

Journal of the Senate

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by the Reverend Co'Relous Bryant of Lincoln.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Message from the House No. 34

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. 171. An act relating to criminal justice agency protocols for an officer-involved shooting.

H. 519. An act relating to Vermont State Employees' Retirement System Group G membership.

H. 536. An act relating to toxic heavy metals in baby food products.

H. 550. An act relating to gender equity within Vermont's correctional facilities.

H. 585. An act relating to health insurance reforms.

H. 606. An act relating to firearms procedures.

H. 733. An act relating to designating a franchise relationship.

H. 775. An act relating to creating tools for housing production.

H. 887. An act relating to crime victim status under the Fair Employment Practices Act.

H. 917. An act relating to military affairs.

H. 921. An act relating to alcoholic beverages.

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

The House has considered the report of the Committee of Conference upon the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on House bill of the following title:

H. 50. An act relating to identifying underutilized State buildings and land.

And has adopted the same on its part.

The House has adopted House concurrent resolutions of the following titles:

H.C.R. 227. House concurrent resolution in memory of Alice June Abraham.

H.C.R. 228. House concurrent resolution congratulating Ryan Kilborn on his selection as the recipient of the Vermont Forest Products Association Outstanding Management of Resources award.

H.C.R. 229. House concurrent resolution in memory of respected legal community leader, linguist, and musician Robert D. Rachlin.

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

Joint Senate Resolution Adopted on the Part of the Senate

J.R.S. 46.

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. 46. Joint resolution relating to weekend adjournment on March 27, 2026.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That when the two Houses adjourn on Friday, March 27, 2026, it be to meet again no later than Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

Bills Referred

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

H. 171.

An act relating to criminal justice agency protocols for an officer-involved shooting.

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 519.

An act relating to Vermont State Employees' Retirement System Group G membership.

To the Committee on Government Operations.

H. 536.

An act relating to toxic heavy metals in baby food products.

To the Committee on Health and Welfare.

H. 550.

An act relating to gender equity within Vermont's correctional facilities.

To the Committee on Institutions.

H. 585.

An act relating to health insurance reforms.

To the Committee on Finance.

H. 606.

An act relating to firearms procedures.

To the Committee on Judiciary.

H. 733.

An act relating to designating a franchise relationship.

To the Committee on Finance.

H. 775.

An act relating to creating tools for housing production.

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

H. 887.

An act relating to crime victim status under the Fair Employment Practices Act.

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

H. 917.

An act relating to military affairs.

To the Committee on Government Operations.

H. 921.

An act relating to alcoholic beverages.

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

Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered**S. 327.**

Senate committee bill entitled:

An act relating to economic development.

Having appeared on the Calendar for notice for one day, was taken up.

Senator Clarkson, for the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs moved to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

This act proposes to strengthen and support Vermont's businesses and promote long-term economic growth by investing in the economic development and vitality of its downtowns and village centers, providing key financial support, technical assistance, and incentives for Vermont businesses of all sizes and at all stages of development. This act also requires the Commissioner of Economic Development to research and create an inventory of the resources available to businesses to assist with growth and development, the Office of Workforce Strategy and Development to study the feasibility of establishing a new culinary institute in the State, and the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies to study the short- and long-term solutions to better connect the economies of New York and Vermont.

Sec. 2. 32 V.S.A. chapter 151, subchapter 11J is amended to read:

Subchapter 11J. Vermont Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program

* * *

§ 5930ee. LIMITATIONS

Beginning in fiscal year 2010 and thereafter, the State Board may award tax credits to all qualified applicants under this subchapter, provided that:

(1) the total amount of tax credits awarded annually, together with sales tax reallocated under section 9819 of this title, does not exceed ~~\$3,000,000.00~~ \$4,000,000.00;

(2) a total annual allocation of ~~no~~ not more than 30 percent of these tax credits in combination with sales tax reallocation may be awarded in connection with all of the projects in a single municipality;

(3) façade tax credits shall not be available for projects that qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit;

(4) no credit shall be allowed under this subchapter for the cost of acquiring any building or interest in a building;

(5) credit under any one subsection of 5930cc of this subchapter may not be allocated more often than once every two years with respect to the same building; and

(6) credit awarded under section 5930cc of this subchapter that is rescinded or recaptured by the State Board shall be available for the State Board to award to applicants in any subsequent year, in addition to the total amount of tax credits authorized under this section.

