

**Journal
of the
JOINT
ASSEMBLY
Biennial Session
2023**

JOURNAL OF THE JOINT ASSEMBLY
of the
STATE OF VERMONT
BIENNIAL SESSION, 2023

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, JANUARY 5, 2023

10:00 A.M.

The Senate and the 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. 2. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to receive the report of the committee appointed to canvass votes for state officers.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 5, 2023, at ten o'clock in the forenoon to receive the report of the Joint Canvassing Committee appointed to canvass votes for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts and Attorney General, and if it shall be declared by said Committee that there had been no election by the voters of any of said state officers, then to proceed forthwith to elect such officers as have not been elected by the voters.

Presiding Officer

Honorable Molly R. Gray, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

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

Report of the Joint Canvassing Committee

Senator Hardy, Co-Chair, then presented the report of the Joint Canvassing Committee, which was as follows:

The Joint Canvassing Committee appointed to canvass the votes for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts, and Attorney General respectfully reports:

That having been duly sworn, it has attended to the duties of its trust and finds the number of votes to have been:

For GOVERNOR.....	284,801
Necessary to have a major part of the votes.....	142,401
Peter Duval, Independent.....	4,723
Kevin Hoyt, Independent.....	6,022
Bernard Peters, Independent.....	2,315
Philip B. Scott, Republican.....	202,147
Brenda Siegel, Democratic/Progressive.....	68,248
Scattering (write-in votes).....	1,346

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the Committee hereby declares that

PHILIP B. SCOTT

received a major part of the votes, and therefore was elected Governor of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

For LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.....	278,723
Necessary to have a major part of the votes.....	139,362
Joseph C. Benning, Republican.....	118,724
Ian G. Diamondstone, GreenMountain.....	8,159
David E. Zuckerman, Progressive/Democratic.....	150,102
Scattering (write-in votes).....	1,738

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the Committee hereby declares that

DAVID E. ZUCKERMAN

received a major part of the votes, and therefore was elected Lieutenant Governor of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

For STATE TREASURER.....	278,358
Necessary to have a major part of the votes.....	139,180
H. Brooke Paige, Republican.....	95,440
Michael S. Pieciak, Democrat.....	182,571
Scattering (write-in votes).....	347

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the Committee hereby declares that

MICHAEL S. PIECIAK

received a major part of the votes, and therefore was elected Treasurer of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

For SECRETARY OF STATE..... 275,379
 Plurality, not a major part of the vote, is required
 Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Democratic..... 179,087
 H. Brooke Paige, Republican.....95,666
 Scattering (write-in votes)..... 626

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the Committee hereby declares that

SARAH L. COPELAND HANZAS

received the greatest number of the votes, and therefore was elected Secretary of State of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

For AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS.....273,627
 Plurality, not a major part of the vote, is required
 Douglas R. Hoffer, Democratic/Progressive..... 178,714
 Richard “Rick” Morton, Republican..... 94,613
 Scattering (write-in votes)..... 300

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Vermont, the Committee hereby declares that

DOUGLAS R. HOFFER

received the greatest number of the votes, and therefore was elected Auditor of Accounts of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

For ATTORNEY GENERAL..... 275,226
 Plurality, not a major part of the vote, is required
 Charity R. Clark, Democratic..... 179,098
 Michael Tagliavia, Republican..... 95,661
 Scattering (write-in votes)..... 467

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. §151, the Committee hereby declares that

CHARITY R. CLARK

received the greatest number of the votes, and therefore was elected Attorney General of the State of Vermont for the two years next ensuing.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

RUTH ELLEN HARDY
 Co-Chair of the Joint Canvassing
 Committee on the part of the Senate

MICHAEL MCCARTHY
 Co-Chair of the Joint Canvassing
 Committee on the part of the House

Report of the Joint Canvassing Committee Adopted

Upon motion of Representative McCarthy, Co-Chair, the report of the Joint Canvassing Committee was adopted.

Dissolution

Thereupon, the President declared that the Joint Assembly was dissolved.

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

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, JANUARY 5, 2023**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. 3. Joint resolution to provide for a Joint Assembly to hear the inaugural message of the Governor.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, January 5, 2023, at two o'clock in the afternoon to receive the inaugural message of the Governor.

Presiding Officer

Honorable David E. Zuckerman, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

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

Recognition

The Chair recognized visiting foreign dignitaries and former Governors and their spouses:

Quebec Delegate to New England, Michael Pizziferri
Governor Howard B. Dean
Governor and Mrs. James H. Douglas
Governor Peter E. Shumlin and Katie Hunt

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court was escorted within the presence of the Joint Assembly by the Sergeant at Arms, Janet Miller.

Committee Appointed

Senator Baruth of Chittenden-Central District moved that a Committee of three Senators and three Representatives be appointed by the Chair to wait upon His Excellency, the Governor-elect, and escort him into the Chamber to receive the Oath of Office and to present his inaugural address.

Which was agreed to.

The Chair appointed as members of such Committee:

Senator Philip E. Baruth, of Chittenden-Central District
Senator Richard T. Mazza, of Grande Isle District
Senator Randolph D. Brock, of Franklin District
Representative Emily Long, of Newfane
Representative Patricia McCoy, of Poultney
Representative Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, of Burlington

Governor-Elect Scott Presented

The Committee performed the duty assigned to it and appeared within the Chamber, accompanied by His Excellency, Governor-elect Philip B. Scott.

Songs

Francois Clemmons sang - "Our National Anthem".

The Middlebury High School Camerata Singers sang - "America the Beautiful".

Invocation

The Reverend Father Julian Asucan, Pastor of St. Augustine Catholic Church, Montpelier, Vermont gave the official invocation.

Oath Administered to Governor

The oath of office was then duly administered by the Honorable Paul L. Reiber, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Vermont, to His Excellency, Governor Philip B. Scott.

Oath Administered to Officers

The oath of office was then duly administered by His Excellency, Philip B. Scott, Governor of the State of Vermont, *separately*, and in the order shown below, to the following officers:

Michael S. Picciak, Treasurer
Sarah L. Copeland Hanzas, Secretary of State
Douglas R. Hoffer, Auditor of Accounts
Charity R. Clark, Attorney General

Second Invocation

The Rabbi David Edelson, Doctor of Divinity at Temple Sinai in South Burlington, Vermont, gave a second invocation.

Song

The Middlebury High School Camerata Singers sang - "These Green Mountains".

Introduction by Chair

The President of the Senate, Lieutenant Governor David E. Zuckerman, then introduced the Governor of the State of Vermont, Philip B. Scott, for the purpose of presentation of his inaugural address.

Inaugural Address

Governor Scott then presented the following remarks.

"Madam Speaker, Mr. President, Mr. Chief Justice, Members of the General Assembly, Honored Guests, and fellow Vermonters.

"I am truly thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve as governor.

"And after a few long years, it is good to be back in the people's house, where Vermonters have come together from across the state in our darkest times and finest hours to solve problems for their communities and help their neighbors.

"So today, I am especially grateful we are here, in this building, together.

"In 1974, after 34 years in office, Senator George Aiken decided to retire from the United States Senate. He had earned a reputation as a staunch defender of our state and added Vermont's voice to the national conversation. So, his shoes seemed difficult to fill.

"But that fall, we put the responsibility on the shoulders of a 34-year-old state's attorney. And the rest, as they say, is history.

"In the time since, Patrick Leahy has worked with nine presidents, and as Pro Tem of the Senate, he was third in line to the presidency. He introduced 1,768 bills and cast 17,374 votes, the second most in Senate history.

"Not bad for a kid from Washington County.

"He carved out a legacy that will benefit generations of Vermonters to come. And that's because he always served with an eye on what's best for the state he represented.

“Senator Leahy could not be here today, but I know he and Marcelle are listening. So, please join me in showing them our thanks and gratitude for so many years of service and a job well done.

“This session, we should take a page out of Senator Leahy’s playbook by always working with an eye on what’s best for the communities we represent.

“Just look at how he used the Small State Minimum to prevent states with larger populations and larger congressional delegations from taking the lion’s share of federal funds. About half of you represent towns of less than a thousand. So, you are up against the same challenge when compared to our biggest cities.

“What better way to honor Senator Leahy’s legacy than to deliver for your small communities the way he has delivered for our small state.

“In November, my team and I set out before dawn to visit all 14 counties in a single day. I have done this six times before. It is a reminder of why I love our state and why I do this work.

“Seeing every county in a day – well over 500 miles – puts things in perspective. At every stop and the drive in between, you see, Vermont: independence and community; struggle and resilience; progress and opportunity.

