

# Journal of the House

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Friday, May 15, 2026

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

## Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by former Rep. Carolyn Partridge of Windham and bagpiper Ben Partridge of Windham.

## Memorial Service

House members rose as the Speaker placed before the House the following names of members of past sessions of the Vermont General Assembly who had passed away recently:

Rep. Jason A. Barney of Highgate	Member of the House, Sessions 1997-2002
Rep. Noel Anne Neely of Pomfret	Member of the House, Sessions 1977-1982

Thereupon, the members of the House held a moment of silence in memory of the deceased members.

## Pages Honored

In appreciation of their many services to the members of the General Assembly, the Speaker recognized the following named Pages who completed their service today and presented them with commemorative pins:

**Shepherd Finch of Chester**  
**Graham Gilman of Moretown**  
**Keira Hallmartel of Fairlee**  
**Lia Tarrant of Montpelier**  
**Maeve Wahlstrom of Whitingham**  
**Lula Walker of Montpelier**  
**Tamsin Wilson of Manchester**

**Ceremonial Readings****H.C.R. 273**

Offered by Representatives Graning of Jericho, Berbeco of Winooski, Bishop of Colchester, Bosch of Clarendon, Chapin of East Montpelier, Cooper of Pownal, Duke of Burlington, Goslant of Northfield, Lueders of Lincoln, Luneau of St. Albans City, Marcotte of Coventry, Micklus of Milton, Morrissey of Bennington, Ode of Burlington, Olson of Starksboro, Page of Newport City, Sheldon of Middlebury, Squirrell of Underhill, Sweeney of Shelburne, Torre of Moretown, Waters Evans of Charlotte, and Wells of Brownington

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2026 as National Tennis Month in Vermont

*Whereas*, on May 21, 1881, the United States Tennis Association (USTA), originally known as the United States National Lawn Tennis Association, was founded in New York, NY, to create rules and standards for the emerging game of lawn tennis, and

*Whereas*, the USTA is the nonprofit, national governing body for tennis in the United States, and leads the promotion and growth of the sport at every level of play, from beginners to professionals at the U.S. Open, and

*Whereas*, as the largest tennis organization in the world, the USTA has over 550,000 members from every corner of the country, and

*Whereas*, the USTA proudly partners with local tennis programs to showcase the important health, social, and educational benefits of tennis, and it makes the sport available to everyone, regardless of age, environment, condition, or ability, through its USTA Adaptive Tennis Grants, and

*Whereas*, according to an annual study from the Physical Activity Council, a partnership of eight of the major governing bodies and trade associations in the U.S. sports and leisure industry, more than 27.3 million Americans played tennis in 2025, an unprecedented 6.2 percent increase in participation over 2024, and the highest number of players since this study began in 2007, and

*Whereas*, increasing the accessibility of tennis for Vermonters of all ages and abilities has enabled the USTA to contribute to making Vermont communities happier and healthier, and

*Whereas*, the USTA has designated the month of May as National Tennis Month in order to encourage players, organizations, facilities, retailers, tennis manufacturers, and others to promote local programs and activities at parks and facilities to showcase tennis and spread the word about the sport and its

benefits, and to help players and nonplayers alike find courts and playing opportunities in their communities, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly recognizes May 2026 as National Tennis Month in Vermont, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to USTA New England.

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 1, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**H.C.R. 289**

Offered by Representatives Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Burke of Brattleboro, and Goodnow of Brattleboro

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

House concurrent resolution congratulating the 2026 Brattleboro Union High School championship mock trial team

*Whereas*, for the past decade, the Vermont Mock Trial Competition for high school students has offered students a combined educational and experiential opportunity to engage in the full scope of the courtroom process, and

*Whereas*, in 2026, the students were challenged with a criminal case listing charges of murder as an accessory and conspiracy to commit murder, and

*Whereas*, the participating student attorneys were presented a case packet consisting of a maximum of six witness affidavits and associated exhibits; based on these materials, they drafted opening statements, direct and cross-examination questions, and closing arguments, and

*Whereas*, the competition's curriculum also includes instruction on courtroom procedure and the rules of evidence, and

*Whereas*, aside from the litigation-specific elements, this academic exercise enables the students to improve their critical thinking and public speaking skills, and

*Whereas*, this year's competition was held at Vermont Law and Graduate School in South Royalton on March 14, 2026, and the panel of 15 judges included members of the federal and State Judiciary, as well as practicing lawyers, and

*Whereas*, after all the trial proceedings had concluded and the judges assessed the student advocates, the Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS) team was awarded first place honors, and

*Whereas*, the BUHS lawyers were Abraham Balint-Wohl, Danny Mahoney-Schmitt, Sal North, and Isabel Young; the school's student witnesses were Leland Stromberg, Eli Welch, and Gilbert Komuves; the faculty coaches were Tessa Anders and Ashley Nadeau; and Alycia Sanders served as the practicing attorney advisor, and

*Whereas*, the selection of BUHS as the competition's top team reflects the diligent preparation of these outstanding students, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly congratulates the 2026 Brattleboro Union High School championship mock trial team, *and be it further*

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

Having been adopted in concurrence on Friday, May 8, 2026 in accord with Joint Rule 16b, was read.

**Recess**

At ten o'clock and seven minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

**Message from the Senate No. 60**

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 proposals of amendment to Senate bills of the following titles:

**S. 202.** An act relating to portable solar energy generation devices.

**S. 298.** An act relating to creating the Vermont Voting Rights Act.

And has concurred therein with a proposal of amendment in the passage of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Senate has considered bills originating in the House of the following titles:

**H. 293.** An act relating to health equity data reporting and registry disclosure requirements.

**H. 583.** An act relating to clinical decision making.

**H. 642.** An act relating to youthful offender proceedings.

**H. 657.** An act relating to various programming and requirements within the Department for Children and Families.

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

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

**H. 956.** An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

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

**S.C.R. 13.** Senate concurrent resolution honoring Middlebury College Professor Jessica Holmes for her exemplary public service as a member and interim chair of the Green Mountain Care Board.

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

**H.C.R. 294.** House concurrent resolution honoring Nicholas Monte, Bennington County's chocolatier extraordinaire.

**H.C.R. 295.** House concurrent resolution honoring Patricia Gibbons for her extraordinary half-century teaching career in the Town of Bennington.

**H.C.R. 296.** House concurrent resolution congratulating Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts of Bennington, Vermont's last remaining Christian bookstore, on its 50th anniversary.

**H.C.R. 297.** House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Director of Fisheries Eric Palmer and extending future best wishes.

**H.C.R. 298.** House concurrent resolution recognizing the importance of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's fish culture program for the continued success of aquatic-resource sustainability and the availability of abundant recreational fishing opportunities in Vermont.

**H.C.R. 299.** House concurrent resolution in memory of Elana Grace Korey and recognizing August 2, 2026, as 802 Day in Vermont.

**H.C.R. 300.** House concurrent resolution in memory of gay rights advocate, political activist, culinary bibliophile, and chocolatier maven Terje Anderson.

**H.C.R. 301.** House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2026 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont.

**H.C.R. 302.** House concurrent resolution congratulating former Shaftsbury Selectboard Chair Arthur Whitman and his wife Kathy Whitman as the recipients of the 2026 Shaftsbury Ordinary Hero Award.

**H.C.R. 303.** House concurrent resolution extending best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery to the indomitable Representative Anne de la Blanchetai Donahue of Northfield.

**H.C.R. 304.** House concurrent resolution celebrating the State House display of Julian Scott's Civil War masterpiece, The Fourth Vermont Forming Under Fire, and thanking those individuals who facilitated this historic artistic event.

**H.C.R. 305.** House concurrent resolution honoring former Representative Francis Matthew (Topper) McFaun for his exemplary public and community service.

#### **Called to Order**

At one o'clock and forty-four minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

#### **Action on Bill Postponed**

##### **S. 208**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to standards for law enforcement identification

Was taken up and, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction**, action on the bill was postponed one legislative day.

#### **Action on Bill Postponed**

##### **S. 212**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to potable water supply and wastewater system connections

Was taken up and, pending second reading of the bill, on motion of **Rep. North of Ferrisburgh**, action on the bill was postponed one legislative day.

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**Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in with Further Proposal of  
Amendment Thereto**

**H. 639**

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled  
An act relating to genetic data privacy

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 61A, in section 2421b, in subsection (d), by striking out subdivisions (2) and (3) in their entireties and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (2) to read as follows:

(2) Genetic data and biological samples of consumers shall:

(A) not be stored within the territorial boundaries of any country currently sanctioned in any way by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control or designated as a foreign adversary under 15 C.F.R. § 7.4(a); and

(B) only be transferred or stored outside the United States with the express consent of the consumer.

Second: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 61A, in section 2421c, by adding a new subsection to be subsection (c) to read as follows:

(c)(1) A consumer pursuing a civil action pursuant to subsection 2461(b) of this title against a direct-to-consumer genetic testing company or service provider for an alleged violation of this subchapter shall, before initiating the civil action, send a written notice to the company or service provider that includes as many details as possible of the alleged violation.

(2) If the company or service provider does not cure the alleged violation within 60 days after the notice is received by the company or service provider or if there is a disagreement as to whether the alleged violation has been cured, the consumer shall have the right to initiate a civil action against the company or service provider pursuant to subsection 2461(b) of this title.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Olson of Starksboro** moved to concur in the Senate proposal of amendment with a further proposal of amendment thereto in Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 61A, in section 2421c, by striking out subsection (c) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (c) to read as follows:

(c)(1) A consumer pursuing a civil action pursuant to subsection 2461(b) of this title against a direct-to-consumer genetic testing company or service provider for an alleged violation of subdivision 2421b(a)(1) or subsection 2421b(b) or 2421b(f) of this subchapter shall, before initiating the civil action,

send a written notice to the company or service provider that includes as many details as possible of the alleged violation.

(2) If the company or service provider does not cure the alleged violation within 60 days after the notice is received by the company or service provider or if there is a disagreement as to whether the alleged violation has been cured, the consumer shall have the right to initiate a civil action against the company or service provider pursuant to subsection 2461(b) of this title.

(3) There is no cure period for any other alleged violation of this subchapter.

Which was agreed to.

**Senate Proposal of Amendment Not Concurred in; Committee of  
Conference Requested and Appointed**

**H. 816**

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

An act relating to regulating the use of artificial intelligence in the provision of mental health services

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

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this act to safeguard individuals seeking mental health services in Vermont from psychological harm, including death by suicide, by ensuring that these services are delivered by mental health professionals and not independently by artificial intelligence systems.

Sec. 2. 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:

\* \* \*

(30) For any mental health professional, engaging in the prohibited use of artificial intelligence pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 7115.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 7115 is added to read:

§ 7115. PROHIBITED USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Artificial intelligence” means an engineered or machine-based system that varies in its level of autonomy and that can, for explicit or implicit objectives, infer from the input it receives how to generate outputs that can influence physical or virtual environments.

(2) “Mental health professional” means an individual licensed, certified, or rostered, respectively, to provide mental health services as a physician pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 23 or 33; an advanced practice registered nurse specializing in psychiatric mental health pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 28; a psychologist pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 55; a peer support provider or peer recovery support specialist pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 60; a social worker pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 61; an alcohol and drug abuse counselor pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 62; a clinical mental health counselor pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 65; a marriage and family therapist pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 76; a psychoanalyst pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 77; an applied behavior analyst pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 95; a nonlicensed or noncertified psychotherapist or a noncertified psychoanalyst; or any other professional who provides mental health services.

(3) “Mental health services” means counseling, therapy, or psychotherapy services used to diagnose or treat an individual’s mental or behavioral health or provide ongoing recovery support, including providing therapeutic decisions, issuing direct therapeutic communications, generating treatment plans or recommendations, or detecting or interpreting emotion or mental states.

(4) “Therapeutic communication” means a written, verbal, or nonverbal interaction intended to diagnose or treat any type of mental or behavioral health concern, provide ongoing recovery support, or provide any advice related to diagnosis, treatment, or recovery, such as:

(A) engaging in direct interactions with clients or patients for the purpose of understanding or reflecting the client’s or patient’s thoughts;

(B) providing guidance, therapeutic strategies, or interventions designed to achieve mental health outcomes;

(C) offering emotional support, reassurance, or empathy in response to emotional or psychological distress;

(D) collaborating with a patient or client to develop or modify treatment plans or therapeutic goals; and

(E) delivering feedback intended to promote growth or address mental health outcomes.

(5) “Therapeutic decision” means the final clinical determination regarding diagnosis or the selection, modification, or termination of treatment or care.

(b) A corporation or entity shall not provide, advertise, or otherwise offer mental health services, including through the use of artificial intelligence, to the public unless the mental health services are provided by a mental health professional.

(c)(1) A violation of this section by a corporation or entity shall be deemed a violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63. The Attorney General has the same authority, and private parties have the same rights and remedies, as provided under 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 1. Each violation of this section shall carry a civil penalty of \$10,000.00 as set forth in 9 V.S.A. § 2461.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude or supplant any other statutory or common law remedies.

(d) Nothing in this section shall preclude a mental health professional who is operating within the professional’s scope of practice from utilizing artificial intelligence tools that are compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-191, provided that the mental health professional reviews and approves any mental health services.

Sec. 4. 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:

\* \* \*

(3) engaging in the prohibited use of artificial intelligence pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 7115;

\* \* \*

#### Sec. 5. REPORT; USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN REGULATED PROFESSIONS

On or before January 15, 2027, the Office of Professional Regulation and the Board of Medical Practice shall jointly submit a written report to the House Committees on Government Operations and Military Affairs, on Health Care,

and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Government Operations and on Health and Welfare containing recommendations for the regulation of the use of artificial intelligence by regulated professionals, including recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Black of Essex** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

**Rep. Berbeco of Winooski**

**Rep. Cina of Burlington**

**Rep. Taylor of Mendon**

**Proposal of Amendment Amended; Third Reading;  
Bill Passed in Concurrence with Proposal of Amendment**

**S. 198**

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of tobacco products and tobacco substitutes

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Kornheiser of Brattleboro** moved to amend the House proposal of amendment by striking out Sec. 11, taxation of tobacco substitutes; tax stamps; report, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 11 to read as follows:

Sec. 11. TAXATION OF TOBACCO SUBSTITUTES; TAX STAMPS;

REPORT

(a) The Office of the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Departments of Taxes and of Liquor and Lottery and in consultation with wholesale dealers and other interested stakeholders, shall:

(1) identify efficient and effective processes by which to impose taxes on tobacco products and tobacco substitutes, as defined in 7 V.S.A. § 1001, as amended by this act, including opportunities to base taxation on a product's nicotine concentration or on the volume of a product's nicotine tank, or both; and

(2) evaluate the continued use of tax stamps in this State as evidence of payment of the excise tax on tobacco products and tobacco substitutes, as defined in 7 V.S.A. § 1001, as amended by this act; explore the potential to

transition to a more modern process, such as quick-response (QR) codes or other digitized systems; and consider the advantages and disadvantages of using alternative approaches for certifying tax compliance.

(b) On or before January 15, 2027, the Office of the Attorney General shall provide its findings and recommendations for the items set forth in subsection (a) of this section, including proposed next steps and legislative needs, to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development, on Human Services, and on Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs; on Finance; and on Health and Welfare.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

**Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration;  
Senate Proposal of Amendment Not Concurred in;  
Committee of Conference Requested and Appointed; Rules Suspended,  
Messaged to the Senate Forthwith**

**H. 660**

Appearing on the Notice Calendar, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House bill, entitled

An act relating to fiscal year 2027 Opioid Abatement Special Fund appropriations

Was taken up for immediate consideration.

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

\* \* \* Opioid Abatement Special Fund \* \* \*

Sec. 1. APPROPRIATIONS; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a) In fiscal year 2027, the following sums shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established in 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

(1)(A) \$455,000.00 to the Department of Health to fund 26 outreach or case management staff positions within the preferred provider network for the provision of services that increase the motivation of and engagement with individuals with substance use disorder in settings such as police barracks, shelters, social service organizations, and elsewhere in the community.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that these positions shall be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(2)(A) \$1,600,000.00 to the Department of Health for recovery residences certified by the Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that recovery residences be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(3)(A) \$850,000.00 to the Department of Health for syringe services.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly that syringe services be funded annually by the Opioid Abatement Special Fund unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(4) \$1,100,000.00 to the Department of Corrections to provide peer recovery center coaches in Vermont correctional facilities and in probation and parole offices to provide group and individual coaching and reentry support, which shall not be used to cover administrative expenses.