* * *

Sec. 3. EXPANDING SERVICES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

(a) Expanding legal services. Of monies appropriated to the Department of Economic Development in fiscal year 2027, \$100,000.00 shall be allocated for the purpose of supporting the Vermont Law and Graduate School's public education offerings and free legal support to small businesses through its Vermont Small Business Law Center, which include:

(1) individual and group educational trainings and consultations;

(2) an ongoing webinar series on legal basics for startups; and

(3) an attorney referral program.

(b) Business advising. Of monies appropriated to the Department of Economic Development in fiscal year 2027, \$539,000.00 shall be allocated for a grant to the Vermont Small Business Development Center for the purpose of supporting the continuation of its work in helping Vermonters start, acquire, and grow businesses. The funds shall also be used to increase business advising and educational workshops to meet increasing demands of entrepreneurs and small business owners post pandemic. This increase of \$150,000.00 from the Governor's suggested budget will allow the Center to serve an additional 200 Vermont entrepreneurs and business owners through no-fee, one-to-one advising to help them start businesses, add and retain jobs, increase sales, export products, and prepare their ownership succession plan to transfer ownership for the business to continue to operate in Vermont.

(c) Microbusiness support. Of monies appropriated to the Department for Children and Families in fiscal year 2027, \$594,000.00 shall be allocated to the Office of Economic Opportunity for the purpose of supporting the Vermont Community Action Partnership's microbusiness development program.

(d) The Vermont Professionals of Color Network. Of monies appropriated to the Department of Economic Development in fiscal year 2027, \$200,000.00 shall be allocated for a grant to the Vermont Professionals of Color Network in its support of critical workforce and business development services it provides to BIPOC business communities and to support its business technical assistance services, which includes education on basic business practices, resource navigation, and networking support to BIPOC small business owners.

Sec. 4. VERMONT OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC COLLABORATIVE

Of monies appropriated to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in fiscal year 2027, \$200,000.00 is allocated to the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative to conduct a comprehensive outdoor recreation economic impact study that will provide the State with information on how it can better support and benefit from the \$2.1 billion dollar outdoor recreation industry.

Sec. 5. INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS OFFICE; APPROPRIATION

Of monies appropriated to the Department of Economic Development in fiscal year 2027, \$150,000.00 shall be allocated to the International Business Office for the purpose of continuing to support the Office's initiatives and to determine what additional supports are needed, if any, to further develop the economic relationship between Vermont and Taiwan.

Sec. 6. BROWNFIELDS ALLOCATION

Of monies appropriated to the Department of Economic Development in fiscal year 2027, \$3,000,000.00 shall be allocated for brownfields remediation and redevelopment.

Sec. 7. BUSINESS RESOURCES AND GROWTH; INVENTORY; STUDY; REPORT

(a) Business growth and development study. The Commissioner of Economic Development, in consultation with stakeholders, for the purpose of determining how the State can better enable and support the growth of Vermont businesses, shall:

(1) clearly define each stage of business development in order to provide business leaders, investors, and the General Assembly with an understanding of the resources businesses need at each stage of development;

(2) identify the public and private resources available to businesses and determine how the resources are currently communicated to businesses;

(3) create an inventory of resources, pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection, that would serve businesses for each stage of development;

(4) determine how best to market and communicate the inventory of resources created pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection to Vermonters and the business community;

(5) determine how to improve succession planning for mature businesses;

(6) identify what resources are available to businesses to access capital;

(7) determine the state of capital access opportunities, including the:

(A) investment environment in Vermont and the New England region;

(B) availability of tax credits to leverage private capital; and

(C) requirements to maintain Vermont's Tech Hub designation; and

(8) identify investor education opportunities for high net worth individuals interested in investing in Vermont businesses.

(b) Report. On or before December 15, 2026, the Commissioner shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs with the Commissioner's findings pursuant to the business resources and growth study set forth in this section along with any recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 8. 2025 Acts and Resolves No. 65, Sec. 3 is amended to read:

Sec. 3. TASK FORCE TO EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF
CONVENTION CENTER AND PERFORMANCE VENUE

* * *

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(2) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(3) the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development or designee;

- (4) the President of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce or designee;
- (5) the Chief Executive Officer of the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce or designee;
- (6) the President of the Vermont Regional Development Corporations or designee; ~~and~~
- (7) the Chair of the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies or designee; and
- (8) the President of the University of Vermont or designee.

* * *

(f) Meetings.

* * *

- (5) The Task Force shall meet not more than ~~six~~ 14 times.

(g) Reimbursement.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Task Force serving in the member's capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than ~~six~~ 14 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

(2) Other members of the Task Force shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than ~~six~~ 14 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

* * *

Sec. 9. 2016 Acts and Resolves No. 157, Sec. H.12, as amended by 2022

Acts and Resolves No. 164, Sec. 5, 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 72, Sec. 39, and 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 176, Sec. 1, is further amended to read:

Sec. H.12. ~~VEGI; REPEAL OF AUTHORITY TO AWARD INCENTIVES~~

~~Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Vermont Economic Progress Council shall not accept or approve an application for a Vermont Employment Growth Incentive under 32 V.S.A. chapter 105, subchapter 2 on or after January 1, 2027. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 10. CULINARY INSTITUTE; STUDY; REPORT

(a) Purpose. The State of Vermont lost a significant contributor to its culinary workforce pipeline development when the New England Culinary Institute closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The General Assembly finds that the establishment of a new culinary institute is critical for long-term workforce needs in the food, tourism, and hospitality sectors, sectors that are significant for the economic health of the State.

(b) Task. The Office of Workforce Strategy and Development shall engage with the stakeholders set forth in subsection (c) of this section to determine how best to establish a new culinary institute in Vermont by doing the following:

(1) research suitable options for the location of a culinary institute;

(2) determine which college or organization should stand up and administer the culinary institute;

(3) determine to what extent the General Assembly is needed to help fund and establish the culinary institute;

(4) begin establishing relationships with restaurants in Vermont that have or will have workforce needs;

(5) gauge the interest from private investors to determine whether there is interest in private funding for a culinary institute; and

(6) conduct any additional research or outreach that would promote the establishment of a culinary institute.

(c) Stakeholders. The Office shall consult and convene with stakeholders to assist in its work pursuant to subsection (b) of this section that have relevant experience in the food and hospitality sectors, including representation from the State Workforce Development Board, Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, State Refugee Office, Vermont Association of Career and Technical Directors, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Independent Restaurants, University of Vermont, Vermont State Colleges System, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, and Vermont Employee Ownership Center.

(d) Report. On or before December 1, 2026, the Office shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs with its findings and information gathered pursuant to subsection (b) of this section along with any recommendations concerning the establishment of a culinary institute in Vermont. The report shall also list the stakeholders consulted pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

Sec. 11. CONNECTING VERMONT TO NEW YORK; STUDY; REPORT

(a) Task. The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies, in consultation with the stakeholders set forth in subsection (c) of this section, shall consider the following in a study of the short- and long-term solutions to better connect the persons and economies of Vermont and New York:

(1) in regard to Vermont Route 22A:

(A) the current and projected usage and condition of the road;

(B) the rate and severity of accidents on the road; and

(C) options available to improve the integrity of the road and the flow of traffic and safety on the road;

(2) a potential route for a new limited access highway to connect Burlington to Interstate 87 in New York and estimated costs associated with constructing such a route; and

(3) the feasibility of a rail system better connecting the two states upon review of the latest versions of the Vermont Rail Plan and the Vermont Freight Plan.

(b) Stakeholders. The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies shall consult and convene with stakeholders to assist in its work pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, including representation from the Agency of Transportation, Agency of Natural Resources, Land Use Review Board, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and Regional Development Corporations.

(c) Report. On or before January 15, 2027, the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies shall submit a written report to the General Assembly with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, except that this section (effective dates) and Sec. 8 (convention center task force) shall take effect on passage.

