

Journal of the House

Friday, April 25, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotion.

House Bill Introduced

H. 511

By Rep. Greer of Bennington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the admittance of federal immigration authorities into schools

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

H. 248

House bill, entitled

An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Bill Referred to Committee on Appropriations

S. 60

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to establishing the Farm Security Special Fund to provide grants for farm losses due to weather conditions

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 83**

Offered by All Members of the House

Offered by All Members of the Senate

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts

Whereas, earning the rank of Eagle Scout is a special honor that only a small percentage of young persons enrolled in the Boy Scouts of America achieves, and

Whereas, an Eagle Scout is an individual who exhibits a strong commitment to service and perseveres to reach this challenging goal, and

Whereas, the following Scouts proudly achieved the rank of Eagle during 2024: Skyler Martinson, Colton Wild, Aiden Blanchard, Mason Schade, Shane Morse, Aden Michael, Sean Plumer, Lincoln Hurley, John Mosher, Riley Beckett, Craig Bouffard, Newt Bowker, Benjamin Edwards, Reilly Kilpatrick, Carl Laverty, Elliot Miklus, Aiden Powell, Spencer Levi, Xavier Richardson, Marc Stearns, Evan Kaigle, Devin Schlegel-Barber, Rose Brassard, Braeden Appel, Micah Killam, Channing Roper, Rhett Gardner, William Kallock, Nicholas Russell, Truman Bates, Nicholas Bushey, Zachary Bushey, Adam Kett, Henry Lawrence, Delainey LeBlanc, Liam Slattery, Jillian Koval, Oliver Bailey, Spencer Adams, Spencer Gebo, Zachary Norris, Gabriel Scribner, Aidan Hall, Mitchell Knowles, Warren Kingsbury, Oliver Andersen, Trevor Hazelton, Brendan Delaney, Joseph Donerkiel, Ethan Little, and Jaedon Beardsley, and

Whereas, all of these Scouts deserve commendation for their dedication and achievement, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2024 Green Mountain Council Class of Eagle Scouts, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each Eagle Scout honored in this resolution and to the Green Mountain Council.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 92**

Offered by Representatives Quimby of Lyndon, Burt of Cabot, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Dolgin of St. Johnsbury, Feltus of Lyndon, Harple of Glover, Higley of Lowell, Kascenska of Burke, Labor of Morgan, Marcotte of Coventry, Nelson of Derby, Page of Newport City, Parsons of Newbury, Powers of Waterford, Southworth of Walden, and Wells of Brownington

Offered by Senators Beck, Douglass, and Ingalls

House concurrent resolution honoring the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont

Whereas, at seven Vermont colleges, and through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, students who aspire to be their families' first college graduate but lack the requisite funds can avail themselves of these federal educational support programs, and

Whereas, in 1964, in the Equal Opportunity Act, Congress established Upward Bound, the original federal college incentive program for financially disadvantaged students; in the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress created Talent Search to assist these students applying for newly established federal financial aid support; and in 1968, the 1965 law was amended to include the Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program (now known as Student Support Services), and together these three services became commonly referred to as the Federal TRIO Programs, and

Whereas, subsequent amendments to the 1965 legislation created the Educational Opportunities Centers and Veterans Upward Bound (1972); the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (1986); and in 1990, the Upward Bound program created a new division, Upward Bound Math-Science, and

Whereas, in 1992, Congress officially renamed and combined these programs as the Federal TRIO Programs, and they continue to be a special gateway for financially disadvantaged students to pursue their college dream, and

Whereas, students and administrators representing the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont are visiting the State House today, Friday, April 25, 2025, and their visit serves as an opportunity to recognize the educational and societal roles of the Federal TRIO Programs, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the outstanding achievements of the Federal TRIO Programs in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Board of Directors of the Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 11, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Ceremonial Reading**H.C.R. 101**

Offered by Representatives Campbell of St. Johnsbury and Dolan of Essex Junction

Offered by Senator Ingalls

House concurrent resolution congratulating Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees

Whereas, spelling correctly is both an art and a science, requiring the knowledge of the English language's grammatical rules and the innumerable exceptions to every spelling convention, and

Whereas, the challenge of spelling complex words correctly is tested in individual schools, states, and nationally through students' participation in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, a venerable scholastic tradition, and 2025 marks the competition's centennial, and

Whereas, Phoenix Newell, a seventh grader at the Riverside School in Lyndonville, has, for two consecutive years, exhibited a passion and a special talent for mastering the nuances of spelling a sophisticated lexicon of words, and

