

Journal
of the
JOINT ASSEMBLY
Adjourned Session
2016

**JOURNAL OF THE JOINT ASSEMBLY
OF THE
STATE OF VERMONT
ADJOURNED SESSION, 2016**

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, JANUARY 7, 2016

2:00 P.M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a Joint Resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 30. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the State-of-the-State message from the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 7, 2016, at two o'clock in the afternoon to receive the State-of-the-State message from the Governor.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Philip B. Scott, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Committee Appointed

Senator John F. Campbell of Windsor District moved that a Committee of three Senators and three Representatives be appointed by the Chair to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, and inform him that the Joint Assembly was now convened for the purpose of receiving his State-of-the-State message.

Which was agreed to.

The Chair appointed as members of such Committee:

Senator Richard W. Sears, Jr., of Bennington District
Senator Richard J. McCormack, of Windsor District
Senator Ann E. Cummings, of Washington District
Representative Tony Klein, of East Montpelier
Representative Sandy Haas, of Rochester
Representative Martha Feltus, of Rochester

The Committee performed the duty assigned to it and appeared within the Joint Assembly accompanied by His Excellency, Governor Peter E. Shumlin, who delivered the following message:

Governor's State-of-the-State Message

“Mr. President, Mr. President Pro Tem, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief justice, Senator Leahy, General Cray, members of the general assembly, distinguished guests and fellow Vermonters, thank you all so much.

“I am as honored and humbled to stand before you today as I was giving my first Inaugural Address in 2011. That day I spoke with affection about our last Governor from Putney, George Aiken. Three-quarters of a century ago, he stood before this body and reflected on the challenges and progress of his day. He said:

““During these four years Vermont, in common with the rest of the nation, has experienced changes and put into practice new functions of government that were either unforeseen or in the visionary stage a few years ago. Our task has been to apply these innovations in a practicable manner.”

“Seventy-five years later, his words call to mind our own efforts over the last five years.

“When I became Governor I promised to focus every day on making the lives of Vermonters more secure – secure in an economy that grows jobs and works for everyone; secure with a saner energy policy that relies on Vermont-grown energy while protecting our planet and our economy; secure with an education system that gives all Vermont kids an equal shot at success; secure with a criminal justice system that relies less on incarceration and more on rehabilitation; and secure with a health care system that offers coverage to all and costs Vermonters less.

“From day one, I made it clear that I didn’t run for this office to be a caretaker. I ran to get tough things done. I ran for Governor because Vermont is a great state. I wanted to make it greater.

“I knew it wouldn’t be easy. That is why I ended my first address to you with these words: “Our obstacles are many, and our challenges are daunting. The change we’re proposing is transformative and systemic. It will not happen quickly or easily.”

“It hasn’t been easy, but together we have accomplished so much. Vermont is a better place to live, work and raise a family than it was when we began.

“Governor Aiken was forthright in saying “there have been times when we have encountered rough places on the highway of our history.” But he concluded “we have been successful for the most part.” Both are as true today as they were in Aiken’s day.

“We put Vermont back to work.

“We started at the trough of the Great Recession, unsure whether we’d be able to build back. Soon after, Irene struck. We were down and we got knocked down again. But we stood back up. We added 17,600 new jobs in the last five years and have grown per capita incomes at or above the national rate every year I have been Governor and that has never happened in Vermont’s history. We have expanded health insurance to 19,000 Vermonters who had no coverage when I took office, and in my forthcoming budget speech I’ll address the important work left to do with our health care system. This hard work, these positive statistics are about real Vermonters who we’ve helped to better times.

- “Christie Montagne of St. Albans was “living the dream” with her husband and eight children on their dairy farm when her husband became ill, forcing them to sell the farm. She was only able to get a part-time job. Christie was struggling to support her family when she found a free job training opportunity sponsored by the state to work as a Medical Coder with Precyse. Now, Christie is earning a great salary with excellent benefits, and describes the job-training as “a life changer” for her family. Christie and Matthew Gamage from Precyse are in the chamber today.

“While there are thousands of success stories like Christie’s, there are still Vermonters stuck with bills that are piling up faster than they can pay them. We have more work to do.

“Vermonters who are sick should not have to choose between going to work or losing their job. This isn’t just about fairness for employees; it’s about protecting all of us. Nationwide, almost 90 percent of food workers report that they go to work sick, and according to the CDC, 65 percent of foodborne illnesses result from the handling of food by someone who’s sick. I’m encouraged that the Senate is committed to getting the good bill the House passed last year to my desk.

“In a race to the bottom where states cannibalize each other for jobs, Vermont has succeeded by being smart, not big. Two years ago, we added to our job creation arsenal the Vermont Enterprise Fund, and in my budget I will ask you to enhance and extend it because of our job-creating successes. This tool has helped create 70 new manufacturing jobs at GW Plastics in Royalton. I am proud to announce that BHS Composites of Sherbrooke, Quebec is expanding to Vermont with 75 new manufacturing jobs in St. Johnsbury thanks to support from the Enterprise Fund. BHS CEO Lena Swennen and her

husband and Vice President Jacques Hainse are here today. Thank you Lena and Jacques for being Vermont's newest job creators.

"4,400 of the new jobs we've created are because of the new face of farming and locally grown food in Vermont. It wasn't that long ago that many believed that our best farming days were behind us, but today a new generation of young farmers are competing for land and resources and producing the best fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, beer, cider, and spirits in the world. In the past two years, I've had the privilege of moving the Best Cheese in America award from one Vermont farm to another Vermont farm. Take that Wisconsin.

"Now get this. Long known to out of staters for our great deer hunting, flatlanders are now coming to Vermont to beer hunt. They are literally rising at dawn to drive to the promise land where they stand in a long line and wait, and wait, and wait some more to purchase Vermont's world award winning beers, which they carry back with them in the trunks of their cars to lift up their miserable lives because they don't live in Vermont.

"We can't let up on our farm to plate, farm to glass, and farm to can revolution. I'm pleased to announce \$175,000 in new money for the Working Lands fund, which has been a catalyst in our Agricultural Renaissance. We have generous donations of \$100,000 from Leigh and Charles Merinoff of Townsend, \$50,000 from WhistlePig and the Progressive Farm Alliance, and \$25,000 from Long Trail. We're honored to have Raj Bhakta from WhistlePig and Dan Fulham from Long Trail with us today. Thank you.

"As I travel around Vermont talking to employers their biggest challenge remains finding enough trained and educated workers to help them grow. They know that our success in moving more low-income Vermont kids beyond high school will determine their success.

"By expanding the number of kids earning college credit for free while still in high school and becoming the only state to guarantee every three and four-year-old access to high quality pre-k, we have taken Vermont's good education system and made it better.

"Kate Lamb is a single mother working in Johnson raising her 4-year-old daughter. Like most working parents, finding quality, affordable child care has been a critical issue. Thanks to our expansion of Pre-K programs across the state, Kate's daycare in Lamoille – Mud City – was able to offer Kate and her daughter exactly what they needed. Thank you Kate for joining us today.

"Despite having one of the highest graduation rates in the country, we continue to fall short getting more students the college education that is now a

prerequisite to earning a decent wage. We must ensure that Vermont kids who are not born with mountains of opportunity have the same shot at economic prosperity as those who are.

“That’s why I signed a bill last year to help families start saving for college from the day their children are born. Now we must fund it. My budget will ensure every child born in Vermont will receive a \$250 contribution to get a savings plan started, and for low-income Vermonters we will double that to \$500.

“We also need to make it easier for those who are working hard in low-paying jobs to get back to school. I constantly talk to Vermonters who ended their studies in high school, are working numerous jobs to make ends meet, long for a better future and more education, but don’t have two pennies to rub together to pay for it. The other night I went to Morrisville and visited the Man Up program at CCV, which offers support and mentoring for young men who are in this exact situation. I met Brandin and Justin Bourdeau. Last year, Brandin was a line cook, and Justin was working at a local grocery store. Through the Man Up program, these two brothers are successfully back on the academic track. Brandin, Justin, and Billi Dunham, the facilitator of this program, are all here today. Stand up and let’s recognize them for their good work.

“It’s our responsibility to offer the same opportunity to every Vermonter, every woman, every man. Today I propose we not just Man Up – let’s Step Up for everyone. In partnership with CCV, Vermont State Colleges and UVM my budget will provide \$2 million to launch Step Up, funding a semester of free courses and support services to help first generation and low income students get back to school. GlobalFoundries has agreed to offer mentoring support to Step Up students. Mike Russo and Kimberly Finnigan from GlobalFoundries are here today– Mike and Kimberly, thank you for investing in our workforce.

“We should be so proud that Act 46 is working better than any of us had anticipated. Communities across Vermont are finally having the very difficult but necessary conversation about how we right-size our education enterprise to improve quality and reduce costs. The rigid spending caps that were a small part of that bill have become the enemy of the good. I ask you to work swiftly in the coming weeks to pass either a moratorium or a repeal of this small piece of Act 46 before school boards have to send their budgets to the printers for Town Meeting Day.

“The most tropical Christmas in memory reminds us that climate change threatens the Vermont we love, from our ski season to our lakes. That’s why we are working so hard to move to green, clean renewable energy that is creating jobs, reducing power rates and putting money in Vermonters pockets while we do it. We’re living in a state where Vermonters’ electric bills have gone down, not up for three of the last four years.

- “When I became Governor, our largest power generator was an aging, leaking nuclear plant. Five years later we’ve increased by ten times the number of solar panels, and we now have more clean energy jobs per capita than any other state in America. During peak demand, solar power has replaced our nuclear plant as the largest power generator in our state.
- “Last year we passed the most ambitious, long-overdue clean water bill in Vermont’s history. No one knows better than Vermont’s Senator Patrick Leahy and his extraordinary copilot Marcelle that Lake Champlain is a Great Lake, and no one has worked harder to make it greater than the Leahy Team. Patrick and Marcelle are here with us, thank you for all you have done for Vermont and our Lake.

“But the clock keeps ticking, we’re running out of time, and the urgency for us to take every sensible action against climate change has never been greater. California, under Governor Brown’s leadership, recently passed a bill to divest state funds from dirty coal, and explore divesting from Big Oil. Our small state must partner with California, which manages hundreds of billions of dollars of state funds, and divest Vermont of coal. Let’s remember Vermont is downwind of the coal fired plants to our West; we’re the tailpipe to their dirty energy choices. Their pollution sickens our children, creates acid rain, dumps mercury on our forests and in our lakes and increases greenhouse gas emissions. I ask that you send me a divestiture bill just like California’s. While you’re doing that, Governor Brown and I will invite other Governors to join us in what should be a national effort.

“While we await the California study on oil, Vermont should not wait to rid ourselves of ExxonMobil stock. It has been clearly documented that since the 1980’s, ExxonMobil’s own scientists have long known about the dangers of global warming, and chose to conceal that from the public. At the same time that they were building their oil rigs taller to account for rising sea levels, they were funding front groups of scientists to deny climate change is real. This is a page right out of Big Tobacco, which for decades denied the health risks of their product as they were killing people. Owning ExxonMobil stock is not a business Vermont should be in.

“There is no one who has done more to promote divestiture than Vermont’s own Bill McKibben. I’m honored to have Bill here today.

“Since I took office we’ve helped thousands and thousands of Vermont families, farms and businesses set-up small-scale methane digesters, solar, wind and hydro. We can’t stop there; We need more smartly-sited renewables to power Vermont. We’re learning as we go. Last year we gave local communities more say in the Public Service Board process. I believe we should continue to build renewables on a Vermont scale, rejecting mega solar projects that gobble up hundreds of acres and require Vermonters to pay for costly grid upgrades. We must also reject anti-renewable extremists who would shut down renewables through moratoriums and other job-killing tactics. Instead let’s give an economic advantage for locating solar on rooftops, brownfields, landfills, and other already developed lands where we currently have transmission capacity. Homegrown, not corporate grown, is Vermont’s energy future.