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Senator Brock, for the Committee on Finance, to which the bill was referred, reported recommending that the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs with the following amendment thereto in Sec. 2, 32 V.S.A. chapter 151, subchapter 11J, in section 5930ee, in subdivision (1), by striking out “\$4,000,000.00” and inserting in lieu thereof “\$3,500,000.00”

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Senator Perchlik, for the Committee on Appropriations, to which the bill was referred, reported recommending that the bill be amended as recommended by the Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and Finance with the following amendments thereto:

First: By striking out Sec. 2, 32 V.S.A. chapter 151, subchapter 11J, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec 2. [Deleted.]

Second: By striking out Sec. 3, expanding services for small businesses, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 3 to read as follows:

Sec 3. [Deleted.]

Third: By striking out Sec. 4, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 4 to read as follows:

Sec 4. [Deleted.]

Fourth: By striking out Sec. 5, International Business Office; appropriation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 5 to read as follows:

Sec 5. [Deleted.]

Fifth: By striking out Sec. 6, brownfields allocation, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 6 to read as follows:

Sec 6. [Deleted.]

Sixth: By striking out Sec. 8, task force to explore development of convention center and performance venue, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 8 to read as follows:

Sec 8. [Deleted.]

Seventh: By striking out Sec. 12, effective dates, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 12 to read as follows:

Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time by title only pursuant to Rule 43, and the recommendation of amendment of the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs was amended as recommended by the Committee on Finance.

Thereupon, the recommendation of amendment of the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, as amended, was further amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations.

Thereupon, the pending question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, as amended? was agreed to and third reading of the bill was ordered.

Bill Amended; Bill Passed

S. 89.

Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to expanding survivor benefits.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending third reading of the bill, Senator Norris moved that the bill be amended in Sec. 2, 20 V.S.A. § 3172, by striking out Sec. 2 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 2 to read as follows:

Sec. 2. 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. 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.

Which was agreed to.

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

Bills Passed

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

S. 154. An act relating to health insurance coverage for biomarker testing.

S. 220. An act relating to addressing education spending in fiscal years 2028 and 2029.

Consideration Postponed

S. 193.

Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to establishing a forensic facility for certain criminal justice-involved persons.

Was taken up.

Thereupon, pending the reading of the report of the Committee on Judiciary, Senator Baruth moved that consideration of the bill be postponed until Tuesday, March 31, 2026, which was agreed to.

Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

S. 197.

Senator Lyons, for the Committee on Health and Welfare, to which was referred Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to establishing a primary care payment reform program.

Reported recommending that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly to invest in primary through streamlined primary care payments that build on the Blueprint for Health and will promote the public good by increasing access to primary care in order to improve the health of Vermonters and reduce health care system costs.

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 13, subchapter 1 is amended to read:

Subchapter 1. Blueprint for Health

§ 701. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Blueprint for Health” or “Blueprint” means the State’s program for integrating a system of health care for patients, improving the health of the overall population, and improving control over health care costs by promoting health maintenance, prevention, and care coordination and management.

* * *

(8) “Health insurance plan” ~~has the same meaning as~~ means a major medical insurance plan as defined in 8 V.S.A. § 4011.

(9) “Health insurer” ~~shall have the same meaning as in section 9402 of this title~~ means any person that offers, issues, renews, or administers a health insurance plan or other health benefit plan in this State and includes, to the extent permitted under federal law, third-party administrators that administer a health benefit plan offering coverage in this State or that provide administrative services only for a health benefit plan offering coverage in this State.

* * *

§ 706. HEALTH INSURER PARTICIPATION; PAYMENTS TO PRACTICES

(a) As set forth in 8 V.S.A. § 4025, health insurance plans shall be consistent with the Blueprint for Health as determined by the Commissioner of Financial Regulation.

(b)(1) Health insurers shall participate in the Blueprint for Health as a condition of doing business in this State as provided for in this section and in 8 V.S.A. § 4025.

(2) In order to facilitate development of the sustainable payment models necessary for the Blueprint’s success, health insurers shall submit to the Agency of Human Services at least quarterly, or more frequently upon the Agency’s request, all information that the Director of the Blueprint deems necessary to perform a comprehensive fiscal analysis of the total cost of care within Vermont and to implement one or more payment models that address health care capacity, volume, quality, and clinical outcomes.

