

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

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

7 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

8 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

16 (5) the Vermont Language Justice Project has created and distributed
17 videos pertaining to COVID-19 and COVID-19 testing; the importance of
18 immunizations and how immunizations work; Mpox; preventing mosquito and
19 tick bites; and safety during flood events, hot and cold weather, cyanobacteria
20 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. APPROPRIATION; VERMONT LANGUAGE JUSTICE PROJECT

12 In fiscal year 2027, \$150,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to
13 the Department of Health for distribution to the Vermont Language Justice
14 Project to prepare informational materials for Vermonters who speak
15 languages other than English in the event of a disease outbreak or other public
16 health emergency, including ongoing personal and public health information.

17 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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(Committee vote: _____)

Senator _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE