for the applicable household size or who owes medical debt in an amount that is five percent or more of the debtor's household income; and

(2) the debtor's patient account still maintains an outstanding balance even after the health care provider has completed its routine efforts to collect the amounts due.

Sec. 2. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 83, Sec. 53(b)(5)(B), as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. C.102 and 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. E.1000, is further amended to read:

(B) ~~\$20,000,000~~ \$19,000,000 shall be appropriated to the State Treasurer's Office and used for redeeming State of Vermont general obligation bonds prior to maturity.

Sec. 3. 1 V.S.A. § 151 is added to read:

§ 151. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

“Behavioral health” means any behavioral condition bearing on health, including stress-linked physical symptoms, patient activation, and health behaviors that can be addressed through support, counseling, change techniques, coaching, and other interventions. As used in the Vermont Statutes Annotated, the term does not include mental health conditions or substance use disorders. The General Assembly recognizes that using the term “behavioral health” to describe mental health conditions or substance use disorders has a stigmatizing impact, which may deter individuals from seeking health care for those conditions, but also recognizes that some jurisdictions interpret the term to incorporate those conditions and that therefore it may be necessary under limited circumstances to include the term in the definition of health care services for the sole reason of avoiding any question about the intended scope of a specific statute.

Sec. 4. 9 V.S.A. § 2466d is added to read:

§ 2466d. REPORTING OF MEDICAL DEBT INFORMATION
PROHIBITED

(a) A credit reporting agency shall not report or maintain in the file on a consumer information relating to a medical debt.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) “Health care services” means all supplies, care, and services of a medical, dental, behavioral health, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventative, rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication.

(2) “Medical debt” means debt arising from health care services, including dental services, or from health care goods, including products, devices, durable medical equipment, and prescription drugs. “Medical debt” does not include debt arising from services provided by a veterinarian; debt charged to a credit card unless the credit card is issued under an open-end or closed-end credit plan offered solely for the payment of health care services; debt charged to a home equity or general-purpose line of credit; or secured debt.

Sec. 5. 9 V.S.A. § 2480b is amended to read:

§ 2480b. DISCLOSURES TO CONSUMERS

* * *

(c) Any time a credit reporting agency is required to make a written disclosure to consumers pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1681g, it shall disclose, in at least 12-point type, and in bold type as indicated, the following notice:

“NOTICE TO VERMONT CONSUMERS

* * *

(2) Under Vermont law, no one may access your credit report without your permission except under the following limited circumstances:

* * *

(F) where the request for a credit report is related to a credit transaction entered into prior to January 1, 1993; or

(G) where the request for a credit report is by the Vermont Department of Taxes and is used for the purpose of collecting or investigating delinquent taxes; or

(H) where the request for a credit report is by an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for the purpose of determining eligibility for the abolition of medical debt.

* * *

Sec. 6. 9 V.S.A. § 2480g is amended to read:

§ 2480g. EXEMPTIONS

* * *

(e) The provisions of section 2480e of this title shall not apply to an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code when determining eligibility for the abolition of medical debt; provided, however, that the exemption from the provisions of section 2480e of this title shall not apply to a tax-exempt organization that is a large health care facility, as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 9481.

Sec. 7. 18 V.S.A. chapter 221, subchapter 10 is amended to read:

Subchapter 10. Patient Financial Assistance and Medical Debt

* * *

§ 9485. PROHIBITION ON SALE OR REPORTING OF MEDICAL DEBT

(a)(1) No large health care facility shall sell its medical debt except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) A large health care facility may sell or otherwise transfer its medical debt to an organization that is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for the specific purpose of the tax-exempt organization abolishing the medical debt of one or more patients by cancellation of the indebtedness.

(b) No large health care facility or medical debt collector shall report or otherwise furnish any portion of a medical debt to a credit reporting agency.

* * *

Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025

Senate Resolution for Second Reading

Favorable

S.R. 12.

Senate resolution reaffirming the friendship between the State of Vermont and Taiwan and supporting enhanced Vermont-Taiwan bilateral relations and Taiwan's participation in international organizations.

Reported favorably by Senator Weeks for the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

(Committee vote: 5-0-0)

NOTICE CALENDAR

Second Reading

Favorable with Proposal of Amendment

H. 488.

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

Reported favorably with recommendation of proposal of amendment by Senator Westman for the Committee on Transportation.

The Committee recommends that the Senate propose to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Transportation Program Adopted as Amended; Definitions * * *

Sec. 1. TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ADOPTED; DEFINITIONS

(a) Adoption. The Agency of Transportation's Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program appended to the Agency of Transportation's proposed fiscal year 2026 budget, as amended by this act, is adopted to the extent federal, State, and local funds are available.

(b) Definitions. As used in this act, unless otherwise indicated:

(1) "Agency" means the Agency of Transportation.

(2) "Candidate project" means a project approved by the General Assembly that is not anticipated to have significant expenditures for preliminary engineering or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the budget year and funding for construction is not anticipated within a predictable time frame.

(3) “Development and evaluation (D&E) project” means a project approved by the General Assembly that is anticipated to have preliminary engineering expenditures or right-of-way expenditures, or both, during the budget year and that the Agency is committed to delivering to construction on a timeline driven by priority and available funding.

(4) “Electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)” and “electric vehicle supply equipment available to the public” have the same meanings as in 30 V.S.A. § 201.

(5) “Front-of-book project” means a project approved by the General Assembly that is anticipated to have construction expenditures during the budget year or the following three years, or both, with expected expenditures shown over four years.

(6) “Mileage-based user fee” or “MBUF” means a fee for vehicle use of the public road system with distance, stated in miles, as the measure of use.

(7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV),” “plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV),” and “battery electric vehicle (BEV)” have the same meanings as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85).

(8) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

(9) “TIB funds” means monies deposited in the Transportation Infrastructure Bond Fund in accordance with 19 V.S.A. § 11f.

(10) The table heading “As Proposed” means the Proposed Transportation Program referenced in subsection (a) of this section; the table heading “As Amended” means the amendments as made by this act; the table heading “Change” means the difference obtained by subtracting the “As Proposed” figure from the “As Amended” figure; the terms “change” or “changes” in the text refer to the project- and program-specific amendments, the aggregate sum of which equals the net “Change” in the applicable table heading; and “State” in any tables amending authorizations indicates that the source of funds is State monies in the Transportation Fund, unless otherwise specified.

* * * Rail Program; Technical Correction * * *

Sec. 2. RAIL PROGRAM

(a) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail the following project is deleted: Barre–Berlin–Montpelier 04-9038–WACR Subsidy.

(b) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail, the following project is added: Hartford HRRD(1) 25G002–White River Junction Depot Repairs.

(c) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation Program for Rail, spending authority for Hartford HRRD(1) 25G002–White River Junction Depot Repairs is authorized as follows:

<u>FY26</u>	<u>As Proposed</u>	<u>As Amended</u>	<u>Change</u>
Other	0	260,000	260,000
Total	0	260,000	260,000
<u>Sources of funds</u>			
State	0	260,000	260,000
Total	0	260,000	260,000

* * * Unobligated Fund Balance for Fiscal Year 2026 * * *

Sec. 3. UNOBLIGATED TRANSPORTATION FUND BALANCE; FISCAL YEAR 2026

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Administration shall ensure an unobligated fund balance of at least \$686,000.00 exists in the Transportation Fund in fiscal year 2026 after the close of fiscal year 2025. It is the intent of the General Assembly that in the creation of the fiscal year 2026 budget adjustment proposal and the fiscal year 2027 budget proposal, the unobligated fund balance required pursuant to this section shall be utilized to offset estimated Transportation Fund revenue losses from fee and tax reductions enacted during the 2025 legislative session.

* * * State and Federal Funding Updates * * *

Sec. 4. STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATES

(a) On or before September 30, 2025 and December 15, 2025, the Secretary of Transportation shall provide the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee with a briefing on the status of State Transportation Fund revenues and federal funding for the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, and any impacts on the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program. The briefing shall include:

(1) a summary of federal funding that has been received to date, federal funding that is anticipated later in the State fiscal year, federal funding that is delayed, and federal funding that has been reduced or subject to rescission;

(2) a summary of the Transportation Fund revenues to date in State fiscal year 2026;

(3) a summary of the impacts on the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program that are caused by changes in State Transportation Fund revenues from the consensus forecast or delays or reductions in federal funding; and

(4) a summary of any legislative action that may be necessary to address reductions in State revenues or federal funding.

(b) Upon becoming aware of a significant change in State revenues or a reduction in federal funding, rescission of federal grants, or delay of anticipated federal funding that will impact the Agency's ability to carry out significant portions of the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program, the Secretary of Transportation may request that the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee meet within 14 days to review the Agency's plan to address the reduction in funding.

(c) In the event of a decrease in overall State or federal funding for the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program that is in excess of four percent, the Secretary shall submit to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee a written report detailing the impact of the decrease on projects that are in the 2026 Transportation Program.

* * * Project Dashboard * * *

Sec. 5. 19 V.S.A. § 10g is amended to read:

§ 10g. ANNUAL REPORT; TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM;
ADVANCEMENTS, CANCELLATIONS, AND DELAYS

* * *

(q)(1) The Agency's annual proposed Transportation Program shall include the following information depicted in a graphical dashboard:

(A) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation Program that have been delayed by more than one year from the preliminary plan projected completion date; and

(B) the percentage of projects in each section of the Transportation Program whose cost has increased by more than 50 percent or \$5,000,000.00, whichever is less, from the preliminary plan cost estimate.

(2) The Agency shall provide the House and Senate Committees on Transportation with quarterly updates to the dashboard provided pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 6. 19 V.S.A. § 10g(g) is amended to read:

~~(g) Project updates.—The Agency’s annual proposed Transportation Program shall include project updates referencing this section and listing the following:~~

~~(1) all proposed projects in the Program that would be new to the State Transportation Program;~~

~~(2) all projects for which total estimated costs have increased by more than \$5,000,000.00 from the estimate in the adopted Transportation Program for the prior fiscal year or by more than 75 percent from the estimate in the adopted Transportation Program for the prior fiscal year;~~

~~(3) all projects for which the total estimated costs have, for the first time, increased by more than \$10,000,000.00 from the Preliminary Plan estimate or by more than 100 percent from the Preliminary Plan estimate; and~~

~~(4) all projects funded for construction in the prior fiscal year’s adopted Transportation Program that are no longer funded in the proposed Transportation Program submitted to the General Assembly, the projected costs for such projects in the prior fiscal year’s adopted Transportation Program, and the total costs incurred over the life of each such project. [Repealed.]~~

~~*** Relinquishment of Vermont Route 36 in the Town of St. Albans ***~~

Sec. 7. RELINQUISHMENT OF VERMONT ROUTE 36 IN THE TOWN OF ST. ALBANS

Pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 15(a)(2), the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Town of St. Albans to relinquish a segment of the State highway in the Town of St. Albans known as Vermont Route 36. The segment authorized to be relinquished begins at mile marker 0.00, just east of the “Black Bridge” (B2), and continues 14,963 feet (approximately 2.834 miles) easterly to mile marker 2.834, where Vermont Route 36 meets the boundary of the City of St. Albans, and includes the 0.106-mile westbound section of Vermont Route 36 and approaches at the entrance to the St. Albans Bay Town Park.

~~*** State-Owned Railroads; Rail Trails ***~~

Sec. 8. 5 V.S.A. chapter 58 is redesignated to read:

CHAPTER 58. STATE ACQUISITION OF STATE-OWNED RAILROADS AND RAIL TRAILS

Sec. 9. 5 V.S.A. § 3408 is amended to read:

§ 3408. RAILBANKING; NOTIFICATION

(a) If the Secretary finds that the continued operation of any State-owned railroad property is not economically feasible under present conditions, ~~he or she~~ the Secretary may place the line in railbanked status after giving advance notice of ~~such~~ the planned railbanking to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation when the General Assembly is in session, and when the General Assembly is not in session, to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee. The Agency, on behalf of the State, shall continue to hold the right-of-way of a railbanked line for reactivation of railroad service or for other public purposes not inconsistent with future reactivation of railroad service. ~~Such~~ The railbanking shall not be treated, for purposes of any law or rule of law, as an abandonment of the use of the rights-of-way for railroad purposes.

* * *

(c)(1) The Secretary may, after consulting with municipalities, adopt rules consistent with the provisions of section 3408a of this chapter governing the interim trail use of State-owned railroad rights-of-way that have been placed in railbanked status.

(2) Signs indicating the rules shall be conspicuously posted in or near all areas affected.

(3) Any person who violates ~~these~~ rules adopted pursuant to this subsection shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$300.00.

Sec. 10. 5 V.S.A. § 3408a is added to read:

§ 3408a. USE OF RAIL TRAILS

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) “Rail trail” means the right-of-way of a State-owned railroad line that has been authorized for railbanking and interim trail use pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d) or section 3408 of this chapter.

(2) “Trail sponsor” means the Agency of Transportation in the case of a rail trail maintained by the Agency or the municipality in the case of a rail trail maintained by a municipality.