(c)(1) The Blueprint payment reform methodologies shall include per-person per-month payments to ~~medical home participating practices, including medical homes and primary care providers,~~ by each health insurer and Medicaid for their attributed patients and for contributions to the shared costs of operating Blueprint initiatives, including the community health teams. Per-person per-month payments to practices shall be:

(A) based on the official National Committee for Quality Assurance's Physician-Practice-Connections-Patient Centered Medical Home (NCQA PPC-PCMH) score or another quality standard identified by the Director of the Blueprint in consultation with the Blueprint Payment Implementation Workgroup, to the extent practicable and shall be;

(B) provided in addition to their normal a practice's typical fee-for-service or other payments; and

(C) from health insurers, in amounts at least equal to Medicaid payments beginning in 2027.

(2) Consistent with recommendations of the Blueprint Executive Committee, the Director of the Blueprint may recommend to the ~~Commissioner of Vermont Health Access~~ Secretary of Human Services changes to the payment amounts or to the payment reform methodologies described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, including by providing for enhanced payment to health care professional practices ~~that operate as a medical home~~, including medical homes and primary care naturopathic physicians² practices; payment toward the shared costs for community health teams; or other payment methodologies required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for participation by Medicaid or Medicare. In formulating recommendations, the Director shall strive to achieve or maintain parity across payers and payment methodologies and to adjust payment methodologies annually as needed to adequately support practices in maintaining NCQA PCMH status or meeting other requirements for participation in Blueprint programs.

(3) Health insurers shall modify payment methodologies and amounts to health care professionals and providers as required for the establishment of the model described in sections 703–705 of this title and this section, including any requirements specified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in approving federal participation in the model to ensure consistency of payment methods in the model.

(4) In the event that the Secretary of Human Services is denied permission from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to include financial participation by Medicare, health insurers shall not be required to cover the costs associated with individuals covered by Medicare.

(d) ~~An~~ A health insurer may appeal a decision to require a particular payment methodology or payment amount to the ~~Commissioner of Vermont Health Access~~ Secretary of Human Services or designee, who shall provide a hearing in accordance with 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. ~~An~~ A health insurer aggrieved by the decision of the ~~Commissioner~~ Secretary or designee may

appeal to the Superior Court for the Washington District within 30 days after the ~~Commissioner issues his or her~~ Secretary or designee issues a decision.

* * *

§ 710. PRIMARY CARE SPENDING TARGETS

The Agency of Human Services shall establish a target for the amount of per-person per-month spending on Vermont residents that should be for primary care services and shall develop a transitional schedule that increases that target over time. Targets may be adjusted to reflect payer-specific differences, such as age and health status. The increased spending shall be directed to the per-person per-month payments established in section 706(c) of this chapter.

Sec. 3. BLUEPRINT PAYMENTS TO PRACTICES; PRIMARY CARE; REPORT

On or before January 1, 2027, the Director of the Blueprint for Health, in consultation with the Blueprint Executive Committee and the Vermont Steering Committee for Comprehensive Primary Health Care, shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare regarding changes to the payment amounts or payment reform methodologies, or both, that are necessary to transition the Blueprint's per-person per-month payments to primary care practices to include payment for the routine primary care needs of attributed patients who are covered by participating health plans. The report shall:

- (1) define which services should be considered routine primary care;
- (2) address any differences in methodology for different practice types;
- (3) make recommendations regarding risk-adjustment and attribution methodologies;
- (4) describe the ways in which the methodology will balance capacity, volume, quality, and outcomes;
- (5) include mechanisms for ensuring that health plans make accurate and appropriate payments to primary care practices in a timely manner;
- (6) make recommendations regarding participation or quality measurement requirements, or both;
- (7) provide an analysis of including cost-sharing amounts for individuals covered by participating health plans in the methodology, including the extent to which such inclusion would be permissible for a high-deductible health plan without losing its eligibility to be paired with a health savings account;

(8) provide an analysis of ways to incorporate a primary care spending allocation target into the methodology; and

(9) provide an operational plan and a description of any additional legislation needed in order to implement the methodology not later than January 1, 2028.

