

Journal of the House

Thursday, April 2, 2026

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

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Rep. Troy Headrick of Burlington.

Senate Bills Referred

Senate bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the first time, and referred to committee as follows:

S. 142

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to a pathway to licensure for internationally trained physicians and medical graduates

To the Committee on Health Care.

S. 190

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the Green Mountain Care Board, reference-based pricing, and studying the creation of a Public Health Benefit Authority

To the Committee on Health Care.

Ceremonial Readings

H.C.R. 232

Offered by Representatives Howard of Rutland City, Bosch of Clarendon, Harvey of Castleton, Howland of Rutland Town, Malay of Pittsford, McCoy of Poultney, Pinsonault of Dorset, and Pritchard of Pawlet

Offered by Senators Collamore, Weeks, and Williams

House concurrent resolution congratulating Malik Hines on his being named a National Afterschool Association's 2026 Next Generation of Afterschool Leader

Whereas, the educational and recreational activities offered in after-school programs serve as an important element of the day for many youngsters, and

Whereas, one of Vermont's premier organizations offering after-school services is the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County, for which Malik Hines of Castleton, who previously worked at the Boys and Girls Club of Burlington, serves as the respected director of operations, and

Whereas, the staff, volunteers, and youngsters associated with this Rutland organization all recognize that Malik Hines is an enthusiastic and talented individual whose role is critical to the institution's smooth management, and

Whereas, annually, the National Afterschool Association "celebrates outstanding early-career professionals [30 years of age and younger] who are making a meaningful impact in the out-of-school time field through leadership, dedication, and a passion for helping youth succeed," and

Whereas, the selection panel had the challenging task of narrowing the pool of more than 140 outstanding nominees to just 30 individuals to be admitted into the 2026 Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders cohort, and Malik Hines was delighted to be one of these individuals, and

Whereas, these superb young after-school leaders were honored last month at the annual convention of the National Afterschool Association held in Washington, DC, and

Whereas, the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County is incredibly proud that Malik Hines is a recipient of this extraordinary and much-deserved national recognition, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Malik Hines on his being named a National Afterschool Association's 2026 Next Generation of Afterschool Leader, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Malik Hines and the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 27, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 233

Offered by Representatives Cole of Hartford, Austin of Colchester, Bishop of Colchester, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro, Coffin of Cavendish, Dolan of Essex Junction, Duke of Burlington, Goslant of Northfield, Graning of Jericho, Greer of Bennington, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Headrick of Burlington, Howard of Rutland City, Keyser of Rutland City, Lalley of Shelburne, LaMont of Morristown, Lipsky of Stowe, Long of Newfane, Luneau of St. Albans City, Masland of Thetford,

McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Morris of Springfield, Morrissey of Bennington, Mrowicki of Putney, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Pezzo of Colchester, Pouech of Hinesburg, Rachelson of Burlington, Squirrel of Underhill, Stone of Burlington, Sweeney of Shelburne, Taylor of Milton, Torre of Moretown, Wells of Brownington, and White of Waitsfield

House concurrent resolution honoring the 2026 nominees for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Vermont Youth of the Year award

Whereas, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) provides youth with the skills to become responsible and successful adults and community leaders, and

Whereas, since 1947, BGCA has conducted a national competition to honor one exceptional club member as the National Youth of the Year (NYOY), BGCA's highest honor, "who serves as both an exemplary ambassador for Boys & Girls Club youth, and as a strong voice for all of our nation's youth," and

Whereas, the journey on the path to selection as the NYOY includes local, state, regional, and national rounds, in which many outstanding youths, who embody "the values of leadership and service, academic excellence and healthy lifestyles," are local nominees, and

Whereas, potential NYOYs who have participated in the organization's year-round leadership program are role models for other club members and serve as representatives to the community at large, and

Whereas, the Vermont Youth of the Year, our State's nominee for the regional NYOY competition, is being named today, April 2, 2026, in Montpelier, and the three contenders for this state-level award are Abdille, Luke, and Tyler, representing, respectively, BGCA's Burlington, Brattleboro, and Rutland local clubs, and

Whereas, each of these three outstanding youths are present today to be legislatively honored, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors the 2026 nominees for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Vermont Youth of the Year award, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each of the three youths recognized in this resolution.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 27, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 235

Offered by Representatives North of Ferrisburgh and Birong of Vergennes

Offered by Senators Heffernan and Hardy

House concurrent resolution congratulating Sophia Parker of Addison on her selection as the 80th Miss Vermont

Whereas, over the course of eight decades, many outstanding young Vermont women have been honored to serve as Miss Vermont, and this proud tradition has continued with the selection of Sophia Parker of Addison as Miss Vermont 2025, and

Whereas, her interest in participating in the Miss Vermont competition dates to 2015, when she was crowned Miss Vermont's Teen, and

Whereas, Sophia Parker earned a bachelor's degree in nursing at the now Vermont State University-Castleton campus and is employed as a registered nurse on the staff of BAYADA Home Health Care, and

Whereas, she is applying her nursing skills as a medic, with the rank of sergeant, in the Vermont Army National Guard, and

Whereas, achieving the honor of serving as Miss Vermont remained a personal goal, and, despite her busy schedule, Sophia Parker devoted the requisite effort to this objective and was rewarded on May 4, 2025, when she was named the 80th Miss Vermont, and

Whereas, this honor included a \$7,500 scholarship and a \$5,000 grant to enroll in the Ellis Strategies public speaking and presentation program, and

Whereas, on September 7, 2025, Sophia Parker served as Vermont's outstanding representative at the 2025 Miss America competition in Orlando, Florida, and throughout this past year she has been a dedicated ambassador of the Miss Vermont Scholarship Organization, speaking to young women across the State concerning the scholarship and community service opportunities available through the organization, and

Whereas, Sophia Parker's community service initiative is entitled "Wildlife Rehabilitation and Stewardship of the Natural World," and, with her mother, she cofounded Otter Creek Wildlife Rescue, a nonprofit organization that rescues and rehabilitates Vermont birds and mammals, and she is Vermont's youngest licensed wildlife rehabilitator, and

Whereas, Sophia Parker has served with distinction as Miss Vermont 2025, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Sophia Parker of Addison on her selection as the 80th Miss Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Sophia Parker and the Miss Vermont Scholarship Organization, Inc.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 27, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

H.C.R. 236

Offered by Representative Cooper of Pownal

House concurrent resolution celebrating the importance of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designating April 2, 2026, as Manufacturing Day at the State House

Whereas, Vermont's manufacturing industry generates an economic impact of \$2.92 billion, and it represents seven percent of Vermont's gross state product and consists of seven percent of the State's workforce, which translates into 26,900 jobs across diverse industrial sectors of the State's economy, and

Whereas, manufacturing plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of both rural and urban communities throughout Vermont, representing businesses that are renowned globally and at the forefront of innovation across various industries, and

Whereas, Vermont's manufacturers contribute significantly to fostering strategic relationships between the State and neighboring regions, including New England, New York, and Canada, as well as the broader local and global economy, and

Whereas, innovation and the diversification of Vermont's economy are exemplified by industry leaders who prioritize community values in their operations, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly celebrates the importance of the manufacturing industry in the Vermont economy and designates April 2, 2026, as Manufacturing Day at the State House, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Associated Industries of Vermont, the Regional Development Corporations of Vermont, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 27, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Burditt of West Rutland**, the following remarks by **Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

To understand who the member from Barre Town is, you have to understand where he came from.

In 1944, the most feared name in Cambridge wasn't a mob boss or a longshoreman; it was ‘Fig Fingers,’ Francis, a five-year-old who ran the East Cambridge docks with an iron fist and a very sticky lollipop.

Francis’s gang, the Porter Square Pirates, controlled the lucrative black market of stolen marbles. While other kids were learning to tie their shoes, Francis was organizing a sophisticated protection racket: you gave him half your sandwich, or he’d tell your mother you said a ‘grown-up word’ behind the Lechmere Station. It was well known that you didn’t cross Francis and his enforcer, a Saint Bernard named Rufus.

The law finally caught up with him in the Spring of 1945. After a high-stakes standoff over misplaced silly putty, the boiling point had been reached, it was time to go straight.

His name still instills fear on the mean streets of Boston to this day, in fact the character played by Jack Nicholson in the *Departed* was named after him.

Francis’s parents had an epiphany aided by clergy intervention. The boy needed to change his wicked ways. Finding an appropriate avenue to channel his obvious leadership abilities and powerful presence for good, rather than evil, was the big question.

