

# Journal of the Senate

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**TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026**

The Senate was called to order by the President.

## **Devotional Exercises**

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of devotions.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

## **Point of Privilege Journalized**

During announcements, Senator Hardy addressed the Chair, and on motion of Senator Ram Hinsdale, her remarks were ordered entered in the Journal.

“I stand today to speak out about what is happening in Minneapolis, a city that might feel far from Vermont but is personally close for me. I lived in Minneapolis for two years, and my daughter lived in Minnesota for five years. I have close family, including my brother and sister-in-law, and many friends who live in Minnesota. Vermont shares a lot with Minnesota—long winters, for sure, but more importantly a commitment to community, empathy for our neighbors, and a belief in the ability of government to help improve people’s lives.

“Alas, this winter we have seen our federal government work to destroy people’s lives and communities in Minnesota. Under false pretenses, the federal administration has waged a war against Minnesota residents in the name of retribution, causing fear, violence, disinformation, and turmoil across the state. They have kidnapped black and brown Minnesotans without due cause or process, breaking into homes without warrants and leaving their cars running in the streets. Most prominently, we have witnessed federal agents murder two Minnesotans who showed up for their communities. We have then watched politicians assassinate the characters of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in a futile attempt to excuse the unprovoked, illegal violence carried out by masked marauders wearing badges.

“As elected officials, we dedicate our time to serve our community, work hard to improve our state, and help establish the laws that keep Vermonters safe. Our positions also come with the responsibility to speak out publicly on matters that we cannot directly legislate. So when an authoritarian federal

government has murdered, kidnapped, and terrorized the residents of another state, including abducting children, and denying medical care to prisoners, including pregnant women, staying silent in the face of these atrocities is not acceptable.

“Thus, I am speaking up to say that Vermonters stand with Minnesotans in the face of this federal terrorism. To the People of Minnesota, I admire your courage, your incredible grassroots organizing, and your commitment to democracy and community. And I stand with people in other states, from Maine to California, who are facing similar acts of federal aggression and violence. Together, we are stronger than the hate and cruelty being directed their way, and I feel confident that we will prevail through our shared commitment to justice, truth, community, and democracy.

“I invite you to join me in supporting Minnesota – talk with me if you would like recommendations for avenues to provide direct support.

“Thank you.”

#### **Point of Privilege Journalized**

During announcements, Senator Major addressed the Chair, and on motion of Senator Ram Hinsdale, his remarks were ordered entered in the Journal.

“Mr. President, colleagues of the Senate,

“I rise today with a heavy heart.

“I do that because a man named Alex Pretti is dead.

“A VA nurse. A caregiver. A public servant.

“Someone whose life was defined not by power, but by service.

“Alex Pretti spent his days caring for veterans—men and women who wore the uniform, who carried the physical and moral injuries of war long after they came home. He showed up for them day after day with compassion, patience, and dignity. That work is not abstract. It is intimate. It is human. It is sacred.

“And it did not stop at the end of his shift.

“By all accounts, Alex was also someone who believed deeply in fairness—someone willing to stand up peacefully when he saw people being treated unjustly. That, too, is a form of service. It is an expression of love for community and belief in our shared humanity.

“For that, he was killed.

“Let me make this personal, because it is personal.

“When my father was dying of cancer, he was cared for by VA staff. In his final months—when pain, fear, and uncertainty could have consumed everything—he raved about the care he received. He talked about the kindness. The professionalism. The sense that the people caring for him genuinely cared about him.

“I have heard that same thing again and again from Alex Pretti’s coworkers—that he was that same kind of caregiver. The kind who treated every patient like a human being first. The kind who saw dignity where others might see paperwork.

“You may or may not know, I am the Executive Director of the Upper Valley Aquatic Center in White River Junction, and I work closely with staff from the VA hospital in White River. I know them. My colleagues know them. They are our neighbors. They coach our kids’ teams, swim in our pool, volunteer in our communities.

“They are, overwhelmingly, wonderful human beings.

“So when a caregiver—when one of them—is shot and killed by agents of the state, we cannot look away. We cannot reduce this to a headline, or a talking point, or a shrug.

“This must stop.

“We cannot continue to normalize violence.

“We cannot continue to excuse the use of lethal force against people who are unarmed, peaceful, and engaged in care or protest.

“And we cannot continue to pretend that this is someone else’s problem.

“Because it is not.

“It is a moral problem.

“It is a leadership problem.

“And it is a choice problem.

“So I ask my colleagues—and I ask myself—

“What are you prepared to do?

“What are we prepared to do to ensure accountability?

“What are we prepared to do to protect caregivers, protesters, and community members?

“What are we prepared to do to say—clearly and without hesitation—that human life matters more than force, more than fear, more than convenience?

“Alex Pretti deserved to go home at the end of the day.

“His patients deserved to keep their nurse.

“And our community deserved better.

“Let us honor his life not just with words, but with action.

“Thank you.”

### **Senate Resolution Placed on Notice Calendar**

#### **S.R. 20.**

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

Offered by Senator Baruth,

**S.R. 20.** Senate resolution relating to adoption of a temporary Rule 44A.

***Resolved by the Senate:***

That a temporary rule, to be designated Rule 44A, be adopted by the Senate, to read as follows:

Rule 44A. (a) Any bill failing to make the crossover dates of March 13, 2026 and March 20, 2026 shall be referred to the Committee on Rules. This provision shall not apply to the following measures:

- (1) The transportation capital bill;
- (2) The capital construction bill;
- (3) The general appropriations bill (“The Big Bill”);
- (4) The fee bill; and
- (5) The tax/revenue bills.

(b) The Committee on Rules may release any bills referred to it for reference to another committee of jurisdiction pursuant to Senate Rule 24 or to the Notice Calendar, as applicable.

(c) The Temporary Rule 44A shall expire when the Legislature adjourns sine die.

Thereupon, under Rules 34 and 51, the resolution was placed on the Calendar for notice.

**Joint Senate Resolution Adopted on the Part of the Senate****J.R.S. 38.**

Joint Senate resolution of the following title was offered, read and adopted on the part of the Senate, and is as follows:

Offered by Senator Baruth,

**J.R.S. 38.** Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on January 30, 2026.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:*

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, January 30, 2026, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

**Bills Introduced**

Senate bills of the following titles were introduced, read the first time and referred:

**S. 306.**

By Senators Major, Clarkson, Hardy, Mattos, Perchlik, Plunkett, Weeks and White,

An act relating to first responders in communications.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 307.**

By Senators Major, Plunkett and White,

An act relating to overtime pay for firefighters.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 308.**

By Senators Brock, Beck, Chittenden, Ingalls, Mattos, Ram Hinsdale, Weeks and Westman,

An act relating to the military retirement income tax exclusion.

To the Committee on Finance.

**S. 309.**

By Senator Clarkson,

An act relating to residential rental agreements, eviction procedures, and the creation of the positive rental payment credit reporting pilot program.

To the Committee on Judiciary.

**S. 310.**

By Senators Brock, Beck, Bongartz, Chittenden, Clarkson, Collamore, Hardy, Ingalls, Major, Mattos, Morley, Norris, Plunkett, Ram Hinsdale, Weeks, Westman and Williams,

An act relating to subscription renewal notifications.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 311.**

By Senators Cummings and Perchlik,

An act relating to posting of land.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

**S. 312.**

By Senators Beck, Ingalls and Morley,

An act relating to a refundable machinery and equipment investment tax credit.

To the Committee on Finance.

**S. 313.**

By Senators Ram Hinsdale, Bongartz, Clarkson, Hardy, Harrison, Major, Perchlik, Weeks and Westman,

An act relating to transforming Vermont's career technical education system.

To the Committee on Education.

**S. 314.**

By Senators Williams and Heffernan,

An act relating to a fee for posting land enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program.

To the Committee on Finance.

**S. 315.**

By Senator Mattos,

An act relating to a homestead property tax exemption for long-term residents who are 65 years of age or older.

To the Committee on Finance.

**S. 316.**

By Senators Perchlik, Gulick, Major, Plunkett and Watson,

An act relating to credit card fees.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 317.**

By Senators Heffernan and Williams,

An act relating to weatherization funding and weatherization workforce recruitment.

To the Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

**S. 318.**

By Senator Mattos,

An act relating to casino gaming.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 319.**

By Senator Mattos,

An act relating to authorizing the issuance of limited wagering event permits for poker games and tournaments.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 320.**

By Senator Vyhovsky,

An act relating to cannabis advertising.

To the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs.

**S. 321.**

By Senator Vyhovsky,

An act relating to consumption of cannabis in a prohibited place.

To the Committee on Judiciary.

**S. 322.**

By Senators Watson and Harrison,

An act relating to removing the power of Vermont corporations to spend money on election activities.

To the Committee on Government Operations.

**Message from the House No. 11**

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 a House bill of the following title:

**H. 545.** An act relating to issuing immunization recommendations.

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

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

**J.R.S. 35.** Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly for the election of an Adjutant and Inspector General, and two legislative Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

**J.R.S. 36.** Joint resolution establishing a procedure for the conduct of the election of two legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation by plurality vote by the General Assembly in 2026.

And has adopted the same in concurrence.

**Adjournment**

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until one o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, January 28, 2026.