Sec. 4. PRIMARY CARE SPENDING; AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES;
REPORT

On or before January 1, 2027, the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Green Mountain Care Board, shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare the baseline per-person per-month spending on primary care services for Vermont residents overall and by each health insurer, third-party administrator administering a health plan or providing administrative services only for a health plan, Medicaid, and Medicare. The Agency shall use the definition of primary care providers and services from the Advancing Healthcare Efficiency through Accountable Design (AHEAD) Model or the definition of primary care services used by the New England States Consortium Systems Organization (NESCSO).

Sec. 5. PRIMARY CARE SPENDING TARGETS; REPORT

On or before January 1, 2028, the Agency of Human Services shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare the per-person per-month primary care spending targets developed pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 710, as added by Sec. 2 of this act, as well as the proposed transitional schedule for increasing that target over time, any recommendations for payer-specific adjustments to the targets, and any additional legislation that is needed to implement and enforce the primary care spending targets and 18 V.S.A. § 710.

Sec. 6. VERMONT CLINICIAN LANDSCAPE; SITE-NEUTRAL
REIMBURSEMENTS; REPORTS

On or before January 1, 2027, the Green Mountain Care Board shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with:

(1) an updated version of the Board's 2017 Vermont Clinician Landscape Study report that reflects the current climate among practicing clinicians in Vermont; and

(2) an updated version of the Board's previous reporting regarding site-neutral reimbursements pursuant to 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 54, Sec. 23; 2016 Acts and Resolves No. 143, Sec. 5; and 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85,

Sec. E.345.1, including the current state of reimbursement differentials based on practice setting and ownership type, along with a description of any significant efforts that have been implemented since 2017 toward achieving site-neutral reimbursements.

Sec. 7. TRANSITIONING CARE TO COMMUNITY SETTINGS; REPORT

On or before January 15, 2027, the Agency of Human Services, in consultation with the Vermont Steering Committee for Comprehensive Primary Health Care, the Blueprint for Health, the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, the Vermont Medical Society, Bi-State Primary Care Association, and other interested stakeholders, shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare with recommendations for ways to accelerate the appropriate transition of patients from hospital care to care delivered in a community setting, including ways to reduce the extent to which primary care services are delivered to patients in an inpatient hospital setting following surgery or other acute care, when care delivered by a primary care provider in the community would be as or more effective and less costly. The recommendations shall include opportunities to use community health teams through the Blueprint for Health to coordinate patients' care transitions. The Agency shall incorporate the recommendations into the Health Care Delivery Strategic Plan as appropriate.

Sec. 8. REGIONAL UNIVERSAL PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM; REPORT

The Office of the State Treasurer, in consultation with the Agency of Human Services, shall collaborate with other northeastern states to explore the potential to establish a regional universal primary care program that would be available to all residents of the member states. On or before January 15, 2027, the State Treasurer shall report to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare regarding the Office's outreach efforts, interest from other northeastern states, any legal or regulatory obstacles identified, and recommendations for next steps.

Sec. 9. 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 155, Sec. 7a, as amended by 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 74, Sec. E.311.2, is further amended to read:

Sec. 7a. SUNSET

~~18 V.S.A. § 33 (medical students; primary care) is repealed on July 1, 2027. [Deleted.]~~

Sec. 10. 8 V.S.A. § 4092(i) is amended to read:

(i)(1) On a periodic basis but not less than once per calendar year, each health insurer shall notify all individuals covered under its health insurance plans of any changes in pharmaceutical coverage and provide access to the preferred drug list maintained by the health insurer or its pharmacy benefit manager.

(2) Not less than 60 days prior to removing a prescription drug from its formulary or from the formulary maintained by a pharmacy benefit manager its behalf, a health insurer shall notify all individuals covered under its health insurance plans who filled a prescription for that prescription drug within the previous 12-month period that coverage for the drug will be discontinued and of the date on which the coverage will end.

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating to payment reform for primary care”

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Senator Lyons, for the Committee on Appropriations, to which the bill was referred, reported that the bill ought to pass when so amended.

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time by title only pursuant to Rule 43, the recommendation of amendment was agreed to and third reading of the bill was ordered.

Bill Amended; Third Readings Ordered

S. 232.

Senator Weeks, for the Committee on Education, to which was referred Senate bill entitled:

An act relating to public libraries and the Department of Libraries.