“It also becomes very clear that the distance between Burlington and Rutland, Manchester and Readsboro, Middlebury and Craftsbury, St. Albans and Richford, can be measured in more than just miles.

“Consider the data. Whether it’s housing burden, income, property value, poverty levels, labor force, or access to broadband – it’s clear some places are consistently doing better than others.

“And when you are driving 500 miles in one day, you see this data reflects real communities. In an instant, the view goes from vibrant downtowns, healthy neighborhoods and bustling offices, to tarped rooves, abandoned homes and shuttered businesses.

“My friends, it is up to us to close this gap.

“Now, it’s not about turning Canaan into Burlington. And no offense to Burlington, but I’m not sure anyone in Canaan wants that. What towns like Canaan or Dover or Montgomery need from us are more tools, and the flexibility to be more vibrant and dynamic.

“The work done in this building is felt differently across counties and communities because they all have different assets and attributes – and sometimes not enough of either.

“That’s why “one-size” rarely fits all.

“This session, if we pay more attention to the individual needs of each community, we can close the gap between regions to give all our towns and villages a brighter future.

“Just imagine what it could look like:

“A future where workers and families from Newport to Newfane have equal access to education, childcare, afterschool programs, quality healthcare, good jobs, and decent affordable housing.

“Where vibrant communities include “mom and pop” stores, restaurants and taverns and broadband, which some of us in New England might call “*wicked-fast*.”

“Where our largest cities and our smallest towns have safe welcoming neighborhoods, healthy downtowns, and reliable and resilient infrastructure.

“A reality where the costs of living and tax burden don’t grow faster than paychecks, so families keep more of what they earn, move up, and enjoy the quality of life they’ve worked so hard for.

“A better, brighter future in every county, every community and every home.

“And it is within our reach.

“This isn’t just high-flying rhetoric and here’s why:

“Before the pandemic, we shored up our foundation by passing responsible budgets and focused on longstanding challenges, like workforce and housing. This work – and the course we have set – has put us in an incredible position to make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity offered by historic federal aid and record state surpluses.

“With pandemic recovery funds, we are investing in fundamentals like broadband, water, sewer and stormwater systems, climate change resiliency, housing and economic revitalization.

“In St. Johnsbury, this means cleaning up brownfields and fixing up vacant rental units for more housing, and water projects to improve health and support economic growth.

“Around Brattleboro, this means adding space for small businesses, expanding healthcare services, and converting college dorms into homes for refugee families.

“We have hundreds of projects underway in all 14 counties and they are making a difference. But it’s important we follow through to achieve the brighter future I just described.

“Look at the opportunity we have along the almost-completed Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

“What was just an idea for an unused rail bed has become a substantial, and still untapped, recreational asset. Extending over 93 miles – the longest in New England – it could bring new energy to 18 communities in five counties. From Swanton to St. J, every town along the route has an opportunity to welcome trail users to their country store, brewery, restaurant, lodging, and that new small business that, today, is just a dream.

“But here’s the thing, the rec path itself is not the answer – it’s just an entryway. An opening to explore the towns, villages, and businesses along the way. And cutting the ribbon on the last section of construction doesn’t come close to finishing the work.

“It’s our job to make sure they have all the tools they need to draw those visitors in, keep them coming back and convince some of them to stay.

“Take Wolcott for example.

“A few years ago, my team was in Lamoille County for Capital for a Day. We met at the town office and heard some locals wanted to open a coffee shop as part of their vision to take full advantage of the rail trail, if it ever got done.

“Now most of us might take the opening of a coffee shop for granted. How hard could it be?

“But we learned it’s tough to put one in Wolcott. And that’s because our well-meaning wastewater regulations make it complicated. And municipal systems, like they have in larger communities, are too expensive.

“Now, I’m not saying we should roll back regulations. But we should use the opportunity we have, right now, to help towns like Wolcott build infrastructure they could never afford on their own, and solve problems that have stifled their economic progress for far too long.

“The basics, like water, sewer and stormwater, housing, and high-speed internet – those are the sparks that ignite revitalization. But we need to follow through to give more communities what they need, so those sparks don’t burn out.

“That’s why my Budget Adjustment, which we will introduce tomorrow, includes funding to help level the playing field for underserved regions. So rather than wait until the end of the session, we can build on our efforts to strengthen Vermont right now.