Whereas, after innumerable hours of study and memorization, Phoenix Newell, then a sixth grader, advanced through numerous rounds of school competition to earn the opportunity to represent the Riverside School at the 2024 Vermont State Spelling Bee, at which she out-spelled all the other contestants and was declared the champion, and

Whereas, this singular achievement entitled Phoenix Newell to advance to the Scripps National Spelling Bee final in Washington, DC, and

Whereas, despite her best effort, Phoenix Newell was not recognized as the 2024 national spelling champion, but the excitement and thrill of being part of this nationwide contest motivated her to try again as a seventh grader, and

Whereas, in 2025, Phoenix Newell's determination, patience, and academic stamina all contributed to her distinctive success in winning a second consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bee, and she eagerly anticipates returning to our nation's capital for her second appearance at the Scripps National Spelling Bee, this time as a more experienced contender, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Phoenix Newell on winning two consecutive Vermont State Spelling Bees, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Phoenix Newell.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, April 18, 2025 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion of **Rep. Wood of Waterbury**, the following remarks by **Rep. Emmons of Springfield** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I'd like to spend some time this morning speaking a little bit about history and its history in terms of legislation that we quite often or maybe not often work on in this General Assembly. Today is the 25th anniversary of the passage of our Civil Unions law back in the year of 2000. I am one of the remaining members still here from that time. We do have a resolution that has been drafted. It will appear next week in our concurrent resolution calendar. It did not come in at the right time but Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words of what occurred and to give a little bit of background on this.

The House, twenty-five years ago today, concurred with the Senate amendments to House bill H.847 and we sent the bill to Governor Howard Dean for his signature and that occurred on April 26, 2000. What led up to that day was something that many of us never really experienced in this House and I want to start by reading a little bit of the Court ruling that set the foundation for the discussion that occurred. And it occurred in our House Judiciary Committee as well as within the halls of this building.

Madam Speaker, on December 20, 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court issued the landmark decision *Baker v. State*, holding that the exclusion of same-sex couples from access to the benefits and rights of marriage licenses under Vermont's law violated the Common Benefits Clause of the Vermont Constitution. The Court allowed the General Assembly to consider and enact legislation consistent with the constitutional mandate described in its decision, which could be civil marriage or a different legal status that delivered ‘the

common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law.’ Based on this, starting in January of the year 2000, our House Judiciary Committee started their work. They heard from many Vermonters and some of those public hearings were tenuous at best. There was high security. There were tremendous emotions on both sides of the issue, but our committee listened to testimony from all sides and came to a unanimous solution of creating civil unions, and the term ‘civil unions’ came out of our House Judiciary Committee room and the work of our colleagues.

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from one particular floor speech that occurred—that sums it up. “The vote was approaching, and the chamber was packed with spectators when [the Vice Chair of House Judiciary Committee, Representative Bill] Lippert, the only openly gay lawmaker, rose to speak.” He started his speech by saying, “‘I think it’s important to put a face on this.’ The room fell silent.” He continued, “‘I’ve had the privilege of developing a deep, devoted, loving, caring relationship with another man. I think it’s very important as we listen, as we debate, as we make decisions, that you understand what the reality is about gay and lesbian people, gay and lesbian couples . . . Our lives, in the midst of historic prejudice and historic discrimination, are, to my view, in some ways miracles. Think what kind of relationship you would try to establish, how successful it would be to find [a] loving, committed partner in an environment where you have been barraged on a daily basis from birth saying you are sinful, you are wrong, something fundamentally flawed in your nature.’”¹

Madam Speaker, we did pass that legislation and we have some members here from the House Judiciary Committee, at that time, that I would like to introduce. We have the former member—the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Representative Tom Little from Shelburne. We have the Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee at the time, Representative Bill Lippert from Hinesburg, and we also have with us a member of the Committee, Representative Alice Nitka, later Senator Alice Nitka, from Ludlow, and they are seated in the Gallery. Please welcome them.”

¹ Quoting excerpts from Mary Ann Lickteig, *Vermont’s Civil Union Law Was Passed 25 Years Ago, Sparking the Nationwide March to Marriage Equality*, Seven Days (April 23, 2025).

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to; Amendment
Offered; Question Divided; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 36

Rep. Bishop of Colchester, for the Committee on Human Services, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by inserting a new Sec. 6 and a new section to be Sec. 7 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. REPORTS; PUBLIC INEBRIATE SERVICES AND
PROGRAMMING

(a)(1) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand public inebriate services and programming shall prioritize Chittenden County.

