

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Human Services to which was referred Senate Bill No.
3 243 entitled “An act relating to distributing funds to the Vermont Language
4 Justice Project” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) Vermont ranks sixth per capita in refugee resettlement;

11 (2) the Governor has recognized the important role immigrants play in
12 Vermont’s economy;

13 (3) when health information is available in only one language and only
14 in written format, it creates barriers that lead to confusion;

15 (4) the Vermont Language Justice Project’s videos fill a critical gap in
16 patient education, particularly for families with limited English proficiency;

17 (5) the Vermont Language Justice Project has created and distributed
18 videos pertaining to COVID-19 and COVID-19 testing; the importance of
19 immunizations and how immunizations work; Mpox; preventing mosquito and
20 tick bites; and safety during flood events, hot and cold weather, cyanobacteria
21 outbreaks, wildfires, and more;

1 (6) the Vermont Language Justice Project’s videos are made in 10 to 21
2 of the languages commonly spoken in Vermont and in collaboration with the
3 Vermont Department of Health;

4 (7) the Vermont Language Justice Project is usually able to respond to a
5 crisis within 24 hours with information in multiple languages and in multiple
6 formats, such as written translations, audio files, and videos; and

7 (8) in January 2025, the Vermont Language Justice Project’s grant from
8 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention abruptly ended, leaving it
9 to be funded solely through donations from individuals and foundations and
10 through fee-for-service work.

11 Sec. 2. VERMONT LANGUAGE JUSTICE PROJECT

12 In fiscal year 2027, the Office of Racial Equity, in consultation with the
13 Department of Public Safety’s Division of Emergency Management, shall
14 contract with the Vermont Language Justice Project to prepare informational
15 materials at the request of State agencies and departments, as needed, to assist
16 Vermonters who speak languages other than English in the event of a disease
17 outbreak, natural disaster, or other public health emergency, including ongoing
18 personal and public health information. The Department of Buildings of
19 General Services shall maintain the Vermont Language Justice Project on the
20 State’s list of approved contractors.

1 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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9 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE