

Journal of the House

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Daisy Benson, President of Vermont Library Association, Colchester, and Amy Williams, Vice President of Vermont Library Association, Rutland.

Pledge of Allegiance

Page Lula Walker of Montpelier led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Message from the Governor

A message was received from His Excellency, the Governor, by Ms. Jaye Pershing Johnson, Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed by the Governor to inform the House of Representatives that on the 20th day of April, 2026, he signed bills originating in the House of the following titles:

- H. 84** **An act relating to allowing telehealth appointments to be recorded with patient and provider consent**
- H.540** **An act relating to the recommendations of the Post-Adjudication Reparative Program Working Group**
- H.694** **An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the Town of Bennington concerning the Town Manager**
- H.733** **An act relating to designating a franchise relationship**

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

S. 142

Senate bill, entitled

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

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Bill Referred to Committee on Ways and Means

H. 902

House bill, entitled

An act relating to approval of amendments to the charter of the City of Barre

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), materially affecting the revenue of one or more municipalities, was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ceremonial Reading

H.C.R. 218

Offered by All Members of the House

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2026 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont

Whereas, the children of members of the U.S. military, who number approximately 1.6 million, exemplify strength, adaptability, and a global outlook, reflective of their unique experiences in military families, and they face long deployments and frequent separations from loved ones with courage and grace, and

Whereas, in 1986, the U.S. Department of Defense first designated April as the Month of the Military Child, and this annual event is part of a year-round initiative aimed at enhancing the lives of these youths, and

Whereas, Purple Up! For Military Kids Day is an important aspect of the Month of the Military Child, and on this special day, Americans are encouraged to wear purple, a color that symbolizes all branches of the military and the fortitude, resilience, and sacrifices of militarily connected youth, and

Whereas, although April 10 and April 15 are both widely observed as the dates for this colorful celebration, since the General Assembly is commemorating the Month of the Military Child today, April 21, 2026, it is an ideal day for wearing purple in support of military children, and

Whereas, the month of April is designated for the recognition of military children, who, in reality, serve alongside their families, and these youngsters' personal adaptability to changing circumstances, which enables their parents to

protect and defend our nation, is worthy of applause and recognition, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April 2026 as the Month of the Military Child in Vermont, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont National Guard Office of Child & Youth Services.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, March 13, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

Message from the Senate No. 45

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 a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 410. An act relating to the calculation of recidivism and other related criminology measures.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has on its part adopted joint resolution of the following title:

J.R.S. 50. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on April 24, 2026.

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

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 89

Rep. Burrows of West Windsor, for the Committee on General and Housing, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding survivor benefits

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 3171 is amended to read:

§ 3171. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

* * *

(3) “Emergency personnel” means:

(A) firefighters as defined in subdivision 3151(3) of this title; and

(B) emergency medical personnel and volunteer personnel as defined in 24 V.S.A. § 2651;

(C) law enforcement officers who have been certified by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council pursuant to section 2358 of this title;

(D) facility employees of the Department of Corrections and Department of Corrections employees who provide direct security and treatment services to offenders under supervision in the community;

(E) classified family services employees in the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families; and

(F) classified medical employees of State-operated therapeutic community residences or inpatient psychiatric hospital units.

(4) “Line of duty” means:

(A) answering or returning from with respect to firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and volunteer personnel:

(i) service in answer to a call of the department or service for a fire or emergency or, including going to and returning from a fire or emergency or participating in a fire or emergency training drill; or

(B)(ii) similar service in another town or district to which the department or service has been called for firefighting or emergency purposes;

(B) with respect to law enforcement officers:

(i) service as a law enforcement officer in answer to a complaint lodged with the department or in response to a disorder, including going to, returning from, and investigating or responding to the complaint or disorder; or

(ii) service under orders from the department or in any emergency for which the law enforcement officer serves as a law enforcement officer;

(C) with respect to covered employees of the Department of Corrections, discharging their duties as employees;

(D) with respect to classified family services employees in the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families, discharging their duties as employees; and

(E) with respect to classified medical employees of State-operated therapeutic community residences or inpatient psychiatric hospital units, discharging their duties as employees.

* * *

Sec. 2. 20 V.S.A. § 3172 is amended to read:

§ 3172. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL SURVIVORS BENEFIT REVIEW

BOARD

(a)(1) There is created the Emergency Personnel Survivors Benefit Review Board, which shall consist of the State Treasurer or designee, the Attorney General or designee, the Chief Fire Service Training Officer of the Vermont Fire Service Training Council or designee, and one member of the public to represent the interests of emergency personnel appointed by the Governor for a term of two years.

(2) Survivors of emergency personnel, employed by or who volunteer for the State of Vermont, a county or municipality of the State, or a nonprofit entity that provides services in the State, who die in the line of duty or of an occupation-related illness may request the Board award a monetary benefit under section 3173 of this ~~title~~ chapter, except survivors of emergency personnel as defined in subdivisions 3171(3)(C)–(F) of this chapter may request the monetary benefit only for deaths that occur on or after July 1, 2026.

(3) The Board shall be responsible for determining whether to award monetary benefits under section 3173 of this chapter. To assist the Board with applications involving deaths from occupation-related illness, the Board may pay reasonable fees from the Emergency Personnel Survivors Benefit Special Fund for a medical expert and other services as necessary to review applications and make recommendations to the Board.

(4) A decision to award monetary benefits shall be made by unanimous vote of the Board and shall be made within 60 days after the receipt of all information necessary to enable the Board to determine eligibility.

(5) The Board may request any information necessary for the exercise of its duties under this section. Nothing in this section shall prevent the Board from initiating the investigation or determination of a claim before being requested by a survivor or employer of emergency personnel.

* * *

Sec. 3. 20 V.S.A. § 3175 is amended to read:

§ 3175. EMERGENCY PERSONNEL SURVIVORS BENEFIT SPECIAL
FUND

(a) The Emergency Personnel Survivors Benefit Special Fund is established in the Office of the State Treasurer for the purpose of the payment of claims distributed pursuant to this chapter. The Fund shall comprise appropriations transfers made by the General Assembly, amounts transferred by the Emergency Board when the General Assembly is not in session, and contributions or donations from any other source. Expenses incurred pursuant to subdivision 3172(a)(3) of this chapter shall be paid from the Fund. All balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward. Interest earned shall remain in the Fund.

(b) In the event that the balance of the Fund is insufficient to pay monetary benefits awarded by the Board when the General Assembly is not in session, the Emergency Board may, pursuant to its authority under 32 V.S.A. § 133, transfer into the Fund additional amounts necessary to pay the monetary benefits.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Rep. Dickinson of St. Albans Town, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on General and Housing.

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

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 626

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to sexual extortion, voyeurism, and disclosure of sexually explicit images without consent

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill in Sec. 1, 13 V.S.A. § 2605, by striking out subsection (j) and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (j) to read as follows:

(j) Penalties.

(1) For a first offense involving a victim who is 18 years of age or older, a person who violates subsection (b), (c), or (d), ~~or (e)~~ of this section shall be imprisoned not more than two years or fined not more than \$1,000.00, or both. For a second or subsequent offense involving a victim who is 18 years of age or older, a person who violates subsection (b), (c), or (d), ~~or (e)~~ of this section shall be imprisoned not more than three years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both.

(2) For a first offense involving a victim who is under 18 years of age, a person who violates subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section shall be imprisoned not more than three years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both. For a second or subsequent offense involving a victim who is under 18 years of age, a person who violates subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section shall be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

(3) A person who violates subsection ~~(e)~~(e) of this section shall be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

Adjournment

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