(2) On or before February 15, 2026, the Departments of Health and of Mental Health shall jointly provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to expand public inebriate services and programming pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b) On or before February 15, 2026, the Department of Corrections shall provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to reinstate the practice of connecting individuals receiving public inebriate services in a correctional facility with appropriate community-based substance use recovery providers.

Sec. 7. REPORTS; HUMAN SERVICES BOARD PROCEEDINGS

(a) On or before December 15, 2025, the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Human Services Board, Office of the Attorney General, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Human Services Board, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare providing the following information and recommendations regarding proceedings before the Board:

(1) a proposal that attorneys representing the Agency or departments participate in training that balances the attorney's ethical obligation to zealously represent the attorney's client with the respectful, trauma-informed treatment of appellants;

(2) an analysis of varying appeals processes specific to the Agency and each department with cases before the Board, including proposals and any legislative action necessary to improve consistency;

(3) a proposal to identify and collect currently unavailable data in a manner that ensures uniform data collection across the Agency and departments with cases before the Board, including data regarding cases resolved prior to reaching the stage of hearing officer or full Board involvement;

(4) recommendations for resolving potential appeals prior to reaching the Board; and

(5) any other recommendation requiring legislative action.

(b) On or before December 15, 2025, the Human Services Board, in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services, each of the Agency's departments with cases before the Board, the Office of the Attorney General, community partners, and individuals with lived experience as appellants before the Board, shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare providing the following information and recommendations regarding proceedings before the Board:

(1) a proposal to improve understanding of Board processes and accessibility to appellants, including the use of media and graphics to explain what the Board is and how it operates;

(2) a proposal for the exchange of periodic feedback as part of a continual quality improvement process between the Board, Agency, departments appearing before the Board, Office of the Attorney General, Vermont Legal Aid, and other relevant stakeholders;

(3) an analysis of how to enable an appellant to present a personal narrative without jeopardizing the appellant's case or disrupting the legal obligations of the Board and the attorneys representing the Agency or departments appearing before the Board; and

(4) recommendations to improve the reporting and analysis of data to the General Assembly, including information related to appeal requests resolved prior to reaching the stage of hearing officer or full Board involvement.

and by renumbering the remaining section to be numerically correct

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, Public Inebriate Services, and Human Services Board proceedings"

Rep. Bluemle of Burlington, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with proposal of amendment as recommended by the Committee on Human Services.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Human Services?, **Reps. Bishop of Colchester, Cole of Hartford, Donahue of Northfield, Eastes of Guilford, Garofano of Essex, Maguire of Rutland City, McGill of Bridport, Nielsen of Brandon, Noyes of Wolcott, Steady of Milton, and Wood of Waterbury** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Human Services as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 6, reports; public inebriate services and programming, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec. 6. REPORTS; SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING FOR PERSONS

WHO ARE INCAPACITATED

(a)(1) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 shall prioritize Chittenden County.

(2) On or before February 15, 2026, the Departments of Health and of Mental Health shall jointly provide a presentation to the House Committees on Health Care and on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare describing efforts to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(b) On or before February 15, 2026, the Department of Corrections shall provide a presentation to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Health Care, and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Institutions and on Health and Welfare describing efforts to reinstate the practice of connecting persons who are in a correctional facility due to incapacitation pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 with appropriate community-based substance use recovery providers.

Second: By proposing to the Senate to amend the bill in Sec. 4, repeal, by striking out “public inebriates” and inserting in lieu thereof “persons who are incapacitated”

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings”

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Human Services, as amended, was agreed to.

Pending the question, Shall the bill be read a third time?, **Rep. Rachelson of Burlington** moved to amend the House proposal of amendment as follows:

First: By proposing to the Senate to amend the bill by striking out Sec. 4, repeal, and Sec. 5, 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 105, in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof new Secs. 4 and 5 to read as follows:

Sec. 4. 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 105 is amended to read:

Sec. 105. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

(c) Secs. 99 and 100 (amending 18 V.S.A. §§ 4910 and 4811) shall take effect on July 1, ~~2025~~ 2027.