Reported recommending that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Findings * * *

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds:

(1) The State of Vermont and its communities depend on libraries as centers for learning, social connection, technological access, disaster preparedness and response, support of health care and social services, and numerous other vital services.

(2) As places of public accommodation, public libraries are obligated to ensure that their services, facilities, and resources are inclusive and accessible to all. However, many of Vermont's existing library facilities require improvements in order to fulfill this obligation and meet programming needs.

(3) Early literacy is integral to student preparedness and success. Vermont's Department of Libraries and statewide network of public libraries are uniquely suited to play a critical role in improving the literacy skills of students throughout the State.

(4) It is essential that the State raise awareness about public libraries and their offerings in order to ensure their continued beneficial impact and continued accessibility for all Vermont residents.

* * * Vermont Libraries Day * * *

Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 379 is added to read:

§ 379. VERMONT LIBRARIES DAY

The third Monday in the month of October is designated as "Vermont Libraries Day."

* * * Afterschool, Summer Reading, and Early Education Funding for Public Libraries * * *

Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 51 is amended to read:

§ 51. UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER SPECIAL FUND

(a) ~~The Universal Afterschool and Summer Special Fund is created, to be managed by the Agency of Education.~~ The cannabis sales tax revenue shall be deposited into the Universal Afterschool and Summer Special Fund. The Fund shall be used as follows:

(1) ~~To establish a grant program~~ programs managed by the Agency of Education and the Department of Libraries that supports support the expansion of universal afterschool and summer programs with a focus on underserved areas of the State.

~~(2) Cannabis~~ Ninety-five percent of the cannabis sales tax revenue deposited in the Fund shall be used by the Agency of Education to support a mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer programming. Eligible recipients can be public, private, or nonprofit organizations.

(2) Five percent of the cannabis sales tax revenue deposited in the Fund shall be used by the Department of Libraries to support afterschool and summer programming at libraries.

(3) The Agency and Department programs shall be subject to the following:

(A) Grants may be used for technical assistance, program implementation, program expansion, program sustainability, and related costs.

(B) Funds may be used to directly target communities with low existing capacity to serve youth in afterschool and summer settings.

(C) The award of grants and any subsequent contract or written agreement issued pursuant to the award of a grant shall require that a grantee does not discriminate, and prohibits its employees, agents, subcontractors, and other service providers from discriminating, on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

(D) The Agency may use up to \$500,000.00 annually for administrative costs to allow for the support of the grant program and technical assistance to communities. This ~~could~~ may include subcontracts to support the grant program.

(b) An advisory committee is created to support the Secretary in administering the funds. The Agency shall provide administrative and technical support to the advisory committee. The advisory committee shall be composed of:

* * *

(7) the Vermont Afterschool Executive Director or designee; ~~and~~

(8) a representative from the Governor's office; and

(9) the State Librarian or designee.

* * *

Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 4014 is amended to read:

§ 4014. EARLY EDUCATION

(a) The Secretary may grant funds for voluntary early education programs. The funds may be used for personnel costs, training of parents and staff, materials and educational equipment, and other costs related to early education programs, including training for public library staff.

(b) The Secretary shall solicit proposals for early education programs from community organizations serving young children. Community organizations include school districts; public libraries; other public agencies, including Head Start programs; and private agencies, including child care programs and parent-child centers.

* * *

* * * Department of Libraries; Duties * * *

Sec. 5. 22 V.S.A. § 605 is amended to read:

§ 605. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES

The duties and functions of the Department of Libraries shall be to provide, administer, and maintain:

* * *

(2) A digital or physical collection of federal documents.

(3) An information and reference service to State government, including a comprehensive digital or physical collection of current information relating to matters of public policy and topics pertinent to State government.

(4) A general library collection of a sufficient size and scope to reinforce and supplement the resources of local and regional libraries. ~~All materials of the Department of Libraries~~ The collection may be composed of digital and physical materials and shall be available for free circulation to all citizens, institutions, and organizations under procedures adopted by the State Librarian except that the State Librarian may restrict rare or reference-type materials to one location. The Department shall arrange, classify, and catalog all materials in its custody and provide for their safekeeping and shall rebind books as needed. The Department shall provide service materials to other libraries in the State, schools, and individuals ~~and may provide service by mail or book wagon or otherwise~~ through interlibrary loan and shall encourage the sharing of library materials between libraries in Vermont and nationally through interlibrary loan.

