

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Education to which was referred Senate Bill No. 232
3 entitled “An act relating to public libraries and the Department of Libraries”
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 * * * Findings * * *

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds:

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

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

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

1 reasonable portion of funding shall be used by the Department of Libraries to
2 support grants for afterschool and summer programs in libraries.

3 * * *

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

8 * * *

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

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

11 (9) the State Librarian or designee.

12 * * *

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

14 § 4014. EARLY EDUCATION

15 (a) The Secretary may grant funds for voluntary early education programs.

16 The funds may be used for personnel costs, training of parents and staff,
17 materials and educational equipment, and other costs related to early education
18 programs, including training for public library staff.

19 (b) The Secretary shall solicit proposals for early education programs from
20 community organizations serving young children. Community organizations
21 include school districts; public libraries; other public agencies, including Head

1 Start programs; and private agencies, including child care programs and
2 parent-child centers.

3 * * *

4 * * * Department of Libraries; Duties * * *

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

6 § 605. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
7 LIBRARIES

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

10 * * *

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

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

15 (4) A general library collection of a sufficient size and scope to
16 reinforce and supplement the resources of local and regional libraries. ~~All~~
17 ~~materials of the Department of Libraries~~ The collection may be composed of
18 digital and physical materials and shall be available for free circulation to all
19 citizens, institutions, and organizations under procedures adopted by the State
20 Librarian except that the State Librarian may restrict rare or reference-type
21 materials to one location. The Department shall arrange, classify, and catalog

1 all materials in its custody and provide for their safekeeping and shall rebind
2 books as needed. The Department shall provide ~~service~~ materials to other
3 libraries in the State, schools, and individuals ~~and may provide service by mail~~
4 ~~or book wagon or otherwise~~ through interlibrary loan and shall encourage the
5 sharing of library materials between libraries in Vermont and nationally
6 through interlibrary loan.

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

12 * * *

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

14 § 143. TRUSTEES

15 (a) Unless a municipality that has established or shall establish a public
16 library votes at its annual meeting to elect a board of trustees, the governing
17 body of the municipality shall appoint the trustees. The appointment or
18 election of the trustees shall continue in effect until changed at an annual
19 meeting of the municipality. When trustees are first chosen, they shall be
20 elected or appointed for staggered terms. This subsection shall not be

1 construed to apply to public libraries that are privately established, chartered,
2 or incorporated pursuant to subchapter 2 of this chapter.

3 * * *

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

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

6 § 1752a. PUBLIC LIBRARIES; PRIVATELY OWNED MUNICIPALITY-
7 SUPPORTED LIBRARIES

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

15 * * * Grant Programs; Inclusion of Libraries in Plan Submissions * * *

16 Sec. 8. 24 V.S.A. § 2783 is amended to read:

17 § 2783. ELIGIBILITY FOR PERFORMANCE GRANTS

18 Upon receipt of a proposal for a performance grant, the Secretary shall
19 within 60 days determine whether or not the service provider may be awarded
20 a performance grant under this chapter. The Secretary shall enter into a
21 performance grant with a service provider if the Secretary finds:

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(10) the service provider demonstrates a capability and willingness to assist public libraries, to encourage the development and growth of programs and services at public libraries, and to increase awareness of the resources available through public libraries within the service area; and

(11) the service provider demonstrates a willingness to coordinate its activities with the planning functions of any regional planning commission located in the same geographic area as the service provider.

Sec. 9. 24 V.S.A. § 4307 is amended to read:

§ 4307. MUNICIPAL BYLAW MODERNIZATION GRANTS

* * *

(f) To receive the grant, the municipality shall:

* * *

(7) update the municipal plan’s housing element as provided in subdivision 4382(a)(10) of this title related to addressing lower- and moderate-income housing needs, implement that element of the plan including through the bylaw amendments, and demonstrate how those bylaws support the implementation of the housing element; ~~and~~

(8) update the municipal plan’s utility and facility element as provided in subdivision 4382(a)(4) of this title related to addressing present and prospective library facilities, resources, and services and update the

1 municipality’s recommendations for meeting future needs for library facilities
2 and services, with indications of priority of need, costs, and method of
3 financing; and

4 (9) comply with the State and Federal Fair Housing Act, including the
5 fair housing provisions of Vermont’s Planning and Development Act.

6 * * *

7 * * * Repeal * * *

8 Sec. 10. REPEAL

9 22 V.S.A. § 608 (Audio-Visual Revolving Fund) is repealed.

10 * * * Effective Date * * *

11 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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15 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE