

1 Introduced by Senator Hashim

2 Referred to Committee on

3 Date:

4 Subject: Court procedure; criminal procedure; miscellaneous amendments

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to make a

6 number of miscellaneous amendments related to civil and criminal procedure

7 statutes.

8 An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

9 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

10 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 164 is amended to read:

11 § 164. ADULT COURT DIVERSION PROGRAM

12 (a) Purpose.

13 (1) The Attorney General shall develop and administer an adult court  
14 diversion program, for both pre-charge and post-charge referrals, available in  
15 all counties.

16 (2) The program shall be designed to provide a restorative option for  
17 persons alleged to have caused harm in violation of a criminal statute or who  
18 have been charged with violating a criminal statute as well as for victims or  
19 those acting on a victim's behalf who have been allegedly harmed by the

1 ~~responsible party~~ person referred to the program. The diversion program can  
2 accept referrals to the program as follows:

3 \* \* \*

4 (c) Adult diversion program policy and referral requirements.

5 \* \* \*

6 (3) Adult post-charge diversion requirements. Each State’s Attorney,  
7 in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General and the adult post-  
8 charge diversion program, shall develop clear criteria for deciding what types  
9 of offenses and offenders will be eligible for diversion; however, the State’s  
10 Attorney shall retain final discretion over the referral of each case for  
11 diversion. All adult post-charge diversion programs receiving financial  
12 assistance from the Attorney General shall adhere to the following:

13 (A) The post-charge diversion program for adults shall only accept  
14 persons against whom charges have been filed and the court has found  
15 probable cause, but are not adjudicated.

16 (B) A prosecutor may refer a person to diversion either before or  
17 after arraignment and shall notify in writing the diversion program and the  
18 court of the prosecutor’s ~~of the~~ referral to diversion.

19 \* \* \*

20 Sec. 2. 4 V.S.A. § 71 is amended to read:

21 § 71. APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF SUPERIOR JUDGES

1 (a) ~~There shall be 34 Superior judges, whose term of office shall,~~ The  
2 number of Superior Judges shall be as determined by the General Assembly.  
3 The term of office of a Superior Judge shall, except in the case of an  
4 appointment to fill a vacancy or unexpired term, begin on April 1 in the year of  
5 their appointment or retention and continue for six years.

6 \* \* \*

7 Sec. 3. 4 V.S.A. § 1102 is amended to read:

8 § 1102. JUDICIAL BUREAU; JURISDICTION

9 (a) The Judicial Bureau is created within the Judicial Branch under the  
10 supervision of the Supreme Court.

11 (b) The Judicial Bureau shall have jurisdiction of the following matters:

12 \* \* \*

13 (4) Violations of 7 V.S.A. § 1005, relating to possession and  
14 procurement of tobacco products by a person under 21 years of age.

15 \* \* \*

16 Sec. 4. 4 V.S.A. § 1106 is amended to read:

17 § 1106. HEARING

18 \* \* \*

19 (d) ~~A~~ Unless otherwise provided by law, a law enforcement officer may  
20 void or amend a complaint issued by that officer by so marking the complaint  
21 and returning it to the Bureau, regardless of whether the amended complaint is

1 a lesser included violation. At the hearing, a law enforcement officer may,  
2 unless otherwise provided by law, void or amend a complaint issued by that  
3 officer in the discretion of that officer.

4 \* \* \*

5 Sec. 5. 7 V.S.A. § 1005(c) is amended to read:

6 (c) A person under 21 years of age who misrepresents ~~his or her~~ the  
7 person's age by presenting false identification to purchase tobacco products,  
8 tobacco substitutes, or tobacco paraphernalia shall be ~~fined~~ subject to a civil  
9 penalty of not more than \$50.00 or provide up to 10 hours of community  
10 service, or both.

11 Sec. 6. 13 V.S.A. § 5351(7) is amended to read:

12 (7) "Victim" means:

13 (A) a person who sustains injury or death as a direct result of the  
14 commission or attempted commission of a crime;

15 (B) an intervenor who is physically injured or killed in an attempt to  
16 assist the person described in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7) or the  
17 police;

18 (C) a surviving immediate family member of a homicide victim,  
19 including a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, or  
20 other survivor who may suffer severe emotional harm as a result of the

1 victim’s death as determined on a case-by-case basis in the discretion of the  
2 Board; or

3 (D) a resident of this State who is injured or killed as the result of a  
4 crime committed outside the United States.

5 Sec. 7. 13 V.S.A. § 7282 is amended to read:

6 § 7282. SURCHARGE

7 \* \* \*

8 (c) ~~SIU surcharge.~~ In addition to any penalty or fine imposed by the court  
9 for a criminal offense committed after July 1, 2009, the clerk of the court shall  
10 levy an additional surcharge of \$100.00 to be deposited in the General Fund, in  
11 support of the Specialized Investigative Unit Grants Board created in 24  
12 V.S.A. § 1940(c), and used to pay for the costs of Specialized Investigative  
13 Units.

14 Sec. 8. 12 V.S.A. § 5135(b) is amended to read:

15 (b) A defendant who attends a hearing held under section 5133 or 5134 of  
16 this title at which a temporary or final order under this chapter is issued and  
17 who receives notice from the court on the record that the order has been issued  
18 shall be deemed to have been served. A defendant notified by the court on the  
19 record shall be required to adhere immediately to the provisions of the order.  
20 ~~However, even when the court has previously notified the defendant of the~~  
21 ~~order, the court shall transmit the order for additional service by a law~~

1 ~~enforcement agency.~~ The clerk shall mail a copy of the order to the defendant  
2 at the defendant's last known address.

3 Sec. 9. 14 V.S.A. § 2 is amended to read:

4 § 2. DEPOSIT OF WILL FOR SAFEKEEPING; DELIVERY; FINAL  
5 DISPOSITION

6 (a) A will may be deposited for safekeeping in the Probate Division of the  
7 Superior Court for the district in which the testator resides on payment to the  
8 court of the applicable fee required by ~~32 V.S.A. § 1434(a)(17)~~ 32 V.S.A.  
9 § 1434(a)(18). The register shall give to the testator a receipt, shall safely keep  
10 each will so deposited, and shall keep an index of the wills so deposited.

11 \* \* \*

12 Sec. 10. 14 V.S.A. § 931 is amended to read:

13 § 931. LIMITATIONS ON CLAIMS OF CREDITORS

14 All claims against the decedent's estate that arose before the death of the  
15 decedent, including claims of the State and any subdivision thereof except  
16 claims filed by the State on behalf of Vermont Medicaid, absolute or  
17 contingent, liquidated or unliquidated, founded on contract, tort, or other legal  
18 basis, if not barred earlier by other statute of limitations, are barred against the  
19 estate, the legal representative of the estate, and the heirs and devisees of the  
20 decedent, unless presented within one year after the decedent's death. Nothing  
21 in this section affects or prevents any proceeding to enforce any mortgage,

1 pledge, or other lien upon the property of the estate. Claims filed by the State  
2 on behalf of Vermont Medicaid must be filed in accordance with subsection  
3 1203(d) of this title. This section shall not be construed to affect the period of  
4 limitations applicable to a claim under 12 V.S.A. § 557.

5 Sec. 11. 14 V.S.A. § 3068 is amended to read:

6 § 3068. HEARING

7 \* \* \*

8 (e)(1) If upon completion of the hearing and consideration of the record the  
9 court finds that the respondent is not a person in need of guardianship, it shall  
10 dismiss the petition and seal the records of the proceeding.

11 (2) If a motion to withdraw the petition is made before the final hearing,  
12 the court shall dismiss the petition and seal the records of the proceeding.

13 (f) If upon completion of the hearing and consideration of the record the  
14 court finds that the petitioner has proved by clear and convincing evidence that  
15 the respondent is a person in need of guardianship or will be a person in need  
16 of guardianship on attaining 18 years of age, it shall enter judgment specifying  
17 the powers of the guardian pursuant to sections 3069 and 3070 of this title and  
18 the duties of the guardian pursuant to section 3071 of this title.

19 (g) Any party to the proceeding before the court may appeal the court's  
20 decision in the manner provided in section 3080 of this title.

21 Sec. 12. 14 V.S.A. § 4051 is amended to read:

1 § 4051. STATUTORY FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY

2 A document substantially in the following form may be used to create a  
3 statutory form power of attorney that has the meaning and effect prescribed by  
4 this chapter.

5 VERMONT STATUTORY FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY IMPORTANT  
6 INFORMATION

7 \* \* \*

8 GRANT OF SPECIFIC AUTHORITY (OPTIONAL)

9 My agent MAY NOT do any of the following specific acts for me UNLESS I  
10 have INITIALED the specific authority listed below:

11 (CAUTION: Granting any of the following will give your agent the authority  
12 to take actions that could significantly reduce your property or change how  
13 your property is distributed at your death. INITIAL ONLY the specific  
14 authority you WANT to give your agent.)

15 ( ) An agent who is not an ancestor, spouse, or descendant may exercise  
16 authority under this power of attorney to create in the agent or in an individual  
17 to whom the agent owes a legal obligation of support an interest in my  
18 property whether by gift, rights of survivorship, beneficiary designation,  
19 disclaimer, or otherwise

20 ( ) Create, amend, revoke, or terminate an inter vivos, family, living,  
21 irrevocable, or revocable trust



- 1       ( ) Consent to the modification or termination of a noncharitable irrevocable  
2       trust under 14A V.S.A. § 411
- 3       ( ) Make a gift, subject to the limitations of 14 V.S.A. § 4047 (gifts) and any  
4       special instructions in this power of attorney
- 5       ~~( ) Consent to the modification or termination of a noncharitable irrevocable~~  
6       ~~trust under 14A V.S.A. § 411~~
- 7       ( ) Create, amend, or change rights of survivorship
- 8       ( ) Create, amend, or change a beneficiary designation
- 9       ( ) Waive the principal’s right to be a beneficiary of a joint and survivor  
10       annuity, including a survivor benefit under a retirement plan
- 11       ( ) Exercise fiduciary powers that the principal has authority to delegate
- 12       ( ) Authorize another person to exercise the authority granted under this power  
13       of attorney
- 14       ( ) Disclaim or refuse an interest in property, including a power of appointment
- 15       ( ) Exercise authority with respect to elective share under 14 V.S.A. § 319
- 16       ( ) Exercise waiver rights under 14 V.S.A. § 323
- 17       ( ) Exercise authority over the content and catalogue of electronic  
18       communications and digital assets under 14 V.S.A. chapter 125 (Vermont  
19       Revised Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act)
- 20       ( ) Exercise authority with respect to intellectual property, including, without  
21       limitation, copyrights, contracts for payment of royalties, and trademarks



1 (III) defacing a firearm’s serial number in violation of ~~13~~  
2 ~~V.S.A. § 4024~~ 13 V.S.A. § 4026; or

3 (IV) straw purchasing of firearm in violation of 13 V.S.A.  
4 § 4025; and

5 (ii) the child had attained 16 years of age but not 19 years of age at  
6 the time the act was alleged to have occurred.

7 Sec. 15. 33 V.S.A. § 5225 is amended to read:

8 § 5225. PRELIMINARY HEARING; RISK ASSESSMENT

9 (a) Preliminary hearing. A preliminary hearing shall be held at the time  
10 and date specified on the citation or as otherwise ordered by the court. If a  
11 child is taken into custody prior to the preliminary hearing, the preliminary  
12 hearing shall be at the time of the temporary care hearing. Counsel for the  
13 child shall be assigned prior to the preliminary hearing.

14 (b) Risk and needs screening.

15 (1) Prior to the preliminary hearing, the child shall be afforded an  
16 opportunity to undergo a risk and needs screening, which shall be conducted  
17 by the Department or by a community provider that has contracted with the  
18 Department to provide risk and need screenings for children alleged to have  
19 committed delinquent acts.

20 (2) If the child participates in such a screening, the Department or the  
21 community provider shall report the risk level result of the screening, the

1 number and source of the collateral contacts made, and the recommendation  
2 for charging or other alternatives to the State’s Attorney. The State’s Attorney  
3 shall consider the results of the risk and needs screening in determining  
4 whether to file a charge. In lieu of filing a charge, the State’s Attorney may  
5 refer a child directly to a youth-appropriate community-based provider that has  
6 been approved by the Department, which may include pre-charge diversion  
7 pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 163, a community justice center or a balanced and  
8 restorative justice program. Referral to a community-based provider pursuant  
9 to this subsection shall not require the State’s Attorney to file a charge. If the  
10 community-based provider does not accept the case or if the child fails to  
11 complete the program in a manner deemed satisfactory and timely by the  
12 provider, the child’s case shall return to the State’s Attorney for charging  
13 consideration.

14 \* \* \*

15 Sec. 16. 27 V.S.A. § 348 is amended to read:

16 § 348. INSTRUMENTS CONCERNING REAL PROPERTY VALIDATED

17 (a) When an instrument of writing shall have been on record in the office of  
18 the clerk in the proper town for a period of 15 years, and there is a defect in the  
19 instrument because it omitted to state any consideration or was not sealed,  
20 witnessed, acknowledged, validly acknowledged, or because a license to sell  
21 was not issued or is defective, the instrument shall, from and after the

1 expiration of 15 years from the filing thereof for record, be valid. Nothing in  
2 this section shall be construed to affect any rights acquired by grantees,  
3 assignees, or encumbrancers under the instruments described in the preceding  
4 sentence, nor shall this section apply to conveyances or other instruments of  
5 writing, the validity of which is brought in question in any suit now pending in  
6 any courts of the State.

7 \* \* \*

8 (d) A release, discharge, or assignment of mortgage interest executed by a  
9 commercial lender with respect to a one- to four-family residential real  
10 property, including a residential unit in a condominium or in a common  
11 interest community as defined in Title 27A, that recites authority to act on  
12 behalf of the record holder of the mortgage under a power of attorney but  
13 where the power of attorney is not of record shall have the same effect as if  
14 executed by the record holder of the mortgage unless, within three years after  
15 the instrument is recorded, an action challenging the release, discharge, or  
16 assignment is commenced and a copy of the complaint is recorded in the land  
17 records of the town where the release, discharge, or assignment is recorded.  
18 This subsection shall not apply to releases, discharges, or assignments obtained  
19 by fraud or forgery.

20 (e) A power of attorney made for the purpose of conveying, leasing,  
21 mortgaging, or affecting any interest in real property that has been

1 acknowledged and signed in the presence of at least one witness shall be valid,  
2 notwithstanding its failure to comply with 14 V.S.A. § 3503 or the  
3 requirements of the Emergency Administrative Rules for Remote Notarial Acts  
4 adopted by the Vermont Secretary of State, unless within three years after  
5 recording, an action challenging its validity is commenced and a copy of the  
6 complaint is recorded in the land records of the town where the power of  
7 attorney is recorded. This subsection shall not apply to a power of attorney  
8 obtained by fraud or forgery.

9 (f) Notwithstanding section 305 of this title, a deed, mortgage, lease, or  
10 other instrument executed for the purpose of conveying or encumbering real  
11 property executed by a person purporting to act as the agent or attorney-in-fact  
12 for the party named in the deed, mortgage, lease, or other instrument, that has  
13 been recorded for at least 15 years in the land records where the real property  
14 is located shall be valid even if no power of attorney authorizing and  
15 empowering an agent or attorney-in-fact appears of record, unless, within 15  
16 years after recording, an action challenging the validity of the deed, mortgage,  
17 lease, or other instrument is commenced and a copy of the complaint is  
18 recorded in the land records of the town where the property is located.

19 Sec. 17. 32 V.S.A. § 1003 is amended to read:

20 § 1003. STATE OFFICERS

21 \* \* \*

1 (c) The officers of the Judicial Branch named in this subsection shall be  
2 entitled to annual salaries as follows:

	Annual	Annual
	Salary	Salary
	as of	as of
	July 14,	July 13,
	2024	2025
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8	(1) Chief Justice of Supreme Court	\$214,024 \$225,581
9	(2) Each Associate Justice	\$204,264 \$215,294
10	(3) <del>Administrative</del> <u>Chief Superior Judge</u>	\$204,264 \$215,294
11	(4) Each Superior Judge	\$194,185 \$204,671
12	(5) [Repealed.]	
13	(6) Each Magistrate	\$146,413 \$154,319
14	(7) Each Judicial Bureau hearing	
15	officer	\$146,413 \$154,319

16 \* \* \*

17 Sec. 18. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 27, Sec. 5 (forensic facility report) is

18 amended to read:

19 Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

20 Sec. 19. EFFECTIVE DATES

- 1        This act shall take effect on passage, except that Sec. 1 shall take effect on
- 2        July 2, 2025.