

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations to which was referred Senate  
3 Bill No. 56 entitled “An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans”  
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the  
5 bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in  
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS STUDY COMMITTEE; REPORT

8 (a) Creation. There is created the Office of New Americans Study  
9 Committee to make recommendations for creating an independent Office of  
10 New Americans.

11 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following  
12 members:

13 (1) the Director of the Vermont Refugee Office, who shall be Chair;

14 (2) one member, appointed by the Commissioner of Labor;

15 (3) one member, appointed by the Executive Director of the Office of  
16 Racial Equity; and

17 (4) five members, appointed by the Governor, one who must be a New  
18 American with lived experience, who shall include:

19 (A) one member, nominated by the Association of Africans Living in  
20 Vermont;

1           (B) one member, nominated by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and

2           Immigrants;

3           (C) one member, nominated by the Vermont Afghan Alliance;

4           (D) one member, nominated by the Brattleboro Development Credit

5           Corporation; and

6           (E) one member, nominated by Migrant Justice.

7           (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall study and submit a written

8           report to the House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development

9           and on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate

10           Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on

11           Government Operations concerning recommendations for creating an

12           independent Office of New Americans, including:

13           (1) a summary of the current demographic, economic, and public health

14           data regarding New Americans in the State and information regarding the

15           government services being utilized and underutilized by New Americans;

16           (2) a summary or survey of varying and successful approaches to

17           providing government services to New Americans in other states, with

18           particular focus on the topics of the role of education and training institutions,

19           professional licensing, housing, and support for employers and municipalities;

20           (3) in consultation with community-based organizations composed of or

21           servicing New Americans, the Vermont Asylum Assistance Project, State

1 agencies and departments that provide services to New Americans, the  
2 Secretary of State’s Office, municipal government leaders, educational  
3 institutions, and business leaders, information on:

4 (A) the existing State and local-level barriers for New Americans for  
5 gainfully participating in the State’s workforce, economy, and business  
6 communities;

7 (B) additional governmental services needed by New Americans but  
8 not yet offered by the State; and

9 (C) the transfer or consolidation of existing governmental services  
10 for New Americans that would be more efficiently provided by a new Office of  
11 New Americans;

12 (4) the proposed structure, duties, funding, and labor needs of an Office  
13 of New Americans; and

14 (5) a definition of the term “New Americans” for the purposes of an  
15 Office of New Americans.

16 (d) The Committee may create subcommittees, with duties and leadership  
17 to be assigned by the Chair.

18 (e) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative, technical,  
19 and legal assistance of the Agency of Human Services.

20 (f) Date of Report. On or before September 1, 2026, the Committee shall  
21 submit the written report required by subsection (c) of this section.

1        (g) Meetings.

2            (1) The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Committee to occur on  
3 or before September 1, 2025.

4            (2) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

5            (3) The Committee shall cease to exist on the earlier of September 1,  
6 2026 or the date that the Committee submits its written report.

7        (h) Compensation and reimbursement.

8            (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General  
9 Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee serving in the member's  
10 capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and  
11 reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for not more than 10  
12 meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the  
13 General Assembly.

14            (2) Other members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem  
15 compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A.  
16 § 1010 for not more than 10 meetings. These payments shall be made from  
17 monies appropriated to the Agency of Human Services.

18        Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

19            This act shall take effect on passage.

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21        (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE