

# Journal of the Senate

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025

The Senate was called to order by the President.

## Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of devotions.

## Message from the House No. 28

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 passed House bills of the following titles:

**H. 137.** An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services.

**H. 266.** An act relating to the 340B prescription drug pricing program.

**H. 463.** An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session.

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

## Senate Resolution Referred

### S.R. 11.

Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read the first time and is as follows:

Offered by Senators Baruth, Beck, Bongartz, Brennan, Brock, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Douglass, Gulick, Hardy, Harrison, Hart, Hashim, Heffernan, Lyons, Major, Mattos, Norris, Perchlik, Plunkett, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Watson, Westman and White,

**S.R. 11.** Senate resolution relating to supporting warm and cooperative relations on the part of both the United States and the State of Vermont with Canada and urging President Trump to remove all tariffs that he has imposed against Canadian imports and to refrain from subsequently imposing any new tariffs against Canadian imports.

*Whereas*, the United States and Canada have been military and diplomatic allies and economic partners, even though episodes of commercial disagreement, since Canadian confederation in 1867, and

*Whereas*, perhaps no American state has a closer and more active two-way relationship with our northern neighbor than the State of Vermont, and

*Whereas*, these ties entail personal, cultural, and economic relationships, and

*Whereas*, many Vermonters enjoy travel to Montreal and Quebec City while Canadians, especially Quebecers, reciprocate with journeys to Vermont to take advantage of the State's outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities, and

*Whereas*, on the economic front, for 2023, the Canadian Consulate in Boston reported that Vermont exported \$680 million in goods and \$165 million in services to Canada, and that same year, Vermont imported \$2.6 billion in goods from Canada, and Canadian investments in the State supported over 17,000 Vermont jobs, and

*Whereas*, according to the Department of Public Service, in 2023, 24 percent of Vermont's electric supply portfolio was served by Hydro-Québec, aside from any renewable energy credits, and Vermont Gas Systems receives 100 percent of its gas from Canada, and

*Whereas*, in recent years, Governor Philip Scott has repeatedly traveled to Montreal on trade missions and has strived to enhance Vermont-Quebec trade ties, and

*Whereas*, on the national level, according to TD Bank, during the first three quarters of 2024, approximately \$683 billion in combined goods and services was shipped in both directions across the United States-Canada border, and

*Whereas*, the same report also noted that Canada is the United States' number one export market, and significant elements of this trade are integrated commerce, especially in the automobile manufacturing sector, and

*Whereas*, Governor Philip Scott has established an interagency task force to prepare for the implementation of tariffs on Canadian goods, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate:***

That the Senate of the State of Vermont supports warm and cooperative relations on the part of both the United States and the State of Vermont with Canada and urges President Trump to remove all tariffs that he has imposed against Canadian imports and to refrain from subsequently imposing any new tariffs against Canadian imports, *and be it further*

**Resolved:** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Donald J. Trump, Governor Philip B. Scott, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Quebec Premier François Legault, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

Thereupon, the President, in his discretion, treated the joint resolution as a bill and referred it to the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

#### **Bill Introduced**

Senate bill of the following title was introduced, read the first time and referred:

#### **S. 129.**

By Senator Cummings,

An act relating to the regulation of virtual-currency kiosk operators.

To the Committee on Finance.

#### **Bills Referred**

House bills of the following titles were severally read the first time and referred:

#### **H. 137.**

An act relating to the regulation of insurance products and services.

To the Committee on Finance.

#### **H. 266.**

An act relating to the 340B prescription drug pricing program.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

#### **H. 463.**

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2025 legislative session.

To the Committee on Government Operations.

#### **Consideration Interrupted by Recess**

#### **S. 23.**

Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to the use of synthetic media in elections.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending third reading of the bill, Senator Ram Hinsdale moved to amend the bill in Sec. 1, 17 V.S.A. chapter 35, subchapter 4, in section 2032, by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in lieu thereof:

“(a) Disclosure. A person shall not, within 90 days before an election in Vermont, publish, communicate, or otherwise distribute synthetic media that the person knows or should have known is deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media unless the person includes a disclosure in the synthetic media stating: “This media has been created or intentionally manipulated by digital technology or artificial intelligence.””

But leaving subdivisions (1)-(2) intact.