“It was a lonely place when Vermont had the courage to acknowledge the terrible disease of opiate addiction that was threatening our quality of life and killing too many of our neighbors.

“Today, there can’t be a state in the Union that has not joined us. Our innovation over the past two years is getting results:

- “65 percent more Vermonters are getting treatment;
- “We are moving addicts into recovery instead of jail;
- “By getting rescue kits to anyone who will take them we have prevented hundreds of overdose deaths;
- “Most importantly, we’ve removed the stigma that discriminates against our friends and family members struggling so hard against this terrible disease.

“Recently I met Meghan Clodgo and Chelsea Mitchell, two young moms who are beating addiction to build a better future for their children. Chelsea became addicted, homeless and alone and her daughter was taken from her. Success meant fighting relapse with all her might, falling and crawling back up again. Megan had a college degree, worked in early childhood education, and began using opiates as an adult, an example of how easily things can get out of hand and how quickly someone can fall into the pit of addiction. With the help of our hub and spoke treatment system and the Lund Center Chelsea and Meghan are doing the hard work to recover. Meghan and Chelsea are here today. Thank you for your strength.

“I said two years ago that opiate addiction is the one thing that could destroy Vermont as we know it. Today, we live almost daily with drug related violence. Whether it is dealers getting shot on Church Street or people burning to death after being doused with gasoline, the horrors seem unimaginable. We live with despair, crime, death, and small children neglected by the people who are supposed to love them the most. So much of this burden lands on the shoulders of our state’s social workers, who spend every day making difficult choices to protect and give hope to heroin’s most innocent victims, our most vulnerable children. We will forever honor one of our very best: Lara Sobel, whose love and compassion for every child, every family, every Vermonter she touched shall be forever etched in our memory. Indeed, Lara’s commitment, her daughters, her husband, her family, give us the faith in our common humanity to keep pressing on, to continue our search for a smarter approach, as folks continue to become addicted faster than we can treat them. We’re honored to be joined today by Lara’s two daughters, Julia and Elahna, and her husband Tim. Thank you for being here. We will never forget your mom.

“To continue Lara’s legacy, let’s give her colleagues the support they need to do their job by approving my request to fund 35 new positions at the Department of Children and Families and help me take measures to ensure their safety in the workplace.

“We also need to take two additional actions to deal with our addiction crisis.

- “First, in order to meet our goal of getting rid of waiting lists we must continue to expand treatment.
 - “In Franklin County, where approximately 250 people travel to other Hubs for treatment, my Health Department is working with the Northwestern Medical Center to expand treatment options closer to home. In addition, we are also working with the hospital to increase access to Vivitrol, a drug that blocks the effects of opiates for a full month to help addicts stay clean.
 - “In Burlington, Health Commissioner Harry Chen is working with Mayor Weinberger, the UVM Medical Center, recovery providers, law enforcement, and community leaders to prevent addiction, reduce drug-related crime, and expand treatment options.
 - “Across the state, the Department of Children and Families is sending drug screeners out with social workers into homes where substance abuse is a contributor to children who are abused or neglected.

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- “Statewide, parents with young children in the DCF system will be moved to the front of the line for treatment until waiting lists are gone.
 - “Second, let’s go after the source that led us into this mess in the first place. It’s difficult for me to find words that adequately express my frustrations but I can find the three letters that are at the root of the problem: F.D.A. In the 1990s, the F.D.A. approved OxyContin, which lit the match that ignited America’s opiate and heroin addiction crisis. In 2010, we prescribed enough OxyContin to keep every adult in America high for an entire month; by 2012 we issued enough prescriptions to give every American adult their own personal bottle of pills. On television, Americans now see commercials for drugs whose sole purpose is to help relieve side effects from taking opiates – in other words there are now F.D.A. approved drugs to help you take more F.D.A. approved opiates. A few years ago, the F.D.A. approved Zohydro, which is OxyContin on steroids, against the recommendation of their own advisory committee. Just a few months ago, the F.D.A. approved OxyContin for kids. You can’t make this stuff up. The \$11 billion-dollar a year opiate industry in America knows no shame. Compassionate pain management has been transformed by big PHRMA into drug promotion and profit. Until America is willing to have an honest conversation about the way we are dealing with pain our challenges will continue. In light of this, I am implementing the following:
 - “First, we are putting an end to the system where doctors, dentists, and health care providers send patients home with 80 or 90 pills in their pocket. I am proposing a new system, where a maximum of 10 pills will be the limit for minor procedures. We’re also looking at reasonable limits for more major procedures that provide pain relief without filling up our medicine cabinets with unused opiates. That’s just Vermont common sense.
 - “Second, we are partnering with pharmacies and local communities to expand drug take back programs, to get rid of Vermont’s Most Dangerous Leftovers.
 - “Third, we are partnering with neighboring states to upgrade the Prescription Monitoring System to prevent addicts from crossing state borders to go pill shopping.

“I ask for your support in these actions.

“We also must continue the good progress we’ve made reforming our criminal justice system.

“It shouldn’t surprise anyone that when we take away people’s driver’s license for non-driver related offenses like underage tobacco purchases, that we end up with four times as many Vermonters with suspended driver’s licenses than we have enrolled in our State College System. I want to recognize our innovative State’s Attorney T.J. Donovan, who worked with us to create two driver restoration days in Chittenden and Windsor Counties. Thank you for being here T.J.

“The stories that T.J. and I heard from lower income Vermonters standing in line for redemption made me ask: Why are we creating a permanent economic disability and making it so difficult for people who want to improve their lives? I ask you to make Driver Restoration Days unnecessary by passing legislation that ensures non-traffic related offenses don’t lead to Vermonters losing their ability to get to work or drop their kids at school.

“The outdated War on Drugs has also failed, and there is no greater example than our nation’s marijuana laws. That’s why Vermont took steps to change our criminal penalties and to institute a well-regulated medical marijuana system that now serves 2,400 Vermonters. This careful approach shows that we know how to regulate marijuana thoughtfully and cautiously, avoiding the pitfalls that have caused other states to stumble where Vermont succeeded.

“But the black market of drug dealers selling marijuana for recreational use is alive and well, serving over 80,000 Vermonters who reported using marijuana last year. These illegal dealers couldn’t care less how young their customers are or what’s in the product they sell, or what illegal drugs you buy from their stash, much less whether they pay taxes on their earnings. That’s why I will work with you to craft the right bill that thoughtfully and carefully eliminates the era of prohibition that is currently failing us so miserably.

“To do it right, we must do it deliberately, cautiously, step by step, and not all in one leap as we legislate the lessons learned from the states that went before us. I will insist on five things before I’ll sign a bill.

- “First, a legal market must keep marijuana and other drugs out of the hands of underage kids. The current system doesn’t. Our new system must.
- “Second, the tax imposed must be low enough to wipe out the black market and get rid of the illegal drug dealers.

- “Third, revenue from legalization must be used to expand addiction prevention programs.
- “Fourth, we must strengthen law enforcement’s capacity to improve our response to impaired drivers under the influence of Marijuana who are already on Vermont’s roads.
- “Fifth, take a hard lesson learned from other states and ban the sale of edibles until other states figure out how to do it right.

“I understand that the Senate will go first and I look forward to working with Senate Pro Tem John Campbell, Senate Leadership, Senator Sears, and the Senate Judiciary Committee to construct a sensible, cautious bill. We have a history of tackling difficult issues with respect and care, the Vermont way. I believe we have the capacity to take this next step and get marijuana legalization done right.

Conclusion

“As we begin a new year, and start a new legislative session, we commit ourselves anew to the work ahead.

“I know there are those critics who perpetually see the cup, Vermont’s cup, as half empty.

“While some pessimists talk down our economy, Vermonters know we continue to make progress growing jobs and attracting businesses because of our unique quality of life, our tight-knit communities, and our dedicated workforce.

“While some cynics call endlessly for Vermont to join the race to the bottom taking place in some states, I believe we should continue our commitments to clean jobs, clean water, clean energy, and a quality educational system.

“Our cup is not half empty; it is overflowing with the most hard-working, most resilient, most rugged and innovative people in America. Together we aspire rightfully to a brighter future, and Vermonters deserve leadership that is forward-looking and unafraid.

“While some want Vermont to join the majority of governors in the nation in closing its borders to the Syrian refugees fleeing violence and death, I believe Vermont must not abandon its long heritage of being a welcoming state to those who are escaping unimaginable horror to seek a better life. How many among us can claim that in our own family’s arrival to America, fleeing

famine, religious oppression, dictatorship or war was not the motivation to come here? Vermonters have a long and proud tradition of rejecting racism, bigotry, bullying, intolerance and fear. When McCarthyism reared its ugly head in America, Senator Aiken cautioned against his own Republican party that sought “victory through the selfish political exploitation of fear, bigotry, ignorance and intolerance.” More than half a century later, the same un-American spirit dominates our political dialogue.

“We are blessed to live in a state where so many reject fear and hatred and I pledge to continue to work together with President Obama, our refugee resettlement community, clergy, volunteers, and our mayors to make our state a beacon of hope and hospitality to Muslims, to our Syrian brothers and sisters, and to all who seek to build a better life right here in Vermont.

“I love being Governor, and I am so grateful for the privilege of serving you. Those of us entrusted by the people of Vermont to affect positive change have the unique opportunity every day of putting words into action.

“Our time is now to make a difference in the lives of Vermonters.

“Let’s begin again, and let’s get to work.

“Thank you.”

Dissolution

The Governor, having completed the delivery of his message, was escorted from the Hall by the Committee appointed by the Chair.

The purpose for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, JANUARY 21, 2016

2:00 P.M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a joint resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 31. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the budget message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 21, 2016, at two o'clock in the afternoon to receive the budget message of the Governor.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Philip B. Scott., President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Committee Appointed

Senator John F. Campbell of Windsor District moved that a Committee of three Senators and three Representatives be appointed by the Chair to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor of the State of Vermont, to inform him that the Joint Assembly is now convened and to escort the Governor to the Chamber to deliver his budget message.

Which was agreed to.

The Chair appointed as members of the Committee:

Senator M. Jane Kitchel, of Caledonia District
Senator Timothy R. Ashe, of Chittenden District
Senator Mark A. MacDonald, of Orange District
Representative Betty A. Nuovo, of Middlebury
Representative Diana Gonzalez, of Winooski
Representative Carolyn Whitney Branagan, of Georgia

The Committee performed the duty assigned to it and appeared within the Joint Assembly accompanied by His Excellency, Governor Peter E. Shumlin, who delivered the following message.

Governor's Budget Message

“Mr. President, Mr. President Pro Tem, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, members of the General Assembly, distinguished guests, and fellow Vermonters, thank you so much.

“My top priority as your Governor has been to make the lives of Vermonters more secure. Our state budget is the roadmap for how we get there.

“In my first budget speech, coming on the heels of three consecutive budget shortfalls, I pledged to match our spending with Vermonters' ability to pay, and I said let's keep “with the long tradition of frugality and common sense that is the lifeblood of Vermonters.”

“We have done that. This will be my sixth budget that does not increase income, sales, or rooms and meals tax rates that are already too high.