(b) Use of rail trails. The following acts are prohibited within a rail trail right-of-way:

(1) Throwing, dropping, or discarding bottles, cans, paper, garbage, rubbish, sewage, or other material of any kind.

(2) Cutting, mutilating, or removing any tree, shrub, flower, plant, top soil, or sod or attempting to do so.

(3) Injury, defacement, removal, or destruction of the surface of the rail trail or a rail trail's structures, appurtenances, recreation facilities, or property.

(4) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, erecting, placing, or displaying any advertising materials, posters, or placards of any kind. This prohibition shall not apply to official signs erected by the trail sponsor.

(5) Except as authorized by the trail sponsor, entering or remaining on the rail trail for the purpose of:

(A) selling, hiring, or leasing any goods or services; or

(B) distributing samples, pamphlets, or advertising materials, except for official information authorized by the trail sponsor.

(6) Parades, demonstrations, picnics, games, entertainment, or organizations, except at times and locations approved by the trail sponsor.

(7) Harassing or molesting wildlife, except for fishing.

(8) Using or discharging any firearms or other weapons or fireworks, except by a person authorized by the trail sponsor or as otherwise permitted by law.

(9) Igniting fires for any purpose, except in fireplaces or firepits at locations designated by the trail sponsor or for trail maintenance purposes.

(10) Soliciting alms or contributions.

(11) Use of motorized vehicles, except for:

(A) maintenance purposes;

(B) snowmobiles, subject to applicable State rules, when the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. has declared the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System officially open;

(C) Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) utilized by an individual with a disability as permitted by the Agency's Rail Trail Accessibility Policy;

(D) electric bicycles as permitted pursuant to applicable State rules;
and

(E) other circumstances that the trail sponsor determines are appropriate.

(12) Overnight camping, except at areas designated for that purpose by the trail sponsor.

(c) Penalty. Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to subdivision 3408(c)(3) of this chapter.

* * * Transportation Board * * *

Sec. 11. 19 V.S.A. § 3 is amended to read:

§ 3. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; CREATION; MEMBERS

~~A transportation board~~ The Transportation Board is formed to be attached to the Agency of Transportation. There shall be seven members of the Board, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor shall so far as is possible appoint Board members whose interests and expertise lie in various areas of the transportation field. The Governor shall appoint the ~~chair~~ Chair, and the Board may vote to appoint other officers. The members of the Board shall be appointed for terms of three years. Board members may be appointed for two additional three-year terms but shall not be eligible for further reappointment. ~~Ne~~ Not more than four members of the Board shall belong to the same political party. No member of the Board shall:

* * *

Sec. 12. 19 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. TRANSPORTATION BOARD; POWERS AND DUTIES

* * *

(d) Specific duties and responsibilities. The Board shall:

* * *

(4) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, regarding legal disputes in the execution of contracts awarded by the Agency or by municipalities cooperating with the Agency to advance projects in the State's Transportation Program, except that the Agency shall provide appellate review relating to bids and the competitive negotiation process under 19 V.S.A. § 10a;

(5) provide appellate review, when requested in writing, of decisions of the Secretary in administering the provisions of Title 24, relating to ~~junkyards~~ salvage yards;

* * *

* * * Green Mountain Transit Authority * * *

Sec. 13. 24 App. V.S.A. chapter 801 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 801. GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

* * *

§ 2. AREA OF OPERATION

(a) ~~The area of operation shall be the urbanized area of Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Washington Counties and the Towns of Orange, Washington, and Williamstown. The area of operation shall include Addison and Caledonia Counties and the Towns of Orange County other than Orange, Washington, and Williamstown, but only for the provision of commuter services. The area of operation shall include Lamoille County, but only for the provision of published scheduled services~~ County as established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Green Mountain Transit Authority may operate service outside the urbanized area of Chittenden County with approval from the Agency of Transportation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent other transit providers from offering transit connecting to the urbanized area of Chittenden County, or providing on demand services in that area, with the approval of the Agency of Transportation.

* * *

§ 10. IMPLEMENTATION

* * *

~~(e) Immediately upon joining the Authority, the municipality shall appoint two commissioners as provided herein. The initial terms of the commissioners of the initial members shall be arranged by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission so that the terms of approximately one-third of the commissioners shall expire in each year. The initial terms of commissioners from municipalities joining after March 7, 1973, shall be set by the Board of Commissioners.~~

* * *

* * * Town Highways * * *

Sec. 14. 19 V.S.A. § 306 is amended to read:

§ 306. APPROPRIATION; STATE AID FOR TOWN HIGHWAYS

(a) General State aid to town highways.

(1) An annual appropriation to class 1, 2, and 3 town highways shall be made. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

(A) the percentage change of the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations for town highways under this subsection (a) and subsections (e) and (h) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

* * *

(e) State aid for town highway structures.

(1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities for maintenance (including actions to extend life expectancy) and for construction of bridges and culverts; for maintenance and construction of other structures, including causeways and retaining walls, intended to preserve the integrity of the traveled portion of class 1, 2, and 3 town highways; and for alternatives that eliminate the need for a bridge, culvert, or other structure, such as the construction or reconstruction of a highway, the purchase of parcels of land that would be landlocked by closure of a bridge, the payment of damages for loss of highway access, and the substitution of other means of access. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:

(A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this subsection (e) and subsections (a) and (h) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

(B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

(2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

(3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$7,200,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. ~~The Agency's proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account the estimated amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with~~

~~respect to project grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well as with respect to new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year~~ Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for State aid for town highway structures is increased pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Town Highway Structures Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall advise the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from the General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the Agency has previously committed to completing those projects.

~~(3)~~(5) Funds received as grants for State aid for town highway structures may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

* * *

(h) Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program.

(1) There shall be an annual appropriation for grants to municipalities for resurfacing, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of paved or unpaved class 2 town highways. ~~However, municipalities~~ Municipalities that have no State highways or class 1 town highways within their borders may use the grants for such activities with respect to both class 2 and class 3 town highways. ~~Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. The Agency's proposed appropriation for the Program shall take into account the estimated amount of qualifying invoices submitted to the Agency with respect to project grants approved in prior years but not yet completed as well as with respect to new project grants to be approved in the fiscal year. This appropriation shall increase over the previous fiscal year's appropriation by the same percentage change as the following, whichever is less, or shall remain at the previous fiscal year's appropriation if either of the following are negative or zero:~~

(A) the percentage change in the Agency's total appropriations funded by Transportation Fund revenues, excluding appropriations under this subsection (h) and subsections (a) and (e) of this section, for the most recently closed fiscal year as compared to the fiscal year immediately preceding the most recently closed fiscal year; or

(B) the percentage change in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

(2) For purposes of subdivision (1)(B) of this subsection, the percentage change in the CPI-U is calculated by determining the increase or decrease, to the nearest one-tenth of a percent, in the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year one year prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made compared to the CPI-U for the month ending on June 30 in the calendar year two years prior to the first day of the fiscal year for which the appropriation will be made.

