Journal of the Senate

Of the STATE OF VERMONT BIENNIAL SESSION, 2025

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025

Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution and the laws of the State of Vermont, the Senate convened at the State House at Montpelier, on the first Wednesday, after the first Monday, the 8th day of January in the year of two thousand twenty-five.

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, eastern standard time, the Senate was called to order by the President, Lieutenant Governor David E. Zuckerman.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Rachel Field of Northfield.

Pledge of Allegiance

The President then led the members of the Senate in the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call

The roll of the Senate was thereupon called by the Secretary, John H. Bloomer, Jr., and it appeared that the following Senators were present.

Addison District Senator Ruth Ellen Hardy

Senator Steven P. Heffernan

Bennington District Senator Seth B. Bongartz

Senator Robert F. Plunkett

Caledonia District Senator Scott L. Beck

Chittenden-Central District Senator Philip E. Baruth

Senator Martine Larocque Gulick

Senator Tanya C. Vyhovsky

Chittenden-North District Senator Christopher P. Mattos

Chittenden-Southeast District	Senator Thomas I. Chittenden Senator Virginia V. Lyons Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale
Essex District	Senator Russell H. Ingalls
Franklin District	Senator Randolph D. Brock Senator Robert W. Norris
Grand Isle District	Senator Patrick M. Brennan
Lamoille District	Senator Richard A. Westman
Orange District	Senator Larry W. Hart
Orleans District	Senator Samuel A. Douglass
Rutland District	Senator Brian P. Collamore Senator David H. Weeks Senator Terry K. Williams
Washington District	Senator Ann E. Cummings Senator Andrew J. Perchlik Senator Anne Elizabeth Watson
Windham District	Senator Wendy K. Harrison Senator Nader A. Hashim
Windsor District	Senator Alison Clarkson Senator Joseph D. Major Senator Rebecca Elizabeth White

Oath Administered

The thirty Senators-elect present and in their seats were duly sworn by the Secretary and severally subscribed the oath of office.

Election of Officers

The President announced that the next order of business was the election of officers, and that nominations for Secretary were in order:

Senator White of Windsor District nominated

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.

of the Town of Wallingford.

Senator Collamore of Rutland District seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Senator Baruth, the nominations were closed and the Assistant Secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for

JOHN H. BLOOMER JR.

of the Town of Wallingford, as Secretary of the Senate for the two years next ensuing.

Thereupon, he presented himself at the bar of the Senate and received the oath of office from the President.

Election of President Pro Tempore

The President then announced that the next order of business was the election of a President *pro tempore*.

Senator White of Windsor District nominated

PHILIP E. BARUTH

of Chittenden-Central District.

Senator Lyons of Chittenden-Southeast District seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Senator Ram Hinsdale, the nominations were closed and the Secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for

PHILIP E. BARUTH

of Chittenden-Central District as President *pro tempore* of the Senate for the two years next ensuing.

Thereupon, he presented himself at the bar of the Senate and received the oath of office from the President.

Election of Third Member of Committee on Committees

The Senate then proceeded to the election of a Senator to serve with the President and President *pro tempore* as a member of the Committee on Committees, which appoints the standing committees of the Senate.

Senator Cummings of Washington District nominated

VIRGINIA V. LYONS

of Chittenden-Southeast District.

Senator Harrison of Windham District seconded the nomination.

There being no further nominations, on motion of Senator Baruth, the nominations were closed and the Secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for

VIRGINIA V. LYONS

of Chittenden-Southeast District to serve with the President and President *pro tempore* as a member of the Committee on Committees.

Thereupon, she presented herself at the bar of the Senate and received the oath of office from the President.

Appointments

The President announced the appointment by the Secretary of

MELISSA ROSE GRADEL

of Montpelier, as Assistant Secretary of the Senate, and she presented herself at the bar of the Senate and received the oath of office from the Secretary.

The President announced the appointment by the Secretary of

CHRISTINE F. GILHULY

of Waitsfield, as Operations Manager/Journal Clerk, and

ANDREA M. HUSSEY

of Montpelier, as Calendar Clerk, and

PENNY M. CARPENTER

of Waterbury, as Office Associate.

