

Journal of the House

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. Devon Thomas, Lutheran Church, Burlington.

Rules Suspended, House Bills Introduced

Pending first reading of House bills, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the bills were read the first time by number and referred to committee as follows:

H. 257

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Boyden of Cambridge, Chapin of East Montpelier, Micklus of Milton, and Sibia of Dover,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating the Office of Entrepreneurship

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 258

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston and Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to law enforcement interrogation policies

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 259

By Rep. Cordes of Bristol,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 260

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Cole of Hartford, Chapin of East Montpelier, Coffin of Cavendish, Howard of Rutland City, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, North of Ferrisburgh, Nugent of South Burlington, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting certain substances in food manufactured, sold, or distributed in Vermont

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 261

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing a 32-hour workweek

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 262

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Chapin of East Montpelier, Hooper of Burlington, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to restricting electronic monitoring of employees and the use of employment-related automated decision systems

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 263

By Reps. Priestley of Bradford, Hooper of Burlington, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, and Minier of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating a right for employees to disconnect from work

To the Committee on General and Housing.

H. 264

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Black of Essex, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Goldman of Rockingham, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Nugent of South Burlington, Priestley of Bradford, and Scheu of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to safe storage of firearms

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 265

By Rep. Headrick of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to prohibiting the imposition of convenience fees on online municipal utility payments

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 266

By Rep. Black of Essex,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to protections for 340B covered entities and 340B contract pharmacies

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 267

By Rep. McFaun of Barre Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Hospital Security Plan

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 268

By Rep. Rachelson of Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to consumer protections related to the towing and storage of vehicles

To the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development.

H. 269

By Reps. Noyes of Wolcott, Birong of Vergennes, Goldman of Rockingham, and McGill of Bridport,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the federal benefits of youth in State custody

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 270

By Reps. Krasnow of South Burlington, Burt of Cabot, Carris-Duncan of Whitingham, Coffin of Cavendish, Dodge of Essex, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Graning of Jericho, Howard of Rutland City, Kleppner of Burlington, Labor of Morgan, LaMont of Morristown, Luneau of St. Albans City, McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Minier of South Burlington, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Priestley of Bradford, Rachelson of Burlington, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to confidentiality for peer support counseling among emergency service providers

To the Committee on Human Services.

H. 271

By Reps. Cordes of Bristol and Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to health insurance and Medicaid coverage for physical therapy services

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 272

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Maguire of Rutland City, McFaun of Barre Town, Morgan, and L. of Milton,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to development on slopes

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 273

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bishop of Colchester, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Bosch of Clarendon, Cole of Hartford, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Dodge of Essex, Feltus of Lyndon, Galfetti of Barre Town, Greer of Bennington, Harvey of Castleton, Hooper of Burlington, Keyser of Rutland City, Labor of Morgan, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, O'Brien of Tunbridge, Pinsonault of Dorset, Powers of Waterford, Pritchard of Pawlet, Surprenant of Barnard, Tagliavia of Corinth, Toof of St. Albans Town, Wells of Brownington, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Use Value Appraisal Program

To the Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

H. 274

By Reps. Burt of Cabot, Bosch of Clarendon, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Higley of Lowell, Keyser of Rutland City, Morgan, L. of Milton, Nelson of Derby, Nielsen of Brandon, North of Ferrisburgh, Powers of Waterford, Tagliavia of Corinth, and Winter of Ludlow,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a hospital patient's right not to be denied care based on vaccination status

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 275

By Reps. Coffin of Cavendish, Birong of Vergennes, Boyden of Cambridge, Greer of Bennington, Hooper of Burlington, Pinsonault of Dorset, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Toof of St. Albans Town,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enrollment in Medicare supplement insurance policies

To the Committee on Health Care.

H. 276

By Rep. Sheldon of Middlebury,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the designation of State wildlands

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 277

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to weatherization funding and weatherization workforce recruitment

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 278

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Eastes of Guilford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to a plan on energy storage development

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 279

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Eastes of Guilford, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to sharing the costs of electric grid upgrades

To the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure.

H. 280

By Reps. Masland of Thetford, Higley of Lowell, Mrowicki of Putney, and Olson of Starksboro,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the siting of an expanded polystyrene foam densifier in the State

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 281

By Reps. McCann of Montpelier, Cordes of Bristol, Graning of Jericho, Logan of Burlington, McGill of Bridport, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, and Priestley of Bradford,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to amending a death certificate to reflect gender identity

To the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

H. 282

By Reps. Taylor of Milton, Toof of St. Albans Town, Bartley of Fairfax, Burditt of West Rutland, Dobrovich of Williamstown, Galfetti of Barre Town, Goslant of Northfield, Hango of Berkshire, Higley of Lowell, Laroche of Franklin, Luneau of St. Albans City, Micklus of Milton, Morgan, L. of Milton, Morgan, M. of Milton, Page of Newport City, Pinsonault of Dorset, Priestley of Bradford, Pritchard of Pawlet, and Tagliavia of Corinth,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to driver education for students participating in the home study program

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 283

By Reps. Harple of Glover, Priestley of Bradford, Burke of Brattleboro, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Dodge of Essex, Hunter of Manchester, Labor of Morgan, Lalley of Shelburne, Masland of Thetford, McCann of Montpelier, Nelson of Derby, Nugent of South Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pouech of Hinesburg, Southworth of Walden, and Wells of Brownington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to delegation of authority to regulate use of State waters

To the Committee on Environment.