(3) Each fiscal year, the Agency shall approve qualifying projects with a total estimated State share cost of \$8,600,000.00 at a minimum as new grants. Beginning with State fiscal year 2027, the minimum total estimated State share cost for the approved grants shall increase over the prior fiscal year's minimum total estimated State share cost by the same percentage as the appropriation for the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program is increased pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(4) In a given fiscal year, should expenditures in the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program exceed the amount appropriated, the Agency shall advise the Governor of the need to request a supplemental appropriation from the General Assembly to fund the additional project cost, provided that the Agency has previously committed to completing those projects. Funds received as grants for State aid under the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program may be used by a municipality to satisfy a portion of the matching requirements for federal earmarks, subject to subsection 309b(c) of this title.

* * *

Sec. 15. CANCELLATION OF LOCALLY MANAGED PROJECTS;
PROCESS; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT

The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Transportation Board, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to examine the requirements of 19 V.S.A. § 309c, cancellation of locally managed projects, to evaluate the obligations, risks, and benefits imposed by the provisions of that section on the State and the local sponsor of a locally managed project and to identify potential changes to the provisions of that section to ensure that State and federal transportation funding resources are appropriately administered. The Agency shall, on or before January 15, 2026, submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 16. MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION ASSETS; ASSESSMENT;
FUNDING NEEDS; REPORT

(a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to:

(1) review current municipal practices relating to planning for ongoing maintenance, upgrades, and replacement of municipal transportation assets, including roads, pavement, bridges, culverts, signals, signage, highway equipment, and highway facilities;

(2) develop a framework for a system to assess the current condition of municipal highway networks and the potential impacts of improvements to or degradation of those networks on the State's transportation system;

(3) develop a prioritization process to direct State funding to the repair, upgrade, or replacement of specific municipal transportation assets based on the need for such work in the context of the asset's role in the State and regional highway networks; and

(4) identify and recommend potential statutory changes to implement the assessment framework developed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection and the prioritization process developed pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection.

(b) The Agency of Transportation shall, not later than January 15, 2027, submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 17. STATE TOWN HIGHWAY AID; MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAMS; EFFICIENCIES; IMPROVEMENTS; REPORT

(a) The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, shall engage a consultant to evaluate the State's Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs administered by the Agency to identify potential efficiencies and improvements related to the administration of Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs. The consultant shall evaluate the various funding streams authorized pursuant to 19 V.S.A. § 306 as well as programs administered through the Agency's Municipal Assistance Bureau, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program, Transportation Alternatives Program, Municipal Mitigation Program, Municipal Park and Ride Program, Better Roads Program, Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation Program, and Grants in Aid.

(b) On or before January 15, 2026, the Agency shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the consultant's findings and any recommendations for legislative or

administrative actions to improve or increase the efficiency of the Town Highway Aid and municipal grant programs.

* * * Mileage-Based User Fee * * *

Sec. 18. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29 are amended to read:

Sec. 27. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly for the State:

(1) ~~to start collecting a mileage-based user fee from all battery-electric vehicles registered in Vermont starting on July 1, 2025, which is expected to be the first day of the first fiscal year when more than 15 percent of new pleasure car registrations in the State are plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) or before January 1, 2027 subject to sufficient funding being available for implementation;~~

(2) ~~to start subjecting~~ subject plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) that are a pleasure car to an ~~increased~~ annual or a biennial ~~registration~~ electric vehicle infrastructure fee starting on ~~July~~ January 1, 2025, and that PHEVs shall not be subject to a mileage-based user fee;

(3) ~~to work towards~~ examine collecting a fee on ~~kWhs~~ electricity that ~~are~~ is dispensed through certain electric vehicle supply equipment available to the public so as to supplant lost ~~gas~~ fuel tax revenue from ~~out-of-state~~ PEVs traveling in Vermont; and

(4) ~~to not commence collecting a mileage-based user fee until such~~ the General Assembly has enacted legislation that establishes the amount of the fee and codifies any necessary authorizing language ~~is codified~~ in statute and ~~that legislation~~ becomes effective.

Sec. 28. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE AUTHORIZATION

(a) Within the Agency of Transportation’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation Program for Environmental Policy and Sustainability, the Agency of Transportation, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, is authorized to apply for and accept a competitive federal Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection grant established pursuant to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (IIJA), Sec. 13001, with up to \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund monies authorized for the nonfederal match in fiscal year 2024 and ~~a to-be-determined amount for the nonfederal match in subsequent fiscal years~~ up to \$350,000.00 in Transportation Fund monies authorized for the nonfederal match in fiscal year 2025.

(b) ~~As permitted under federal regulations and grant terms, the~~ The Agency shall utilize ~~grant monies to design~~ State or federal funding, or both,

authorized to be used for the purpose of designing a mileage-based user fee that is consistent with Secs. 27 and 29 of this act.

(c) Subject to State procurement requirements and the availability of sufficient funding, the Agency may retain one or more contractors or consultants, or both, to assist with the design of a process to commence collecting a mileage-based user fee on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

Sec. 29. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE DESIGN

(a) Definitions. As used in Secs. 27–30 of this act:

(1) “Account manager” means a person under contract with the Agency of Transportation or Department of Motor Vehicles to administer and manage the mileage-based user fee.

(2) “Annual vehicle miles traveled” means the total number of miles that a BEV is driven between annual inspections as reported ~~by an inspection mechanic~~ to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

(3) “Mileage-based user fee” means the total amount that an owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont owes the State and is calculated by:

(A) multiplying the mileage-based user fee rate by the annual vehicle miles traveled ~~or~~;

(B) in the case of a terminating event, by multiplying the mileage-based user fee rate by the vehicle miles traveled between the last Vermont annual inspection and the terminating event; or

(C) in the absence of a recorded odometer reading during the mileage reporting period, by multiplying the mileage-based user fee by the 98th percentile of estimated annual vehicle miles traveled for a pleasure car in Vermont.

(4) “Mileage-based user fee rate” means the per-mile usage fee charged to the owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont.

(5) “Mileage reporting period” means the time between annual inspections or the time between ~~an~~ the most recent annual inspection and a terminating event.

(6) “Pleasure car” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(28).

(7) “Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV)” has the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85) and includes battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), which have the same meaning as in 23 V.S.A. § 4(85)(A) and (B).

(8) “Terminating event” means either the registering of a BEV that had been registered in Vermont in a different state or a change in ownership or lesseeship of the BEV, or both.

(b) Commencement date. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee for miles driven by a BEV registered in Vermont to commence collecting revenue on ~~July 1, 2025~~ January 1, 2027.

(c) Covered vehicles. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee based on the annual vehicle miles traveled by BEVs registered in the State.

(d) Imposition of a mileage-based user fee. The Agency shall design a process to collect a mileage-based user fee from the owner or lessee of a BEV registered in Vermont for each mileage reporting period ~~within 60 days after the Vermont annual inspection~~ on an annual, quarterly, or monthly basis selected by the owner or lessee and reconciled upon renewal of the vehicle registration or within 60 days after a terminating event that closes the mileage reporting period.

Sec. 19. INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) the mileage-based user fee for a BEV pleasure car be approximately equivalent to the average amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue from the use of a non-PEV pleasure car registered in Vermont and the average amount collected by the State in fuel tax revenue and Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fee from the use of a PHEV pleasure car; and

(2) that the mileage-based user fee for BEV pleasure cars will be an interim step towards gradually expanding the mileage-based user fee to all motor vehicles.

Sec. 20. MILEAGE-BASED USER FEE; FUNDING; DESIGN; UPDATES

The Agency of Transportation shall report to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee on or before September 30, 2025 and December 15, 2025 regarding the status of federal grants and other funding for the design of the mileage-based user fee pursuant to the provisions of 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 62, Secs. 27–29, as amended by Sec. 12 of this act, and the Agency’s progress in designing the mileage-based user fee.

* * * Authority to Transfer Monies in State Fiscal Year 2026 * * *

Sec. 21. AUTHORIZATION TO USE MONIES TO CONTINUE PARTNERSHIP WITH DRIVE ELECTRIC VERMONT IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2026

In State fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Transportation is authorized to spend up to \$325,000.00 in remaining monies appropriated to the Electrify Your Fleet Program in State Fiscal Year 2024 to continue the Agency of Transportation’s partnership with Drive Electric Vermont. The monies shall be used for programs and activities that support increased ownership and use of PEVs in the State through:

- (1) stakeholder coordination;
- (2) consumer education and outreach;
- (3) infrastructure development; and

(4) the provision of technical assistance and support to Vermont municipalities and Vermont businesses desiring to electrify their vehicle fleets.

* * * Consideration of Vehicle Miles Traveled in Project Planning * * *

Sec. 22. 19 V.S.A. § 1 is amended to read:

§ 1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this title:

* * *

(26) “Vehicle miles traveled” means the estimated sum of the miles traveled by all motor vehicle trips within a specific area during a calendar year.

Sec. 23. 19 V.S.A. § 10b is amended to read:

§ 10b. STATEMENT OF POLICY; GENERAL

(a) The Agency shall be the responsible agency of the State for the development of transportation policy. It shall develop a mission statement to reflect:

(1) that State transportation policy shall be to encompass, coordinate, and integrate all modes of transportation and to consider complete streets, as defined in section 2401 of this title, principles; and

(2) the need for transportation projects that will improve the State’s economic infrastructure;~~;~~ ~~as well as the use of resources in efficient, coordinated, integrated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound ways;~~ reduce vehicle miles traveled within the State when feasible; and that will be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) issued under 30 V.S.A. § 202b.

* * *

Sec. 24. 19 V.S.A. § 10c is amended to read:

§ 10c. STATEMENT OF POLICY; HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

* * *

(c) In choosing between the improvement of an existing highway and complete reconstruction, the Agency shall weigh the following factors:

* * *

(9) the impact on the historic, scenic, and aesthetic values of the municipality, as interpreted by the municipality, in which the highway is located; ~~and~~

(10) if it is a forest highway under federal jurisdiction; and

(11) opportunities to reduce vehicle miles traveled or otherwise reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to the highway.

* * *

Sec. 25. 19 V.S.A. § 10i is amended to read:

§ 10i. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

* * *

(c) Transportation Program. The Transportation Program shall be developed in a fiscally responsible manner to accomplish the following objectives:

* * *

(3) strengthening the economy, protecting the quality of the natural environment, and improving Vermonters' quality of life; ~~and~~

(4) achieving the recommendations of the CEP; and

(5) striving to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

* * *

* * * Medical Transports * * *

Sec. 26. PUBLIC TRANSIT DEMAND RESPONSE VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS; GRANTS; APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$600,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Transportation in fiscal year 2026 for the purpose of providing grants to the public transit agencies to hire volunteer coordinators. Volunteer coordinators hired with grants provided pursuant to this section shall be

responsible for the identification, recruitment, and retention of volunteers to provide transportation services to individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs.

(b) The Agency shall, to the extent possible, seek to provide grants to public transit providers in a manner that is geographically balanced and ensures the distribution of volunteer coordinators throughout the State.

(c) Not later than December 15, 2026, the Agency, in consultation with public transit agencies that receive grants pursuant to this section, shall submit a written report the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the extent to which grants issued pursuant to this section resulted in an increase in volunteer capacity in the State.

Sec. 27. MEDICAID NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

(a) In fiscal year 2026, prior to executing a contract to provide Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation services, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall provide to the Joint Fiscal Committee for review and approval a detailed analysis demonstrating that by executing such a contract:

(1) no State policy, including the coordinated delivery of transportation services in the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities program and the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program, will be compromised;

(2) there will be no degradation of service to eligible individuals; and

(3) the financial stability of the State's public transportation systems will be maintained.

(b) The analysis shall also include the impact of the Agency of Transportation's investments in vehicles, technology, and other capital investments on the coordinated service delivery model.

Sec. 28. VOLUNTEERS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES; BACKGROUND CHECKS; EXPANSION OF VOLUNTEER POOL; REPORT

(a) On or before July 15, 2025, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall commence meeting with the Vermont Public Transit Association, the Agency of Transportation, and, in the discretion of the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, other stakeholders to identify potential, federally permissible opportunities to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers. As part of this work, the Department and Association shall collaborate to determine if there are specific classes of offenses that currently prevent volunteer drivers from providing

transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program.

(1) The Vermont Public Transit Association shall, to the extent possible, gather and provide to the Department anonymized information from its members regarding:

(A) the number of potential volunteers who were barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program due to a background check during the past year;

(B) which of the background checks currently required by the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program resulted in potential volunteers being barred from providing transportation services, broken out by percentage; and

(C) a summary of the offenses that resulted in potential volunteers being barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program, broken out by:

(i) the type of offense;

(ii) whether the offense was a felony or misdemeanor;

(iii) whether the offense was under State or federal law;

(iv) the percentage of potential volunteers who were barred from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program for each type of offense; and

(v) to the extent that it is possible to determine, the number of rides that could have been provided by the individuals barred under each type of offense.

(2) The Department shall utilize the information provided by the Association pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection to determine, to the extent possible, whether the identified offenses are:

(A) fraud-based or otherwise implicate potential Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse;

(B) an offense that otherwise bars an individual from providing transportation services through the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program; or

(C) an offense that caused harm to an individual other than the offender, or otherwise negatively impacted the safety of the general public.

(b) The Department of Vermont Health Access and the Vermont Public Transit Association shall, on or before January 30, 2026, make themselves available to provide an update to the House Committees on Transportation and on Health Care and to the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health and Welfare regarding the work performed pursuant to this section and opportunities that were identified to expand the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program's pool of volunteer drivers.

Sec. 29. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS; PUBLICITY; OUTREACH

(a) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Vermont Public Transit Association, shall identify and pursue opportunities to communicate with the Vermont driving public regarding volunteer and community driver participation in the State's demand response transportation programs, including the Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities program and the Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation program. Outreach conducted pursuant to this section may include:

(1) invitations for individuals to voluntarily indicate their interest through the operator licensing and vehicle registration processes, subject to any data privacy requirements under State or federal law;

(2) notices or other public outreach placed on the Department's website or other internet-based platforms; and

(3) messaging by the Agency of Transportation on social media platforms, including providing links to informational resources provided by the Vermont Public Transit Association.

(b) The Department of Vermont Health Access, in consultation with the Agency of Transportation and the Vermont Public Transit Association, shall identify and pursue opportunities to increase awareness of available transportation services provided by volunteer and community driver programs among both individuals who are potentially eligible to volunteer as drivers and individuals who could potentially utilize the transportation services.

Sec. 30. COORDINATION OF HEALTH CARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES; WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, shall convene a working group to improve the coordination of health care and transportation services in relation to individuals enrolled in the State's demand response transportation programs. The working group shall be composed of stakeholders identified by the Secretary in consultation with the Commissioner of Vermont Health Access, including representatives of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health

Systems, independent dialysis and methadone facilities, and the Vermont Public Transportation Association.

(b) The working group shall examine various options for improving the coordination of health care and transportation services, including:

(1) opportunities to coordinate the scheduling of health care appointments and treatments to maximize the use of shared rides; and

(2) opportunities to improve communication between the public transit agencies and health care providers to facilitate coordination of health care and transportation services for individuals enrolled in the State’s demand response transportation programs.

(c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Secretary and Commissioner shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Transportation and on Health Care and the Senate Committees on Transportation and on Health and Welfare with the working group’s findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

* * * Vehicle Identification Numbers for Certain Vehicles * * *

Sec. 31. ULTRA-LOW VOLUME VEHICLE MANUFACTURING; KIT-CARS; HOMEBUILT MOTOR VEHICLES; VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER; REPORT

(a)(1) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources and representatives of the ultra-low volume vehicle manufacturing industry in Vermont, shall examine processes for issuing vehicle identification numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles and opportunities to facilitate the registration of such vehicles.

(2) As used in this section:

(A) “Homebuilt motor vehicle” means a motor vehicle that is constructed or assembled by an individual from new or used parts, or both, and is not a kit-car.

(B) “Kit-car” means a motor vehicle that is constructed by an individual from a manufactured kit that includes some or all parts and components necessary to construct the motor vehicle.

(C) “Ultra-low volume motor vehicle” means a vehicle that is manufactured for sale by a manufacturer whose annual worldwide production is not more than 325 motor vehicles.

(b) In preparing the report, the Commissioner shall:

(1) examine the potential to waive some or all Vermont motor vehicle emissions requirements for ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles;

(2) identify a cost-effective process for certifying the safety of ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles; and

(3) develop a streamlined process to provide State Vehicle Identification Numbers to ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles.

(c) On or before January 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Transportation regarding the Commissioner's findings and identifying any legislative action necessary to enable the issuance of vehicle identification numbers to and registration of ultra-low volume motor vehicles, kit-cars, and homebuilt motor vehicles.

* * * Railroad Lease Extensions * * *

Sec. 32. 5 V.S.A. § 3405 is amended to read:

§ 3405. LEASE FOR CONTINUED OPERATION

(a) The Secretary, as agent for the State, with the approval of the General Assembly, or if the General Assembly is not in session, approval of the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee, is authorized to lease or otherwise arrange for the continued operation of all or any State-owned railroad property to any responsible person, provided that approval for the operation, if necessary, is granted by the federal Surface Transportation Board under 49 C.F.R. Part 1150 (certificate to construct, acquire, or operate railroad lines). The transaction shall be subject to any further terms and conditions as in the opinion of the Secretary are necessary and appropriate to accomplish the purpose of this chapter.

(b) To preserve continuity of service on State-owned railroads, the Secretary may enter into a short-term lease or operating agreement, for a term not to exceed six months, with a responsible railroad operator. The Secretary shall notify the House and Senate Committees on Transportation within 10 calendar days after entering into any lease or agreement pursuant to this subsection.

(c) The Secretary shall notify the House and Senate Committees on Transportation or, if the General Assembly is not in session, the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee when there are 12 months remaining on

the operating lease for any State-owned railroad, and when there are 12 months remaining on a lease extension for the operating lease for any State-owned railroad.

* * * Dig Safe * * *

Sec. 33. 30 V.S.A. § 7006 is amended to read:

§ 7006. MARKING OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITIES

A company notified in accordance with section 7005 of this title shall, within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, ~~of~~ after the receipt of the notice, mark the approximate location of its underground utility facilities in the area of the proposed excavation activities; provided, however, if the company advises the person that the proposed excavation area is of such length or size that the company cannot reasonably mark all of the underground utility facilities within 48 72 hours, the person shall notify the company of the specific locations in which the excavation activities will first occur and the company shall mark facilities in those locations within 48 72 hours and the remaining facilities within a reasonable time thereafter. A company and an excavator may by agreement fix a later time for the company's marking of the facilities, provided the marking is made prior to excavation activities. For the purposes of this chapter, the approximate location of underground facilities shall be marked with stakes, paint, or other physical means as designated by the Commission.

Sec. 34. 30 V.S.A. § 7006a is amended to read:

§ 7006a. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERGROUND UTILITY FACILITY MARKINGS

After a company has marked its underground facilities in accordance with section 7006 of this title, the excavator shall be responsible for maintenance of the designated markings. In the event said markings are obliterated, destroyed, or removed, the person engaged in excavation activities shall notify the System referred to in section 7002 of this title that remarking is needed. The System shall then notify all member companies whose facilities may be affected. ~~The~~ Each applicable company shall within 48 72 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, following receipt of the notice, remark the location of its underground utility facilities.