One day his family was walking past a hockey rink where young Francis’s interest became quite clear, hockey would be his new path. His parents bought a pair of rusted skates and Francis hit the frozen marshes of the Charles River. By age six, he had ‘gone straight.’ He realized that hitting people with a stick was frowned upon in the streets, but on the ice, they gave you a trophy for it.

He traded the life of crime for a life in the crease. It became his life. He played throughout school and into college, playing at BU before becoming a coach and spending a lifetime passing on his knowledge to future generations.

I know you are all wondering, how did a boy named Francis become a man called Topper, so I am going to tell you. In his very first game he got hit so hard that he spun and spun and spun, over and over, until a voice from the crowd shouted, 'hey look, that kid is spinning like a Top.' True story.

I met Topper on my first day, eight years ago, when I walked into Human Services where he was the Ranking Member. He took me under his wing, gave me guidance, and even provided corrective action when necessary. When he wanted to give advice or find out 'what the heck was wrong with me,' he'd say 'Jimmy, let's take a ride,' and off to the elevator we'd go for a private counseling session. We took a lot of elevator rides over the years.

You never have to guess what Topper is thinking, he will tell you, and it will be the truth. You'll know when he's mad by a simple tell with the phrase 'you people' appears out of nowhere. I am proud to call Topper my friend, to have learned so much from him over the past eight years and even though I am mad that he is leaving me to deal with Gina and Theresa alone, I am beyond happy that he is going home to spend his time with his greatest love, his wife.

We all can aspire to be the person that Topper is, he is worthy of the praise this week and beyond, his mark has been left, and Vermonters have been well served.

So, I end with this: Thank you to Big T for your friendship and guidance to me and to so many others who have come and gone during your tenure as the member from Barre, and for your five plus decades of service to Vermont. You are loved and respected for a reason, and we will all miss you."

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Black of Essex**, the following remarks by **Rep. Cina of Burlington** were ordered printed in the Journal:

"Madam Speaker:

I just want to take a minute to honor the member from Barre Town and his open mind, and his open heart.

Let me start by sharing a tidbit about his open mind. The member from Barre Town has demonstrated an open mind as my co-chair of the Universal Healthcare Caucus. Many people are surprised that it's led by a Progressive and a Republican. What we learned together is that in Saskatchewan, universal healthcare was established by a coalition between the Conservatives

and the Labour Party—not the Liberals. So hopefully someday, open minds like Topper’s will help us solve some of our greatest problems.

Let me speak for a minute about his open heart by sharing a little story from the Health Care Committee, where I’ve served with him, and where he was the Vice Chair for the last few years. When we were hearing testimony about gender-affirming healthcare, we had families and youth come into speak to our committee—opening their hearts and sharing their hardships with us. There was a father and a son, and the father was saying how much it broke his heart that his child couldn’t tell him who he really was, and how long it took—and everything that this man did for his child. I remember the member from Barre Town saying to the father that ‘If he was my kid, I would’ve done everything you did,’ reaffirming for this father how much he did for his child. I’ll always remember afterwards him giving that kid a big hug and thanking that young man for coming in. That’s just one example of his open heart.

If only there were more open hearts and minds in this world like the member from Barre Town.”

Remarks Journalized

On motion by **Rep. Cooper of Pownal**, the following remarks by **Rep. Steady of Milton** were ordered printed in the Journal:

“Madam Speaker:

I am excited and proud to introduce my granddaughter, Sophia, to the House Chamber.

I am big into memories, and I wanted to share with my granddaughter the way I feel when I walk through the Capital doors. I am sure she saw my excitement when I walked through the halls, and working with such wonderful people. Sharing this memory with her, will forever live in my heart.

Madam Speaker, and members of the House, please help me in welcoming Sophia to the House. She is seated in the Gallery.”

Third Reading; Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment

S. 210

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to access to autopsy reports

Was taken up, read the third time, and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

**Committee Bill Introduced;
Referred to Committee on Ways and Means**

H. 955

By the Committee on Education,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to next steps in transforming Vermont's education system

Was read the first time and, pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Message from the Senate No. 37

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 on its part passed Senate bills of the following titles:

S. 193. An act relating to establishing a forensic facility for certain criminal justice-involved persons.

S. 198. An act relating to the regulation of tobacco products and tobacco substitutes.

S. 214. An act relating to the provision of prekindergarten education in geographically isolated school districts.

In the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Adjournment

At one o'clock and fifty-two minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.