

Helen Argraves

HCED Legislative Intern

UVM '25

February 6, 2025

## WEEKLY REPORT

8:45 AM, February 7, 2025, Room 35

Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

### I. New Bills in Committee

- A. S.34 – An act relating to lowering the rate of increase for mobile home lot rents
- B. S.37 – An act relating to unemployment insurance eligibility and benefits
- C. S.48 – An act relating to workforce leadership in Vermont

### II. Bill Activity

#### A. S.37

- Goal of bill: to give school support staff access to the basic right to apply for unemployment insurance
- VNEA:
  - Support staff are vital, but underpaid and underemployed; UI provides a fill-in for summer interim
  - Retention of support staff is crucial, and without access to UI staff are being lost to higher paying jobs
- Dept. of Labor:
  - Instructional nature of paraeducator role may mean bill does not conform to federal policy on UI

- Predicts significant uptake of UI in VT and estimates costs to be ~\$16M, ultimately increasing cost to tax-payers
- Sen. Brock: Question of cost
  - VNEA cited Minnesota to demonstrate lower than expected cost: \$5M (EPI analysis)
- Sen. Brock: Question on condition of UI requiring an individual to be actively looking for work
  - Return to Work Provision exempts those with a reasonable assurance of return to work within 10-week window

### III. Other Key Points

#### A. Sen. Ram Hinsdale Workforce Omnibus Introduction

#### B. Summit Properties – Economic Development

- Act 250 keeping money at bay for development
- Middle-and-low-income households unable to afford median price housing

#### C. Vermont Futures Project

- Expansion goal: 802,000+ population by 2035
- Demographics, workforce, and housing intertwined
- Housing crisis root causes include more than lack of availability – ratio of jobs to available housing, transportation
  - Sen. Weeks: Rutland has 2,000+ offline homes – How is this the case during a housing crisis?

#### D. Rural Economic Development

- Updates on 2 initiatives
  - Farm and Forest Viability Program (FFVP)
  - Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

E. HOME Act and Act 181 Update

- VNRC, LURB, VAPDA

F. Vermont Bankers Association

- Financing update
- Inflation, interest rates, and uncertainty around future policy are challenges to development