Senate Resolutions Adopted

Senate resolutions of the following titles were severally offered, read and adopted, and are as follows:

Offered by Senator Baruth,

S.R. 1. Senate resolution relating to the rules of the Senate.

Resolved by the Senate:

That for the 2025 Biennial Session the Senate be governed by the Permanent Rules of the Senate as in effect at the end of the 2024 Adjourned Session, until others are adopted, with the following amendments:

First: Senate Rule 2A is amended to read as follows:

2A. The Senators from the Addison Senatorial District shall occupy seats numbered 18 and 19; from the Bennington Senatorial District, seats numbered 5 and 6; from the Caledonia Senatorial District, seat number 26; from the Chittenden-Central Senatorial District, seats numbered 10, 11

and 12; from the Chittenden-North Senatorial District, seat number 27; from the Chittenden-Southeast Senatorial District, seats numbered 7, 8 and 9; from the Essex Senatorial District, seat number 3; from the Franklin Senatorial District, seats numbered 20 and 21; from the Grand Isle Senatorial District, seat number 25 26; from the Lamoille Senatorial District, seat number 1; from the Orange Senatorial District, seat number 4; from the Orleans Senatorial District, seat number 2; from the Rutland Senatorial District, seats numbered 22, 23 and 24; from the Washington Senatorial District, seats numbered 28, 29 and 30; from the Windham Senatorial District, seats numbered 16 and 17; and from the Windsor Senatorial District, seats numbered 13, 14 and 15.

Second: In Rule 24, ninth paragraph, after the words "public buildings" by striking out the comma and inserting the following: <u>; information technology generally along with the acquisition, operation, and management of information technology (in state government and in the General Assembly);</u>

Third: Senate Rule 102(a) is amended to read:

102. Ethics:

(a) The Committee on Committees shall, at the beginning of the biennium or as soon as possible thereafter, establish an Ethics Panel to receive and investigate allegations of ethical violations of senators and allegations of discrimination by senators, except for those complaints covered under Rule 101, and to recommend to the Senate any disciplinary action against a senator for an ethical or discriminatory violation, if the Panel deems it necessary.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

S.R. 2. Senate resolution relating to concurrently conducted electronic committee meetings.

Resolved by the Senate:

Notwithstanding the language in Permanent Senate Rule 32A limiting the applicability of Senate Rule 32A to Declarations of Emergency, the provisions of Permanent Senate Rule 32A regarding committee meetings shall be in effect until Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

S.R. 3. Senate resolution relating to electronic participation in Senate Session.

Resolved by the Senate:

That a temporary rule, to be designated by Rule 9B, be adopted to read as follows:

Rule 9B. Temporary Rule Regarding Electronic Participation in Senate Sessions

- (a)(1) Senate Sessions shall be in-person, except a Senator may participate, debate, deliberate and vote pursuant the procedures of Senate Rule 9A in concurrently conducted electronic sessions on a temporary, emergency basis if:
- (A) the Senator has tested positive for or diagnosed with COVID-19 and is within a required period of isolation;
- (B) the Senator has COVID-19 symptoms and is awaiting the results of a diagnostic test;
- (C) the Senator is the primary caregiver for a household member and the household member is required to be home due to one of the reasons set forth in subdivisions (A)–(B) of this subdivision (1); or
- (D) the Senator or the household member for which the Senator is the primary caregiver has a temporary emergency relating to care or health.
- (2) A Senator may avail themselves of section (a)(1)(D) for no more than two (2) consecutive days. A Senator may request the Rules Committee approve a longer duration of participation under section (a)(1)(D).
- (b) This temporary rule shall remain in effect through Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

S.R. 4. Senate resolution relating to appointment of a committee to inform the Governor of the organization of the Senate.

Resolved by the Senate:

That a committee of four Senators be appointed by the President to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, and to inform him that the Senate has organized and is ready on its part to proceed with the business of the session.

Offered by Senator Ram Hinsdale,

S.R. 5. Senate resolution relating to informing the House of the organization of the Senate.