* * * Legal Trails * * *

Sec. 35. 19 V.S.A. chapter 3 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 3. TOWN HIGHWAYS

§ 301. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(2) ~~“Legislative body” includes boards of selectmen, aldermen, and village trustees~~ means a “legislative body” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

(3) ~~“Selectmen” includes village trustees and aldermen~~ “Selectboard” means a “selectboard” as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2001.

* * *

(8) “Trail” means a public right-of-way that is not a highway and that:

(A) municipalities have the authority to exclusively or cooperatively maintain;

(B) previously was a designated town highway having the same width as the designated town highway, or a lesser width if so designated; or

(B)(C) a new public right-of-way laid out as a trail by the ~~selectmen~~ legislative body for the purpose of providing access to abutting properties or for recreational use. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to independently authorize the condemnation of land for recreational purposes or to affect the authority of ~~selectmen~~ legislative bodies to reasonably regulate the uses of recreational trails.

§ 302. CLASSIFICATION OF TOWN HIGHWAYS

(a) For the purposes of this section and receiving State aid, all town highways shall be categorized into one or another of the following classes:

* * *

(2) Class 2 town highways are those town highways selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable, they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways from town to town and to places that by their nature have more than normal amount of traffic. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, with the approval of the Agency, shall determine which highways are to be class 2 highways.

(3) Class 3 town highways:

(A) Class 3 town highways are all traveled town highways other than class 1 or 2 highways. The ~~selectmen~~ legislative body, after conference with a representative of the Agency, shall determine which highways are class 3 town highways.

* * *

(5) Trails shall not be considered highways ~~and the town.~~ A municipality shall have the authority to maintain trails but shall not be responsible for any maintenance, including culverts and bridges.

* * *

§ 303. TOWN HIGHWAY CONTROL

Town highways shall be under the general supervision and control of the ~~selectmen~~ legislative body of the town where the roads are located. ~~Selectmen~~ The legislative body of a town shall supervise all expenditures.

§ 304. DUTIES OF SELECTBOARD

(a) It shall be the duty and responsibility of the selectboard of the town to, or acting as a board, it shall have the authority to:

* * *

(16) Unless the town electorate votes otherwise, under the provisions of 17 V.S.A. § 2646, appoint a road commissioner, or remove ~~him or her~~ the road commissioner from office, pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 2651. Road commissioners, elected or appointed, shall have only the powers and authority regarding highways granted to them by the selectboard.

* * *

(24) Maintain trails, but shall not be required to maintain trails.

* * *

* * * Effective Dates * * *

Sec. 36. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section and Secs. 32 (railroad leases) and 33 and 34 (dig safe) shall take effect on passage.

(b) Sec. 5 (Agency of Transportation dashboard) shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

(c) Sec. 6 (repeal of 19 V.S.A. § 10g reports) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(d) The remaining sections shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Committee vote: 5-0-0)

(For House amendments, see House Journal of March 26, 2025, pages 742-744)

Reported favorably by Senator Chittenden for the Committee on Finance.

The Committee recommends that the bill ought to pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Transportation.

(Committee vote: 7-0-0)

Reported favorably by Senator Perchlik for the Committee on Appropriations.

The Committee recommends that the bill ought to pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Transportation.

(Committee vote: 7-0-0)

H. 494.

An act relating to capital construction and State bonding.

Reported favorably with recommendation of proposal of amendment by Senator Harrison for the Committee on Institutions.

The Committee recommends that the Senate propose to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, legislative intent, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that of the \$111,965,288.44 authorized in this act, not more than \$62,314,761.44 shall be appropriated in the first year of the biennium, and the remainder shall be appropriated in the second year.

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

Sec. 2. STATE BUILDINGS

(a) The following sums are appropriated to the Department of Buildings and General Services, and the Commissioner is authorized to direct funds appropriated in this section to the projects contained in this section; however, no project shall be canceled unless the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions are notified before that action is taken.

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026:

- (1) Statewide, major maintenance: \$7,138,401.00
- (2) Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance: \$1,500,000.00

(3) <u>Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program:</u>	<u>\$75,000.00</u>
(4) <u>Rutland, Asa Bloomer Building roof repair and sewage system upgrades:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
(5) <u>Rutland, multimodal garage renovation:</u>	<u>\$600,000.00</u>
(6) <u>Middlesex, Print and Postal uninterruptable power supply upgrade:</u>	<u>\$58,279.44</u>
(7) <u>Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(8) <u>Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
<u>(c) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027:</u>	
(1) <u>Statewide, major maintenance:</u>	<u>\$8,500,000.00</u>
(2) <u>Statewide, planning, reuse, and contingency:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
(3) <u>Statewide, physical security enhancements:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
(4) <u>Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance:</u>	<u>\$850,000.00</u>
(5) <u>Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program:</u>	<u>\$75,000.00</u>
(6) <u>Montpelier, State House replacement of historic interior finishes:</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
(7) <u>Montpelier, 120 State Street HVAC – steam lines interior renovation:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(8) <u>Middlesex, Vermont State Archives roof replacement, main building:</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>
(9) <u>Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement:</u>	<u>\$2,000,000.00</u>
(10) <u>Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs:</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$14,371,680.44</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$15,225,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 2</u>	<u>\$29,596,680.44</u>

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

Sec. 4. COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

- (1) Major maintenance at statewide historic sites: \$550,000.00
- (2) Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves: \$46,000.00
- (3) Roadside historic site markers: \$25,000.00
- (4) Bennington, Battle Monument, maintenance of safety fencing, restoration, planning, and design: \$425,000.00

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

- (1) Major maintenance at statewide historic sites: \$550,000.00
 - (2) Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves: \$46,000.00
 - (3) Roadside historic site markers: \$25,000.00
- Appropriation – FY 2026 \$1,046,000.00
- Appropriation – FY 2027 \$621,000.00
- Total Appropriation – Section 4 \$1,667,000.00

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 5, grant programs, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 5. GRANT PROGRAMS

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

- (1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program: \$250,000.00
- (2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program: \$250,000.00
- (3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program: \$250,000.00

(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program: \$250,000.00

(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program: \$250,000.00

(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program: \$250,000.00

(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

(1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the sums appropriated in subdivisions (a)(5) and (b)(5) of this section be equally allocated between grants for human services and grants for educational facilities.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$1,800,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$2,100,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 5 \$3,900,000.00

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

Sec. 14. JUDICIARY

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Judiciary for the following projects:

(1) Woodstock Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system: \$100,000.00

(2) Essex County Courthouse, connector and security upgrades: \$3,685,910.00

(3) Lamoille County Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system: \$190,000.00

(b) The sum of \$1,100,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$5,075,910.00

Total Appropriation – Section 14 \$5,075,910.00

Sixth: In Sec. 19, FY 2026 and 2027; capital projects; FY 2026 appropriations act; intent; authorizations, by striking out subsection (c) and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (c) to read as follows:

(c) Authorizations; Capital Infrastructure subaccount. In FY 2026, spending authority for the following capital projects from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments are authorized as follows:

(1) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide major maintenance: \$861,599.00

(2) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide planning, reuse, and contingency: \$250,000.00

(3) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide physical security enhancements: \$250,000.00

(4) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for State House repointing: \$219,500.00

(5) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for an uninterrupted power supply system for the Middlesex print and postal facility: \$250,000.00

(6) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction: \$6,900,000.00

(7) to the Vermont Veterans' Home for the design and construction of the American unit: \$1,500,000.00

(8) to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm at the Vermont Veterans' Home: \$45,000.00

(9) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Bennington, high school redevelopment housing infrastructure: \$1,100,000.00

(10) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Barre, Prospect Heights housing infrastructure: \$1,000,000.00

(11) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for Brattleboro, Winston Prouty Center housing infrastructure: \$1,000,000.00

(12) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to support a site study focused on economic development, parking, housing, and flood mitigation for the 1.6-acre parcel at 87 State Street and parcels at 89 State Street and 42 Court Street: \$100,000.00

(13) to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a competitive grant to establish a new recovery residence, per the criteria of the Vermont Recovery Housing Program Action Plan: \$250,000.00

(14) to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the purchase of a fire apparatus: \$275,000.00

(15) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Lake Champlain Walleye Association, Inc. to upgrade and repair the Walleye rearing, restoration, and stocking infrastructure: \$25,000.00

(16) to the Department of Public Safety for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the dry hydrant program: \$35,000.00

Seventh: By adding a new section to be Sec. 22a to read as follows:

Sec. 22a. CASH FUND; JOINT FISCAL OFFICE; REPORT

On or before December 15, 2025, the Joint Fiscal Office shall submit a report to the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on

Corrections and Institutions on considerations for use of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments under 32 V.S.A. § 1001b that:

(1) provides the historical context, including the economic rationale, for the Cash Fund;

(2) compares financial management practices for expenditures made through cash and through bonded dollars, including long-term financial impacts;

(3) distinguishes between the intended uses of the Capital Infrastructure subaccount and the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves subaccount;

(4) describes, for each year since the Cash Fund's inception:

(A) the sources of funds; and

(B) the annual expenditures from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount; and

(5) outlines the current legislative process by which appropriations are made from the Cash Fund.

(Committee vote: 5-0-0)

(No House Amendments)

Senate Resolution for Second Reading

Favorable

S.R. 13.

Senate resolution strongly objecting to the manner and circumstances under which U.S. immigration authorities arrested and detained Mohsen Mahdawi and strongly advocating that he be afforded due process under the law and released immediately from detention.

Reported favorably by Senator Baruth for the Committee on Judiciary.

(Committee vote: 4-1-0)

CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION

Concurrent Resolutions For Action Under Joint Rule 16

The following joint concurrent resolutions have been introduced for approval by the Senate and House. They will be adopted by the Senate unless a Senator requests floor consideration before the end of the session. Requests for floor consideration should be communicated to the Secretary's Office.

H.C.R. 109-118 (For text of Resolutions, see Addendum to House Calendar of April 24, 2025)

CONFIRMATIONS

The following appointments will be considered by the Senate, as a group, under suspension of the Rules, as moved by the President *pro tempore*, for confirmation together and without debate, by consent thereby given by the Senate. However, upon request of any senator, any appointment may be singled out and acted upon separately by the Senate, with consideration given to the report of the Committee to which the appointment was referred, and with full debate; and further, all appointments for the positions of Secretaries of Agencies, Commissioners of Departments, Judges, Magistrates, and members of the Public Utility Commission, underlined below, shall be fully and separately acted upon.

Wanda Minoli of Montpelier - Commissioner of Building and General Services for a term from and including October 24, 2024 to and including February 28, 2025 - By Senator Harrison for the Committee on Institutions (April 2, 2025)

Wanda Minoli of Montpelier - Commissioner of Building and General Services for a term from and including March 1, 2025 to and including February 28, 2027 - By Senator Harrison for the Committee on Institutions (April 2, 2025)

Caleb Greenwood of Troy - Student Member of the State Board of Education - By Senator Williams for the Committee on Education (April 22, 2025)

PUBLIC HEARING

The Vermont Senate Committee on Government Operations and the Vermont House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs will hold a public hearing on **Veteran's Affairs on Wednesday, April 30, 2025 from 4:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. in Room 11 at the State House.**

JFO NOTICE

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

JFO #3246: 125+ acre land donation valued at \$184,830.00 from Pieter Van Schaik of Cavendish, VT to the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. The acreage will become part of the Lord State Forest.

[Received March 24, 2025]

JFO #3247: \$2,875,419.00 to the Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families to support families affected by the July 2024 flood event. The request includes three (3) limited-service positions. Two (2) Emergency Management Specialists to the AHS central office and one (1) Grants and Contract Manager to the Department of Children and Families Positions funded through June 30, 2027.

[Received April 10, 2025, expedited review requested April 10, 2025]

JFO #3248: \$35,603.00 to the Vermont Department of Libraries from the Vermont Community Foundation and the dissolution of the VT Public Library Foundation. The grant will provide modest grants to VT libraries with a preference for smaller libraries and for programs and projects that support children and diversity.

[Received April 10, 2025]

JFO #3249: \$22,117.00 to the Agency of Human Services, Department of Corrections to ensure compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

[Received April 10, 2025]

JFO #3250: \$391,666.00 to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation from the Northern Border Regional Commission. Funds will support the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaboration (VOREC) Program Director as well as VOREC initiatives.

[Received April 11, 2025]

JFO #3251: \$50,000.00 to the Agency of Human Services, Central Office from the National Governor's Association. The funds will support state-side improvements of service-to-career pathways, with a focus on emergency responders.

[Received April 11, 2025]

JFO #3252: \$10,000,000.00 to the Vermont Department of Libraries from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Public Facilities Preservation Initiative grant will provide smaller grants to rural libraries for the completion of necessary capital improvement projects.

[Received April 11, 2025]

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

CROSSOVER DATES

The Joint Rules Committee established the following crossover deadlines:

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

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

Note: The Senate will not act on bills that do not meet these crossover deadlines, without the consent of the Senate Rules Committee.

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).