H. 284

By Reps. Burke of Brattleboro and Pouech of Hinesburg,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to requirements for older drivers to renew operator's licenses and for the operation of motor homes

To the Committee on Transportation.

H. 285

By Rep. Noyes of Wolcott,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to making motor vehicle inspections more affordable

To the Committee on Transportation.

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence**J.R.S. 14**

By Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 14. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on February 21, 2025.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 21, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

Was taken up, read, and adopted in concurrence.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 21**

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution expressing strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designating February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont

Whereas, the education of Vermont's youth is of great importance, and the role of local school board members is essential in this process, and

Whereas, all too often, Vermonters do not fully appreciate the scope of the commitment school board members must make to their duties and the challenges they encounter in performing this critical civic role, and

Whereas, as the citizens of Vermont, and the General Assembly in particular, engage in a major examination of education financing in our State, school board members will be important contributors to this critical discussion, and

Whereas, these special community public servants deserve our admiration and respect for their continuing devotion to the success of public education in Vermont, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly expresses strong appreciation for the essential role of Vermont's school board members in the State's public education system and designates February as School Board Recognition Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont School Boards Association.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, February 7, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Committee Relieved of Consideration and Bill Committed to
Other Committee**

H. 175

Rep. Mihaly of Calais moved that the Committee on General and Housing be relieved of House bill, entitled

An act relating to clarifying the right of adjunct faculty to receive unemployment insurance benefits

And that the bill be committed to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, which was agreed to.

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 98

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to confirmatory adoptions

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 15A V.S.A. § 1-114 is added to read:

§ 1-114. CONFIRMATORY ADOPTION FOR CHILDREN BORN

THROUGH ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Assisted reproduction” means a method of causing pregnancy other than sexual intercourse and includes:

(A) intrauterine, intracervical, or vaginal insemination;

(B) donation of gametes;

(C) donation of embryos;

(D) in vitro fertilization and transfer of embryos; and

(E) intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

(2) “Donor” means a person who contributes a gamete or gametes or an embryo or embryos to another person for assisted reproduction or gestation, whether or not for consideration. This term does not include:

(A) a person who gives birth to a child conceived by assisted reproduction except as otherwise provided in 15C V.S.A. chapter 8; or

(B) a parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 7 or an intended parent under 15C V.S.A. chapter 8.

(3) "Marriage" includes civil union and any legal relationship that provides substantially the same rights, benefits, and responsibilities as marriage and is recognized as valid in the state or jurisdiction in which it was entered.

(4) "Petitioners" means the persons filing a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(b) Whenever a child is born as a result of assisted reproduction and the person or persons who did not give birth are a parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 703 or presumed parent pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 401 and the parents seek to file a petition to confirm parentage through an adoption of the child, the court shall permit the parents to file a petition for adoption in accordance with this section.

(c) A complete petition shall comprise the following:

(1) the petition for adoption signed by all parents;

(2) a copy of the petitioners' marriage certificate, if petitioners are married;

(3) a declaration signed by the parents explaining the circumstances of the child's birth through assisted reproduction, attesting to their consent to assisted reproduction, and stating that there are no other persons with a claim to parentage of the child under Title 15C; and

(4) a certified copy of the child's birth certificate.

(d) A complete petition for adoption, as described in subsection (c) of this section, shall serve as the petitioners' written consents to adoption and no additional consent or notice shall be required.

(e) If the petitioners conceived through assisted reproduction with donor gametes or donor embryos, the court shall not require notice of the adoption to the donor or consent to the adoption by the donor.

(f) Unless otherwise ordered by the court for good cause shown and supported by written findings of the court demonstrating good cause, for purposes of evaluating and granting a petition for adoption pursuant to this section, the court shall not require:

(1) an in-person hearing or appearance, although the court may require a remote hearing;

(2) an investigation or home study by, a notice to, or the approval of the Department for Children and Families;

(3) a criminal-record check;

(4) verification that the child is not registered with the federal register for missing children or the central register; or

(5) a minimum residency period in the home of the petitioners.

(g) The court shall grant the adoption under this section and issue an adoption decree promptly after the filing of a complete petition and upon finding that:

(1) for marital parents, the parent who gave birth and the spouse were married at the time of the child's birth and the child was born through assisted reproduction; or

(2) for nonmarital parents:

(A) the person who gave birth and the nonmarital parent consented to the assisted reproduction; and

(B) no other person has a claim to parentage pursuant to Title 15C or that any other person with a claim to parentage of the child who is required to be provided notice of, or who must consent to, the adoption has been notified or provided consent to the adoption.

(h) A petition to adopt a child pursuant to this section shall not be denied on the basis that any of the petitioners' parentage is already presumed or legally recognized in Vermont.

(i) When parentage is presumed or legally recognized pursuant to 15C V.S.A. § 201, the fact that a person did not petition for adoption pursuant to this section shall not be considered as evidence when two or more presumptions conflict, nor in determining the best interests of the child.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 13

House bill, entitled

An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies

H. 44

House bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous amendments to the laws governing impaired driving

Favorable Report; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered**H. 154**

Rep. Hooper of Burlington, for the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to designating November as the Vermont Month of the Veteran

Reported in favor of its passage. The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading ordered.

Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee Appointment

Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 9390, the Speaker appointed the following member to the Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee:

Rep. Cordes of Bristol

Adjournment

At three o'clock and forty minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at three o'clock in the afternoon.