Resolved by the Senate:

That the Secretary be directed to inform the House of Representatives that a quorum of the Senate has assembled and organized by the election of **John H. Bloomer, Jr.**, of Wallingford, as Secretary, and **Philip E. Baruth**, a Senator from Chittenden-Central District, as President *pro tempore*, and is ready on its part to proceed with the business of the session.

Joint Senate Resolutions Adopted on the Part of the Senate

Joint Senate resolutions of the following titles were severally offered, read and adopted on the part of the Senate, and are as follows:

Offered by Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 1. Joint resolution relating to joint rules.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the joint rules of the Senate and the House as adopted in 2023 be adopted as the joint rules of this biennial session until others are adopted.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 2. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the report of the committee appointed to canvass votes for state officers.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at ten o'clock in the forenoon to receive the report of the Joint Canvassing Committee appointed to canvass votes for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts and Attorney General, and if it shall be declared by said Committee that there had been no election by the voters of any of said state officers, then to proceed forthwith to elect such officers as have not been elected by the voters.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 3. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the inaugural message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at two o'clock in the afternoon to receive the inaugural message of the Governor.

Offered by Senator Baruth,

J.R.S. 4. Joint resolution relating to Town Meeting adjournment.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, February 28, 2025, or Saturday, March 1, 2025, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Committee Appointed

Pursuant to the provisions of S.R.4, the President appointed a Committee to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, to inform him that the Senate is ready on its part to proceed with the business of the session:

Senator Ram Hinsdale Senator White Senator Beck Senator Collamore

Report of Committee

Senator Ram Hinsdale of Chittenden-Southeast District, for the Committee appointed to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, to inform him that the Senate is ready on its part to proceed with the business of the session, appeared at the bar of the Senate and reported that it had performed the duties assigned to it.

Canvassing Committee Elected

The President nominated as a committee on the part of the Senate to canvass votes for state officers,

Senator Hardy, of Addison District

Senator Plunkett, of Bennington District

Senator Beck, of Caledonia District

Senator Gulick, of Chittenden-Central District

Senator Mattos, of Chittenden-North District

Senator Ram Hinsdale, of Chittenden-Southeast District

Senator Ingalls, of Essex District

Senator Norris, of Franklin District

Senator Brennan, of Grand Isle District

Senator Westman, of Lamoille District

Senator Hart, of Orange District

Senator Douglass, of Orleans District

Senator Williams, of Rutland District

Senator Watson, of Washington District

Senator Harrison, of Windham District

Senator Major, of Windsor District

Thereupon, Senator Baruth moved that the nominees be elected by the Senate, which was agreed to.

Thereupon, the President declared the nominees elected, and the Committee so elected received the oath of office from the Secretary.

The President designated Senator Hardy, of Addison District, as Chair of the Joint Canvassing Committee to canvass votes for state officers.

Message from the House No. 1

A message was received from the House of Representatives by Mx. Nigel Hicks-Tibbles, its First Assistant Clerk, as follows:

Mr. President:

I am directed to inform the Senate that:

A quorum of the House has assembled and organized by the election of

Jill Krowinski

the Representative from Burlington (Chittenden-16), as Speaker, and

BetsyAnn Wrask

of Barre Town, as Clerk, who in turn has appointed Nigel Hicks-Tibbles of Northfield as First Assistant Clerk and Courtney Reckord of Williamstown as Second Assistant Clerk, and is ready on its part to proceed with the business of the session.

Message from the House No. 2

A message was received from the House of Representatives by Ms. Courtney Reckord, its Second Assistant Clerk, as follows:

Mr. President:

I am directed to inform the Senate that:

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

- **J.R.S. 1.** Joint resolution relating to joint rules.
- **J.R.S. 2.** Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the report of the committee appointed to canvass votes for state officers.
- **J.R.S.** 3. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the inaurgural message of the Governor.
 - **J.R.S. 4.** Joint resolution relating to Town Meeting adjournment.

And has adopted the same in concurrence.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until nine o'clock and fifty minutes in the morning.