“Today, I am proud to present to you a budget that:

- Closes a 68-million-dollar budget gap.
- Does not rely on one-time money for on-going state expenses for the first time since the Great Recession;
- Increases General Fund spending by a modest 3.1 percent, which is matched by an identical projected increase in revenues.
- Protects our most vulnerable Vermonters and helps working families get ahead;
- And helps fund the health care expansion that has given coverage to nearly 20,000 Vermonters who were living in fear that they were one sickness away from bankruptcy just a few years ago.

“While it is easy to criticize a budget, and I know many will, it’s difficult to make the tough choices involved in crafting a responsible one.

“Let’s remember where we started. Five years ago, our state was staggering from the blows of the Great Recession, revenues were in free-fall, and there were no easy choices. Vermont’s General Fund revenues had fallen by nearly 15 percent, and we were faced with a 176-million-dollar budget gap.

“We didn’t take the easy way out. We proposed 83 million dollars in General Fund budget reductions and discontinued the prior Administration’s phantom savings of 23 million dollars from the failed Challenges for Change program that had been booked but never realized.

“Despite what you may hear from those who practice revisionist history, five years later our fiscal responsibility has paid off. The state’s revenues have grown every year, employers continue to add jobs, our unemployment rate remains low, and personal income growth outpaces the national average. We’ve done all this while:

- Fully funding pension payments;
- Refusing to raid our rainy day funds;
- Meeting our debt service;
- And honoring our statutory obligation to the Education Fund because Vermonters can’t shoulder additional property tax increases.

“The single biggest challenge to affordability for Vermonters and our job creators is the unsustainable rising cost of health care. It’s also the single biggest challenge we have to maintaining a sustainable state budget. In fact, this year alone, expanded health costs are driving nearly 75 percent of our budget gap.

“The math is simple – Vermont embraced Obamacare and signed up nearly 20,000 Vermonters for health care, helping us to achieve near universal coverage – long a goal of mine and many of you. Today, over 200,000 of our residents are on some form of Medicaid. But while we’re eager to expand Medicaid to families that had been making horrid choices without it, we have refused to summon the courage to pay for it.

“Last year I stood here before you as a Governor who has an aversion to taxes, and proposed a modest payroll tax to pay for the promises we have made. Had that proposal become law, this year’s budget discussion would be very different. The 55-million-dollar shortfall we face in Medicaid would be virtually non-existent. We would have collected 100 million dollars in federal money, which we’re currently leaving in Washington, that could have been used to adequately compensate our health care providers who are being driven out of business by a system that pays them just 40 to 60 cents on the dollar.

“If you don’t believe me, talk to the folks in Franklin County who just lost four family docs because of inadequate and unfair reimbursement rates. Vermont should not be the state that signs people up for Medicaid just to turn our backs on them. Vermont should not be the state who begs our doctors and nurses to take care of folks on Medicaid just to turn their backs on them. That’s not leadership and it’s not good government.

“In order to help plug this year’s Medicaid budget hole, I am proposing that the provider assessment now applied to hospitals and nursing homes be expanded to physicians and dentists, at half of the rate that other providers are currently paying. This will raise 17 million dollars in state funds and draw down 20 million of the federal dollars that we’ve been leaving on the table.

“These funds will be used to increase Medicaid primary care and dental reimbursements for providers and hardworking family docs who are currently struggling. Specifically, we will restore the ill-conceived cuts made by the Affordable Care Act, which make it more difficult for our small, rural providers to treat those on Medicaid.

“Rising health care costs don’t just threaten our state budget; they continue to create challenges for Vermont families and businesses. In the last ten years, health care costs have doubled. Without systematic change, premiums could nearly double in the next decade. If you’re worried about affordability, and as Governor I’ve been worried about affordability every single day, then rising health care costs are public enemy number one.

“That is why since Day One of my Administration we have been working to change the way we pay for healthcare by moving from a fee for service payment method to an outcomes-based approach, or what is known as the All-Payer Model. That’s a convoluted term for a strategy to achieve two simple, common sense goals that go hand-in-hand: Enhanced care that leads to better health outcomes for Vermonters and smarter spending by hospitals and providers that is focused more on making people healthy and less on running tests and procedures to get paid.

“Let me be clear about what the All Payer Model will mean for Vermonters:

- You will get to choose your provider and see the doctor whom you trust.
- Your doctor will get paid to keep you healthy, meaning they will get to spend the time they need with you and you will have a relationship that is more than a yearly 15-minute physical.
- And for those on Medicare, your benefits will not change.

“The All Payer Model is about restoring the relationship between Vermonters and their family doctor or health care provider. It is no small irony that our future in health care is about restoring this decades old relationship that has been eroded under our current money-gobbling, fee-for-service, managed care system.

“We have been working hand-in-hand with the Green Mountain Care Board to negotiate the terms of Vermont’s All Payer Model with the federal government. Next week, we will detail for you what specifically we are asking of the federal government. It is my hope that we can come to terms with them quickly, and begin the transition to a new, better health care system that will save money and make Vermonters healthier. The Chair of the Green Mountain Care Board Al Gobeille is here today. Thank you Al for all your hard work.

“Some will claim that we should stick with the system we have because change is scary. We can’t. Under the fee-for-service system we have now we spend more on health care than anyone else in the world, and our outcomes are

not as good – we have higher infant mortality, higher obesity, and we don't live as long as the countries that are spending less than us. We must do better.

“When I ran for this office, I said we must spend our tax dollars to educate Vermonters, not lock them up. We've done that. By getting non-violent addicts into treatment rather than jail, we have reduced Vermont's incarcerated population to the lowest level since the early 2000s. That has saved us nearly 50 million dollars, money we are now using to ensure universal pre-k for three and four-year-olds, school meals for all who need them, and dual enrollment and early college, which is giving more Vermont kids a free start on a higher education.

“Today those efforts continue. My budget recommends that we close the work camp at the St. Johnsbury Correctional Facility because of our falling inmate population. Instead, let's use those savings to fund my Step Up program, which will help those in low-wage jobs get back on the academic track and the road to a brighter future. Let's use our tax dollars to educate, not incarcerate.