(5) \$250,000.00 to the Department for Children and Families' Office of Economic Opportunity to support long-term programs at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness, including harm-reduction supports, transportation to recovery meetings and appointments, and clinical nursing programs.

(6)(A) \$600,000.00 to the Department of Health for the creation of new recovery residence beds at National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) certification level III or above.

(B) \$600,000.00 to the Department of Health for opioid use disorder residential treatment beds at American Society of Addiction Medicine level 3.1.

(7) \$248,000.00 to the Department of Health for the Prehospital Vermont EMS Buprenorphine Treatment (PREVENT) Program to expand training for emergency service providers on carrying buprenorphine and administering buprenorphine after administering naloxone.

(8) \$35,000.00 to the Department of Health to subsidize room and board for individuals in Rutland Mental Health Services' transitional housing program.

(9) \$237,646.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Springfield Project ACTION to support public safety enhancement team coordinator positions in Bennington, Springfield, Brattleboro, St. Johnsbury, and central Vermont for the purposes of providing administrative support, meeting facilitation, data tracking, outreach event coordination, and sustainability planning.

(10) \$800,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to recovery centers.

(11) \$287,000.00 to the Department of Public Safety to provide funding for expanding the Public Safety Enhancement Team's harm reduction and strategic community intervention efforts.

(12)(A) \$1,100,000.00 to the Department of Health for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington to establish an overdose prevention center, provided, however, that the Department shall not distribute funding until a location for the overdose prevention center has been procured by lease or purchase, the overdose prevention center is being fit up for its intended use, and the overdose prevention center is currently or will imminently become operational.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly to continue to appropriate funds annually from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund through at least fiscal year 2028 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for the operation of the overdose prevention center, unless and until the Special Fund does not have sufficient monies to fund this expenditure.

(b) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 703, unless reverted by a future act of the General Assembly, the appropriations made in accordance with this section shall carry forward until fully expended.

Sec. 2. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 22, Sec. 14, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. C.112, is further amended to read:

Sec. 14. APPROPRIATION; OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

In fiscal year 2023, the following monies shall be appropriated from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4774:

~~(1)(A) \$1,500,000 divided equally between four opioid treatment programs~~ to cover costs associated with partnering with other health care providers to expand satellite locations for the dosing of medications, including costs associated with the satellite locations' physical facilities, staff time at the satellite locations, and staff time at opioid treatment programs to prepare medications and coordinate with satellite locations;

~~(B) the satellite locations established pursuant to this subdivision (1) shall be located in Addison County, and eastern or southern Vermont, and in a facility operated by the Department of Corrections;~~

~~(2) \$500,000 to establish a second Chittenden Clinic Addiction Treatment Center satellite location in northwestern Vermont;~~

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 4772 is amended to read:

§ 4772. OPIOID SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

\* \* \*

(c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall demonstrate broad ongoing consultation with individuals living with opioid use disorder about their direct experience with related systems, including medication for opioid use disorder, residential treatment, recovery services, harm reduction services, overdose, supervision by the Department of Corrections, and involvement with the Department for Children and Families' Family Services Division. To that end, the Advisory Committee shall demonstrate consultation with individuals with direct lived experience of opioid use disorder, frontline support professionals, the Substance Misuse Oversight Prevention and Advisory Council, the Health Equity Advisory Commission, and other stakeholders to identify spending priorities as related to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services and harm reduction strategies for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Governor, the Department of Health, and the General Assembly on prioritizing spending from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. Each ongoing funding proposal considered by the Advisory Committee shall include a sustainability plan from the applicant to ensure consideration of future expenses and available resources apart from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. The Advisory Committee shall consider:

(1) the impact of the opioid crisis on communities throughout Vermont, including communities' abatement needs and proposals for abatement strategies and responses;

(2) the perspectives of and proposals from opioid use disorder prevention coalitions, recovery centers, and medication for opioid use disorder providers; and

(3) the ongoing challenges of the opioid crisis on marginalized populations, including individuals who have a lived experience of opioid use disorder.

\* \* \*

(e) ~~Presentation~~ Recommendations.

(1) Annually, the Advisory Committee shall vote on its recommendations. Recommendations shall be informed by outcomes and measurements reported by previous grantees and developed in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General. If the recommendations are supported by an affirmative vote of the majority, the Advisory Committee

shall present its recommendations for expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund established pursuant to this subchapter to the Department of Health and concurrently submit its recommendations in writing to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare. The Advisory Committee's written recommendations shall address how each recommendation meets one or more of the criteria listed in subsections 4774(b) and (c) of this subchapter. The Advisory Committee shall give priority consideration to services requiring funding on an ongoing basis.

(2) If the Department does not agree with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, it may separately submit its own recommendations, developed in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, to the General Assembly.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3a. 18 V.S.A. § 4774 is amended to read:

§ 4774. OPIOID ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND

(a)(1) There is created the Opioid Abatement Special Fund, a special fund established and managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5 and administered by the Department of Health. The Opioid Abatement Special Fund shall consist of all abatement account fund monies disbursed to the Department from the national abatement account fund, the national opioid abatement trust, the supplemental opioid abatement fund, or any other settlement funds that must be utilized exclusively for opioid prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services, co-occurring mental health conditions, and co-occurring substance use disorders.

\* \* \*

Sec. 4. APPROPRIATION REVIEW; FISCAL YEAR 2028 PROPOSAL  
SUSPENSION

The Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee shall not accept funding proposals from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund for fiscal year 2028, unless a proposal was previously identified in statute as intended for annual funding. It instead shall review the outcomes of programs and initiatives previously funded through the Opioid Abatement Special Fund to assess effectiveness, long-term sustainability, and the appropriateness of the Opioid Abatement Special Fund as a funding source, where applicable. If funds are available after making fiscal year 2028 appropriations recommendations for previously funded programs and initiatives, the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee shall identify specific areas of focus and shall make funding

recommendations within those areas based on needs assessments and statewide data rather than requesting new proposals.

Sec. 5. QUARTERLY REPORTING; EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID  
ABATEMENT SPECIAL FUND MONIES

The Department of Health shall submit to the General Assembly quarterly reports regarding expenditures from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund. Specifically, the reports shall identify funds appropriated from the Special Fund that remain unobligated or unspent, or both, and shall include an explanation as to why the funds have not been fully distributed. Reports due on October 1, 2026, and July 1, 2027, shall be submitted to the Joint Fiscal Committee. Reports due on January 1, 2027, and April 1, 2027, shall be submitted to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare. The Department shall post reports required pursuant to this section on its website.

Sec. 6. REVERSIONS

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, in fiscal year 2027, the following amounts shall revert to the Opioid Abatement Special Fund from the accounts indicated:

<u>3420892313 VDH-Opioid Sp. Fund Prov Satellites</u>	<u>\$444,000.00</u>
<u>3420892313 VDH-Opioid Sp. Fund Wound Care</u>	<u>\$8,287.34</u>
<u>3420892501 VDH-Opioid Sp. Fund Stabilization Beds</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>

\* \* \* Syringe Recovery Plan \* \* \*

Sec. 6a. PLAN; SYRINGE RECOVERY

On or before December 15, 2026, the Department of Health shall submit a plan to the House Committee on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare containing recommendations for the implementation of one or more syringe recovery models throughout the State to enhance public health and safety. The plan shall require syringe service providers to report to the Department on the percentage of distributed syringes that are returned to the provider or otherwise collected.

\* \* \* Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund \* \* \*

Sec. 7. APPROPRIATIONS; SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION  
SPECIAL FUND

In fiscal year 2027, the following monies shall be appropriated from the Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund established pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 4812:

(1) \$288,935.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Elevate Youth Services to support the creation of a low-barrier, drop-in teen center in Barre to provide food, activities, positive adults role models, peer counselors, prevention and recovery programming, and direct connection to treatments;

(2) \$124,999.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to the Greater Falls Connections to enhance youth engagement and education and to expand prevention-focused staffing and youth programming space in response to increasing community need;

(3) \$200,000.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Interaction: Friends for Change to increase access to community-based therapy, housing, crisis, medical, recovery, and employment supports for youth in Windham County; and

(4) \$26,697.00 to the Department of Health for distribution to Winooski Partnership for Prevention to provide funding for staff time and stipends for partners to deliver medicine safety education to elementary-aged youth during school with family engagement.

Sec. 8. 18 V.S.A. § 4812 is amended to read:

§ 4812. SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION SPECIAL FUND

\* \* \*

(e) As part of its annual budget presentation, the Department shall report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare on its specific spending proposal from the Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund for the coming fiscal year. The report shall include an estimate of the monies in the Special Fund anticipated to remain unallocated at the end of the fiscal year.

\* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to fiscal year 2027 Opioid Abatement Special Fund and Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund appropriations”

Pending the question, Shall the House concur in the Senate proposal of amendment?, **Rep. Wood of Waterbury** moved that the House refuse to concur and ask for a Committee of Conference, which was agreed to, and the Speaker appointed as members of the Committee of Conference on the part of the House:

**Rep. Wood of Waterbury**  
**Rep. Maguire of Rutland City**  
**Rep. Bluemle of Burlington**

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the House's actions on the bill were ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

#### **Recess**

At one o'clock and fifty-nine minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker declared a recess until the fall of the gavel.

#### **Called to Order**

At two o'clock and five minutes in the afternoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

#### **Action on Bill Postponed**

##### **H. 944**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2027 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Was taken up and, pending consideration of the Senate proposal of amendment, on motion of **Rep. Walker of Swanton**, action on the bill was postponed one legislative day.

#### **Rules Suspended, Messaged to Senate Forthwith**

##### **H. 816**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to regulating the use of artificial intelligence in the provision of mental health services

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and the House's actions on the bill were ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

**Adjournment**

At two o'clock and five minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Monday, May 18, 2026, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 53.

**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. 294**

House concurrent resolution honoring Nicholas Monte, Bennington County's chocolatier extraordinaire

**H.C.R. 295**

House concurrent resolution honoring Patricia Gibbons for her extraordinary half-century teaching career in the Town of Bennington

**H.C.R. 296**

House concurrent resolution congratulating Inspirational Bible Book & Gifts of Bennington, Vermont's last remaining Christian bookstore, on its 50th anniversary

**H.C.R. 297**

House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Director of Fisheries Eric Palmer and extending future best wishes

**H.C.R. 298**

House concurrent resolution recognizing the importance of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's fish culture program for the continued success of aquatic-resource sustainability and the availability of abundant recreational fishing opportunities in Vermont

**H.C.R. 299**

House concurrent resolution in memory of Elana Grace Korey and recognizing August 2, 2026, as 802 Day in Vermont

**H.C.R. 300**

House concurrent resolution in memory of gay rights advocate, political activist, culinary bibliophile, and chocolatier maven Terje Anderson

**H.C.R. 301**

House concurrent resolution recognizing May 2026 as National Foster Care Month in Vermont

**H.C.R. 302**

House concurrent resolution congratulating former Shaftsbury Selectboard Chair Arthur Whitman and his wife Kathy Whitman as the recipients of the 2026 Shaftsbury Ordinary Hero Award

**H.C.R. 303**

House concurrent resolution extending best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery to the indomitable Representative Anne de la Blanchetai Donahue of Northfield

**H.C.R. 304**

House concurrent resolution celebrating the State House display of Julian Scott's Civil War masterpiece, *The Fourth Vermont Forming Under Fire*, and thanking those individuals who facilitated this historic artistic event

**H.C.R. 305**

House concurrent resolution honoring former Representative Francis Matthew (Topper) McFaun for his exemplary public and community service

**S.C.R. 13**

Senate concurrent resolution honoring Middlebury College Professor Jessica Holmes for her exemplary public service as a member and interim chair of the Green Mountain Care Board

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House and Senate Calendar Addendums on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2026 Adjourned Session.]