* * *

Sec. 5. 18 V.S.A. § 4810 is amended to read:

§ 4810. TREATMENT AND SERVICES

* * *

(d) A person judged by a law enforcement officer to be incapacitated, ~~and who has not been charged with a crime, and who poses a risk to public safety~~ may be lodged in protective custody in a lockup or community correctional center for up to 24 hours or until judged by the person in charge of the facility to be no longer incapacitated, if and only if:

(1) the person refuses to be transported to an appropriate facility for treatment or, if once there, refuses treatment or leaves the facility before ~~he or she~~ the person is considered by the responsible staff of that facility to be no longer incapacitated; or

(2) ~~no~~ there is not an approved substance abuse treatment program with detoxification capabilities ~~and no~~ a staff physician, or other medical professional at ~~the nearest~~ a licensed general hospital ~~can be found~~ within a 60-mile radius of where the person was first encountered who will accept the person for treatment.

* * *

(h) If an incapacitated person in protective custody is lodged in a lockup or community correctional center;

(1) ~~his or her~~ the person's family or next of kin shall be notified as promptly as possible. ~~If, unless the person is an adult and requests that there be no notification, his or her~~ in which case the person's request shall be respected;

(2) any personal belongings taken from the person shall be promptly returned to the person upon release; and

(3) the person shall be returned to the location the person was first encountered or other reasonable location upon release, if requested.

* * *

Second: In Sec. 6, reports; services and programming for persons who are incapacitated, by striking out subsection (a) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (a) to read as follows:

(a) The Departments of Health and of Mental Health's existing plan to expand services and programming for persons who are incapacitated pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4810 shall first prioritize the county with the highest current use of correctional facilities for this purpose and then any other underserved region of the State. As part of the Departments' fiscal year 2027 budget presentation, the Departments shall include a proposal for expanding community-based services for persons who are incapacitated to underserved regions of the State using, in part, cost savings from diverting persons who are incapacitated from emergency departments and correctional facilities.

Pending the question, Shall the House proposal of amendment be amended as offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington?, **Rep. Headrick of Burlington** asked that the question be divided by first considering the amendment to Sec. 4, and by thereafter considering the remainder of the amendment, and the Speaker ruled the question was divisible in that manner.

Thereupon, the question, Shall the House proposal of amendment be amended as offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington in Section 4?, was disagreed to.

Thereafter, the remainder of the amendment offered by Rep. Rachelson of Burlington was disagreed to and third reading ordered.

Favorable Reports; Second Reading; Third Reading Ordered

H. 364

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

An act relating to approval of the annexation of property by the Village of Swanton

Reported in favor of its passage.

Rep. Higley of Lowell, for the Committee on Ways and Means, reported in favor of its passage.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, and third reading was ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 398

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, on motion of **Rep. Carris-Duncan of Whitingham**, action on the bill was postponed until April 28, 2025.

Message from the Senate No. 47

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 18. An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 17. An act relating to approval of the adoption of the charter of the Town of Morristown.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 109. House concurrent resolution congratulating the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie.

H.C.R. 110. House concurrent resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont.

H.C.R. 111. House concurrent resolution designating May 18, 2025 as Grand Army of the Republic Highway Day in Vermont.

H.C.R. 112. House concurrent resolution congratulating Capital City Concerts and Karen Kevra for a quarter century of delightful and informative classical music performances and related cultural endeavors in central Vermont.

H.C.R. 113. House concurrent resolution congratulating the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition.

H.C.R. 114. House concurrent resolution honoring Deborah J. Aldrich for 42 years of extraordinary municipal public service in the Town of Chester.

H.C.R. 115. House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Danville High School Bears Division IV championship boys' basketball team.

H.C.R. 116. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War.

H.C.R. 117. House concurrent resolution congratulating Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

H.C.R. 118. House concurrent resolution commending Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and seven minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Monday, April 28, 2025, at three o'clock in the afternoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 23.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 109

House concurrent resolution congratulating the South Burlington Chapter of Rotary International on 40 years of exemplary community service and professional camaraderie

H.C.R. 110

House concurrent resolution designating April 2025 as Black Maternal Care Awareness Month in Vermont

H.C.R. 111

House concurrent resolution designating May 18, 2025 as Grand Army of the Republic Highway Day in Vermont

H.C.R. 113

House concurrent resolution congratulating the winning teams at the 2025 Jr Iron Chef VT competition

H.C.R. 114

House concurrent resolution honoring Deborah J. Aldrich for 42 years of extraordinary municipal public service in the Town of Chester

H.C.R. 115

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2025 Danville High School Bears Division IV championship boys' basketball team

H.C.R. 116

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vietnam War

H.C.R. 117

House concurrent resolution congratulating Essex Middle School science teacher Andrew Kasprisin on his designation as the 2025 Vermont finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

H.C.R. 118

House concurrent resolution commending Team Trumie and Truman Compton for their advocacy, community engagement, and fostering of public awareness and acceptance of autism

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]