(5) A service of advice and consultation to all libraries in the State, in order to assist them in realizing their potential. ~~This service shall be provided at a regional level as well as at the State level.~~ The Department may provide centralized cataloging and other related technical services to libraries in the State to the extent feasible.

* * *

Sec. 6. 22 V.S.A. § 143 is amended to read:

§ 143. TRUSTEES

(a) Unless a municipality that has established or shall establish a public library votes at its annual meeting to elect a board of trustees, the governing body of the municipality shall appoint the trustees. The appointment or

election of the trustees shall continue in effect until changed at an annual meeting of the municipality. When trustees are first chosen, they shall be elected or appointed for staggered terms. This subsection shall not be construed to apply to public libraries that are privately established, chartered, or incorporated pursuant to subchapter 2 of this chapter.

* * *

* * * Municipal Bonds; Improvements to Public Libraries * * *

Sec. 7. 24 V.S.A. § 1752a is amended to read:

§ 1752a. PUBLIC LIBRARIES; PRIVATELY OWNED MUNICIPALITY-SUPPORTED LIBRARIES

By a majority vote of those present and voting at an annual or special meeting warned for the purpose, a municipality may issue municipal bonds under this chapter for the cost of capital improvements to any public library, as defined in 22 V.S.A. § 101, including any privately owned municipality-supported library situated within the municipality for use of residents of the municipality; and such the improvements shall be considered “improvements” for the purposes of this chapter.

* * * Repeal * * *

Sec. 8. REPEAL

22 V.S.A. § 608 (Audio-Visual Revolving Fund) is repealed.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Senator Hardy, for the Committee on Finance, to which the bill was referred, reported that the bill ought to pass when so amended.

Senator Perchlik, for the Committee on Appropriations, to which the bill was referred, reported that the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Education with the following amendments thereto:

First: In Sec. 1, findings, by adding a subdivision (5) to read as follows:

(5) For more than 125 years, public libraries have provided diverse afterschool and summer programs and literacy opportunities to all children free of charge. These programs often include literacy, arts, technology, or science education; nutritious meals; and creative recreational activities.

Second: By striking out Sec. 3, 16 V.S.A. § 51, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 51 is amended to read:

§ 51. UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER SPECIAL FUND

(a) The Universal Afterschool and Summer Special Fund is created, to be managed by the Agency of Education. The cannabis sales tax revenue shall be deposited into the Universal Afterschool and Summer Special Fund. The Fund shall be used as follows:

(1) To establish a grant program that supports the expansion of sustaining or expanding universal afterschool and summer programs with a focus on underserved areas of the State.

(2) Cannabis sales tax revenue shall be used to support a mixed delivery system for afterschool and summer programming. Eligible recipients can be public, private, or nonprofit organizations, including public libraries, schools, and volunteer mentoring programs. The Agency may allocate a portion of the funds annually to the Department of Libraries for the purpose of providing subgrants to public libraries to sustain or create summer and afterschool programming. A coalition or group of public libraries may also apply for a grant from the Agency or Department.

* * *

(E) The Agency shall create a simple application and reporting process that reduces barriers to grant program participation for small, community-based organizations, such as rural public libraries, volunteer mentoring programs, and similar organizations.

(b) An advisory committee is created to support the Secretary in administering the funds. The Agency shall provide administrative and technical support to the advisory committee. The advisory committee shall be composed of:

* * *

(7) the Vermont Afterschool Executive Director or designee; ~~and~~

(8) a representative from the Governor's office; and

(9) the State Librarian or designee.

* * *

(e) Annually, the advisory committee shall solicit public input on the grant program and procedures established pursuant to this section. The advisory committee shall hold a meeting to discuss the public input and any plans to implement recommended changes to the grant program.

And that when so amended the bill ought to pass.

Thereupon, the bill was read the second time by title only pursuant to Rule 43, and the recommendation of the Committee on Education was amended as recommended by the Committee on Appropriations.

Thereupon, the pending question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Education, as amended? was agreed to and third reading of the bill was ordered.

Adjournment

On motion of Senator Baruth, the Senate adjourned until one o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, March 25, 2026.