#### **Recess**

On motion of Senator Baruth the Senate recessed until the fall of the gavel.

#### **Joint Assembly**

At ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the morning, the hour having arrived for the meeting of the two Houses in Joint Assembly pursuant to:

**J.R.S. 16.** Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of seven Superior Court Judges and one Magistrate.

The Senate repaired to the hall of the House.

Having returned therefrom, at twelve o'clock in the afternoon, the President assumed the Chair.

#### **Called to Order**

The Senate was called to order by the President.

#### **Consideration Resumed; Bill Amended; Bill Passed**

##### **S. 23.**

Thereupon, the pending question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by Senator Ram Hinsdale?, was agreed to.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

#### **Bills Passed**

Senate bills of the following titles were severally read the third time and passed:

**S. 27.** An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports.

**S. 51.** An act relating to the Vermont unpaid caregiver tax credit.

**Bill Amended; Bill Passed****S. 59.**

Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to amendments to Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending third reading of the bill, Senators Hart, Collamore, Vyhovsky and White moved to amend the bill in Sec. 2 V.S.A. 312, in subdivision (d)(3), by striking out the second sentence in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Whenever a public body includes an executive session as an item on a posted meeting agenda, the public body shall list the agenda item as "proposed executive session."

Which was agreed to.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

**Bill Passed****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.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending third reading of the bill, Senator Vyhovsky moved to amend the bill in Sec. 2, 6 V.S.A. chapter 207, in subchapter 4, in section 4633, by striking out subdivision (a)(2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (a)(2) to read as follows:

(2) The Secretary shall establish criteria for awards under the program, including:

(A) determining the amount of an award based on the annual net income of the farm in relation to the median net income of all farms in Vermont;

(B) limiting the number of awards an individual applicant may receive under program to not more than three awards in any previous 10-year period;

(C) prioritizing awards to applicants who have not previously received an award under the program; and

(D) requiring applicants to demonstrate that assistance from other sources is unavailable to provide reimbursement for the losses claimed in an application.

Which was disagreed to.

Thereupon, the bill was read the third time and passed.

**Bill Passed**

**S. 109.**

Senate bill of the following title was read the third time and passed:

An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures.

**Senate Resolution Adopted on the Part of the Senate**

**S.R. 10.**

Senate resolution of the following title was read the third time and adopted:

Senate resolution relating to the disapproval of Executive Order 01-25.

**Proposed Amendment to the Constitution Concurred In**

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution designated as Proposal 3 having appeared on the Calendar for seven legislative days pursuant to Rule 83,

Was taken up.

Thereupon, Proposal 3 was read the third time and is as follows:

**PROPOSAL 3**

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to provide that the citizens of the State have a right to collectively bargain.

Sec. 2. Article 23 of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is added to read:

Article 23. [Right to collectively bargain]

That employees have a right to organize or join a labor organization for the purpose of collectively bargaining with their employer through an exclusive representative of their choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions and to protect their economic welfare and safety in the workplace. Therefore, no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to collectively bargain with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, or that prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization representing the employer's employees

that requires membership in the labor organization as a condition of employment.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

The amendment set forth in this proposal shall become a part of the Constitution of the State of Vermont on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2026 when ratified and adopted by the people of this State in accordance with the provisions of 17 V.S.A. chapter 32.

Thereupon, the pending question, Shall the Senate concur in the adoption by the preceding General Assembly of Proposal 3 for the amendment of the Constitution of the State of Vermont, and request the concurrence of the House? was decided in the affirmative on roll call pursuant to the Vermont Constitution and Rule 83, Yeas, 29 Nays 0 (the necessary majority vote having been attained).

**Roll Call**

**Those Senators who voted in the affirmative were:** Baruth, Bongartz, Brennan, Brock, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Cummings, Douglass, Gulick, Hardy, Harrison, Hart, Hashim, Heffernan, Ingalls, Lyons, Major, Mattos, Norris, Perchlik, Plunkett, Ram Hinsdale, Vyhovsky, Watson, Weeks, Westman, White, Williams.

**Those Senators who voted in the negative were:** None.

**The Senator absent and not voting was:** Beck.

**Adjournment**

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until eleven o'clock in the forenoon on Friday, March 21, 2025.