“File this under something no one seems to know: Vermont currently charges the lowest mutual fund registration fee in New England. I am proposing we raise that fee to match the other New England states, which will raise over 13 million dollars, and use some of the additional revenue to fund a \$250 college savings account for every child born in Vermont and a \$500 savings account for low-income kids. Research shows that a college savings account can increase by three to four times the likelihood that low and moderate income kids will attend college. My proposed fee increase is modest – it's half of what Massachusetts currently charges – but the impact on Vermont kids will be great. Let's get this done.

“My Administration has set a goal to end family homelessness by 2020, not only because we know it is the right thing to do but because we know that safe and stable homes serve as a platform for economic opportunity and community revitalization. That goal is achievable, but only if we commit ourselves to making it happen. That is why I am directing my Administration to develop a plan to ensure that 15 percent of taxpayer-funded housing in Vermont is dedicated to homeless families and those with special needs. My Agency of Human Services and Agency Commerce and Community Development will work with the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, our non-profit housing developers, service providers, my Poverty Council, and

others to develop a pathway to make this happen. Working together, we can end family homelessness by 2020.

“When Vermont took on the opiate and heroin crisis two years ago, we expanded the use of the overdose reversing drug naloxone because we refused to avert our eyes to neighbors dying in our streets from addiction. That single act has saved hundreds of lives. We will not turn back now. My budget includes funding to make permanent the naloxone pilot program that we launched two years ago, keep needle exchange programs operating across the state, and open a new treatment hub in northwestern Vermont that will treat an additional 400 Vermonters.

“My budget will also provide resources for those on the front lines of the opiate and heroin battle, including 5 million dollars to fund positions for the Department of Children and Families, the judiciary, the States Attorneys, and the Defender General, as well as 2 million dollars to improve safety for state employees doing this important and difficult work.

“It is time for our state to open our eyes to another disease that is too often kept as a family secret and spoken about in the same hushed whispers that I used to hear from victims of opiate addiction. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Vermonters ages 15 to 34, and the third leading cause of death for those 35 to 44. We learned recently of the tragic loss of a Vermonter and my neighbor, Betsey Catlin of East Montpelier, when her family took the courageous step of publicly acknowledging her suicide. Betsey’s obituary said that after a long struggle with depression, she “ultimately decided she did not fit in this world.” Her dad Mark said that while Betsey tried to get by, “she couldn’t get by.” My heart goes out to the Catlin family and all the families across Vermont who have been impacted by suicide.

“That’s why my budget will almost double funding to the Vermont Suicide Prevention Center to ensure help is available for Vermonters who struggle to get by.

“The budget I present today closes the General Fund budget gap of 68-million-dollars by trimming the projected growth rate by 38 million dollars and raising 30 million dollars from the mutual fund fee and expansion of the existing provider assessment. But we all know a budget is about more than an accounting of numbers or a collection of line-items. It is a document that

puts into action our values, priorities, and hopes for a Vermont that is more secure for all who call this state home. Creating jobs and an economy that works for every Vermonter. Ensuring everyone has access to an education that will set them up to make a good living. Pursuing a rational criminal justice system. Improving a health care system that delivers on the promise of universal access at an affordable cost. Confronting addiction that threatens Vermont's quality of life.

"The budget I present to you turns these values into action. I ask for your support.

"Thank you so much."

Dissolution

The Governor, having completed the delivery of his message, was escorted from the Hall by the committee appointed by the Chair.

The purpose for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, FEBRUARY 18, 2016

10:30 A.M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a joint resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 40. Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly for the election of two legislative Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, February 18, 2016, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to elect two legislative Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation to serve a four year term commencing March 1, 2016, and expiring on March 1, 2020. In case election of all such Trustees shall not be made on that day, the two Houses shall meet in Joint Assembly at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed in such election, until all such Trustees are elected.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Philip B. Scott, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Statement by Presiding Officer

Pursuant to our statutes we are assembled here today in Joint Assembly for the election of two legislative trustees for the Vermont State Colleges Corporation, who are to be elected as trustees for four-year terms commencing on March 1, 2016, and expiring on March 1, 2020. The Chair now cautions you with respect to two statutory conditions imposed by that law for this election:

First: No candidate for election to the Vermont State Colleges Corporation can presently be serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Vermont.

Second: Consideration shall be given to the *geographic* distribution of those elected in order to "prevent an unfair focus on any single college".

The procedure for the election of these two legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation will be similar to the procedure which we followed in past years. The candidates will be nominated from the floor and elected by plurality vote.

The adoption of J.R.S. 41 permits us to determine the winners of this election by means of a plurality vote, so that two candidates can be elected on the same ballot.

In the event that more than two candidates are nominated, you will be instructed to vote for not more than two candidates on the same ballot.

I also draw your attention to the text of Joint Rule 10 which applies to elections held by the assembly.

Rule 10(a): Whenever a Joint Assembly is required to elect one or more persons to any office, the voting shall be by ballot, except that if there is only one candidate for any office, and if there is not objection, the chair may put the question to the Joint Assembly by voice vote.

Election of Trustees of Vermont State Colleges Corporation

The Joint Assembly then proceeded to the election of two legislative trustees of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation, each for a term of four years, from and including the first day of March, 2016.

Nominations for Both Vacancies

Representative James W. Masland of Thetford nominated *Representative Eileen Dickinson* of St. Albans Town.

Representative Timothy Jerman, of Essex then nominated *Representative William J. Lippert, Jr.* of Hinesburg.

There being no other nominations, the Chair declared that nominations were closed.

Accordingly, those names placed in nomination and on the ballot for the office of Trustee of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation were as follows:

Representative Eileen Dickinson of St. Albans Town
Representative James W. Masland of Hinesburg

Vermont State Colleges Corporation Trustees Declared Elected

There being two vacancies and two nominations, under Joint Rule 10(a), with no objection, the question, Shall Eileen Dickinson and William J. Lippert, Jr. be elected to the Office of Trustee of Vermont State Colleges Corporation? was agree to.

Whereupon, the Chair declared that

Eileen Dickinson, of St. Albans Town

having received a plurality of the total votes cast, was duly elected a Trustee of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation, for a term of four years, commencing March 1, 2016.

Whereupon, the Chair declared that

William J. Lippert, Jr., of Hinesburg

having received a plurality of the total votes cast, was duly elected a Trustee of the Vermont State Colleges Corporation, for a term of four years, commencing March 1, 2016.

Dissolution

The purpose for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, MARCH 17, 2016**10:30 A.M.**

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a Joint Resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 43. Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of four Superior Judges.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to vote on the retention of four Superior Judges. In case the vote to retain said Judges shall not be made on that day, the two Houses shall meet in Joint Assembly at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon on each succeeding day, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, and proceed until the above is completed.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Philip B. Scott, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Statement of Presiding Officer

Pursuant to our Constitution and statutes we are assembled here today in Joint Assembly to cast our votes on the retention of four Superior Judges.

This year we are again operating under the Judicial Retention Act passed in 1976, as amended in subsequent sessions of the General Assembly, which establishes the procedure for retention of incumbent Superior Judges and Magistrates. The date for holding joint assemblies for the retention of judges is set by statute to be the eleventh Thursday of the session.

The procedure to be followed requires the vote be by written ballot. There will be one written ballot containing the names of all the judges of the Superior Court.

Retention of Superior Judges

We shall now proceed to the matter of retention of the four incumbent Superior Judges. Under the Judicial Retention Act which establishes the procedure for the retention of Superior Judges, nominations may not be received from the floor. Rather, each judge seeking retention must file a

declaration of intention to seek retention with the Secretary of State or if a Superior Judge is appointed after September 1 of the year preceding the expiration of the term of office the Superior Judge shall automatically be a candidate for retention without filing notice. By this means the name of each judge seeking retention is automatically placed in nomination and considered for retention pursuant to the terms of the Judicial Retention Act.

In addition, the Judicial Retention Act provides that when a candidate does so declare for retention, the question to be decided is:

"Shall the following Superior Judges be retained in office?"

Tellers Appointed

Accordingly, we will need tellers, and the Chair will now appoint as tellers:

Senator Jeanette K. White, of Windham District, as Chief Teller
Senator Brian A. Campion, of Bennington District
Senator Brian P. Collamore, of Rutland District
Representative Sarah E. Buxton, of Tunbridge
Representative Susan Hatch Davis, of Washington
Representative Marjorie Ryerson, of Randolph
Representative Job Tate, of Mendon

We shall now proceed to the matter of retention of the incumbent Superior Judges. For these positions we have received four declarations of intention to seek retention to the office of Superior Judge from the following:

Thomas S. Durkin
David Howard
Robert A. Mello
Helen M. Toor

The question to be decided in each of these cases is:

"Shall Superior Judge Thomas S. Durkin be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge David Howard be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Robert A. Mello be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Superior Judge Helen M. Toor be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

The ballot which you will receive will contain these questions in printed form on one single ballot. The term of these Superior Judges are for six years, from and including the first day of April, 2016, and until their successors are elected and qualified.

To facilitate the procedure for this morning, the Chair will rule, unless there is objection, that debate on these four Judges will be received separately. At the end of the debates for the four Judges, any general debate on the entire question shall be in order.

Committee Reports

First, we will receive the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention. The Chair recognized the Senator from Caledonia District, Senator Joseph C. Benning, who delivered a general report for the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of all the Judges.

The Chair then recognized Senator Alice W. Nitka, of Windsor District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Thomas S. Durkin.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Newbury, Chip Conquest, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge David Howard.

The Chair then recognized Senator Michal D. Sirotkin, of Chittenden District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Robert A. Mello.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Burlington, Barbara Rachelson, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Helen M. Toor.

Results of Balloting

Balloting then proceeded for the office of Superior Judges, with the following results:

For Superior Judge Thomas S. Durkin

Total votes cast	152
Necessary for a majority	77
For retention	149
Against retention	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

THOMAS S. DURKIN, of BRATTLEBORO

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2016, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge David Howard

Total votes cast	151
Necessary for a majority	76
For retention	150
Against retention	1

Whereupon the Chair declared that

DAVID HOWARD, of BENNINGTON

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2016, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Robert A. Mello

Total votes cast	150
Necessary for a majority	76
For retention	150
Against retention	0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

ROBERT A. MELLO, of HINESBURG

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2016, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Helen M. Toor

Total votes cast	152
Necessary for a majority	77
For retention	146
Against retention	6

Whereupon the Chair declared that

HELEN M. TOOR, of CHARLOTTE

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Superior Judge for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2016, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

Dissolution

The purpose for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, MAY 6, 2016

10:00 A.M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives pursuant to a Joint Resolution which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

J.R.S. 55. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the 2016 adjournment message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Friday, May 6, 2016, at ten o'clock in the evening to receive the adjournment message of the Governor.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Philip B. Scott, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

John H. Bloomer, Jr., Secretary of the Senate, Clerk.

Committee Appointed

The Chair appointed the following six Representatives to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor, and escort him into the Chamber to hear the 2016 adjournment message of the Governor:

Representative Christopher Pearson, of Burlington
Representative Susan Hatch Davis, of Washington
Representative Donald H. Turner, Jr., of Milton
Representative Patti Komline, of Dorset

Representative Sarah Louise Copeland-Hanzas, of Bradford
Representative Tony Klein, of East Montpelier

The Committee performed the duty assigned to it and appeared within the Joint Assembly accompanied by His Excellency, Governor Peter E. Shumlin, who delivered the following message.

Governor's Adjournment Message

“Thank you. At a time in America where government is under attack, where some are arguing that we should simply leave people to fend for themselves, we are showing that our democracy is alive, well, and working for Vermonters. Because of your tri-partisan work since January we’ve passed legislation together that is worthy of the trust voters have placed in us. Consider this:

- “Vermont will become the fifth state in America to ensure its citizens aren’t faced with a choice of going to work sick or potentially losing their job.
- “We’ll be the fourth state to enhance our democracy by automatically registering voters when they apply for a driver’s license.
- “We’ll be the seventh state to ban the box statewide, ensuring that past mistakes will not sentence Vermonters to a lifetime of struggling to get an interview and find a good job.
- “We have acted to eliminate outdated traffic fines, which have become a permanent economic disability for tens of thousands of lower income Vermonters.
- “We repealed the caps in Act 46 that had become the enemy of a very good bill that is working better than most had expected.
- “You funded my Step Up program, allowing us to help Vermonters stuck in low-wage jobs get back to school with the classes and mentoring they deserve to achieve higher wages and a brighter future.
- “You helped fund a new addiction treatment hub in St. Albans, which will serve 400 Vermonters.
- “We expanded resources for those on the front lines of Vermont’s opiate crisis and increased penalties for anyone who threatens the safety of our hard working DCF employees who are fighting for Vermont’s most vulnerable children.
- “We are expanding the successful naloxone program so that fewer addicts lose their lives before our eyes.

- “We are putting an end to passing out FDA-approved painkillers like candy. Thanks to your work, fewer Vermonters will be sent home with enough painkillers to invite a lifetime of addiction.
- “We passed an energy bill that continues to get us off coal and oil as we aggressively build out renewables with the support and consideration of local communities.
- “And we passed a balanced budget that for the first time in nearly a decade does not rely on any one-time funds for ongoing state expenses and maintains my pledge to not raise income, sales, or rooms and meals tax rates.

“All of this builds on the progress we have made together in the last five and a half years. By any measure, those accomplishments have lifted up Vermont.

- “Coming out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, we invested in job creation and made the single largest investment in transportation infrastructure in Vermont’s history. In five and a half years, we have cut in half the number of crumbling roads and bridges. We enjoy one of the lowest unemployment rates in America. We’ve added nearly 17,000 jobs. And for the first time since we’ve been keeping records, per capita personal income has grown each of the last four years at or above the national average.
- “We created the Green Mountain Care Board to help control health care costs, embraced Obamacare, and extended health insurance to over 19,000 Vermonters who faced horrid choices between getting sick, buying their medicine, or going bankrupt. That’s resulted in Vermont being tied for the lowest uninsured rate in America and hospital budgets that are growing at the lowest rates in 40 years.
- “We invested in renewable energy, expanded Vermont’s net metering program, set a comprehensive renewable energy goal, enacted a first-in-the-nation law that transforms our utilities into energy efficiency companies, and advanced the most comprehensive clean water legislation in Vermont’s history. As a result, one in every 20 jobs in our state is in the clean energy industry. We have ten times the amount of solar and 20 times as much wind as we did in 2010. And Vermonters’ have more money in their pockets because electric bills have gone down for three of the last four years at the same time as our neighbors have watched their rates skyrocket.

- “We launched the War on Recidivism, expanded our expungement laws, decriminalized small amounts of marijuana, got naloxone to anyone who would take it, vastly increased addiction treatment services, and sent Vermonters into drug treatment rather than jail. Today, we’ve expanded those in treatment by 65 percent and have the lowest prison population since the early 2000s, saving Vermonters tens of millions of dollars. Most importantly, we have reduced the stigma surrounding opiate addiction, treating it as a disease instead of a crime.
- “We’re the first state in America to guarantee universal Pre-k for all three and four year olds. We’ve made college more affordable by expanding early college and dual enrollment. Free school meals are now available to all who need them. We established personalized learning plans for all Vermont kids, and we passed Act 46. As a result, we’ve seen a 57 percent increase in Pre-K enrollment, a 150 percent increase in the number of high school kids getting college credit for free, and our schools are making local decisions to streamline our education enterprise and improve educational outcomes for kids. Those actions should reduce the burden of ever-increasing property taxes in the future.
- “We enacted a law that gives terminally ill patients the dignity to make end-of-life choices, raised the minimum wage, and we’re leading the nation in giving consumers the right to know what’s in their food with GMO labeling. Today, as other governors in America are signing bills that discriminate against the LGBT community, Vermont’s at the forefront of strengthening their rights.
- “And we’ve enacted six balanced budgets over six years that never raised income, sales, or rooms and meals tax rates because they’re already high enough. Today, despite the revisionist history we hear of budgets growing faster than our economy, the average budget since 2011 has grown at just over three percent, roughly the same growth rate as the economy.

“This is not the era for ticker tape parades for public servants and endless thank you tributes from your constituents. But you should be proud of the work we’ve accomplished together; it will have a lasting impact for generations of Vermonters to come.

“What also makes me extremely proud of our work together is the way we’ve gone about it. We’ve done a lot, and we’ve done it together, as a family. I am acutely aware of this tonight as myself, and many of you, are moving on from our current roles in public service. Like all families, we’ve had our spats.

But we've always come together to do what is best for Vermont. I will be forever grateful to all of you and to Vermonters for giving me the privilege of serving as governor of the greatest state in the nation. Thank you for your service. And thank you for your great work.”

Dissolution

The Governor, having completed the delivery of his message, was escorted from the Hall by the following committee of five Senators appointed by the Chair:

Senator John F. Campbell, of Windsor District
Senator Richard W. Sears, Jr., of Bennington District
Senator Jeanette K. White, of Windsor District
Senator Richard T. Mazza, of Grand Isle District
Senator Kevin J. Mullin, of Rutland District

The purpose for which the Joint Assembly was convened having been accomplished, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

JOHN H. BLOOMER, JR.
Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the Joint Assembly