“This work is important because stronger, more economically secure communities lead to healthier, safer families.

“As we know, we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to stabilize healthcare through the pandemic. And the challenges we had before, still exist. From workforce shortages to increased demand due to an aging population. And now, we are dealing with inflation.

“All of this has led to higher costs, which is a reality we must face.

“Another is, 12 years after Tropical Storm Irene, we still have not finished rebuilding our mental health system. This has led to fewer options for patients. And too often they end up in emergency departments, which are not equipped to care for them, despite the nurses and doctors doing their very best to help. It’s a reminder of what happens when we lose focus on the fundamentals and don’t finish what we start.

“We have important work to do across the entire system to better integrate mental and physical health. But I know, if we make these goals a priority and work together in good faith, we can deliver better access and higher quality at a cost Vermonters can afford.

“And to restore progress that was halted by the pandemic in a number of areas, we need a shared, community-based approach.

“We have the knowledge and have laid the foundation to do it. Vermont set the standard for treating the opioid epidemic as a public health crisis. And now, we’re building on it with lessons learned from our nation-leading pandemic response to address overdoses, suicides, homelessness, crime rates and more.

“This approach means agencies and departments are working as one team, shoulder to shoulder with local leaders, federal partners, and community

organizations. And using real-time data to focus on the people and neighborhoods that need our attention most.

“We are prioritizing prevention, giving kids a healthier start through home visiting and partnering with pediatricians, so we can identify risks earlier and prevent problems down the road. And we’re doing more with our mobile mental health response when those problems do arise.

“Together, we made the state’s largest-ever investment in substance abuse prevention, which is being deployed as we speak. It’s helping community partners give students meaningful things to do – like afterschool programs, clubs, sports and jobs – where they build healthy relationships, explore opportunities and feel valued.

“They are also critical to our treatment and recovery efforts, connecting people to services, sharing life-saving resources, and supporting families who desperately need our help.

“These are proven initiatives, which is why I’ll propose we build on them and do more to prevent the destruction these deadly drugs are causing in too many towns, too many cities, and in too many of our homes.

“And while we focus on root causes, law enforcement and accountability must also be part of this discussion. And I believe it has to include a sincere look at well-intentioned reforms that are having unintended consequences.

“Whether that’s expunging records that could lead to a violent offender getting a gun; policy that has made youth the target of drug traffickers; or divisive rhetoric that makes it difficult to retain and recruit good public servants.

“With a more unified approach to health and safety on the ground, we can divert more people off the path to drugs and crime, and solidify our position as the safest, healthiest state to live and raise a family.

“Addressing climate change is part of this work as well.

“This is an area where we share goals but may disagree on how to get there. Still, we’ve proven we can work together, devoting nearly a quarter-billion-dollars over the last two years. This is funding good work to reduce emissions, revitalize old homes, lower energy bills, improve health, and protect communities from flooding.

“Our weatherization investments are improving thousands of homes for those who could not afford to do it on their own. And it has helped low-

income families each save, on average, over 200 gallons of fuel or propane every year. But we know people are still hurting and when you consider kerosene, which many families have to use to heat their homes because they have outside, aboveground tanks, is over \$6 a gallon, these savings add up.

“We are also helping homeowners and municipalities convert to energy-saving technologies, efficient renewable systems, and storage capacity to meet the growing demand.

“When it comes to transportation emissions, we started laying the groundwork long before COVID, investing Volkswagen settlement funds to expand charging infrastructure and making EV purchases more affordable.

“We are electrifying our state fleet, converting to electric buses for public transportation, and testing electric loaders, excavators and law enforcement vehicles.

“We currently have the most public EV charging ports per capita, and we have five times as many EVs on the road as we did when I came to office.

“Some of you were here three years ago, when I stood at this podium and talked about how excited I was to see Ford announcing the new EV Mustang and working on an all-electric F-150 truck. I saw it as a gamechanger, a way to introduce EVs to more people, including those who need heavy duty vehicles for work and everyday life.

“Just over a thousand days later, I’m riding in one of those F-150 Lightnings every single day. Though as you might imagine, I’d rather be driving myself.

“But it has been valuable for me to experience this and has opened my eyes to issues we need to address to help transition to this new world. For example, when traveling around the state, I get to see different levels of chargers with some faster than others, as well as how many we have and where they are.

“On one trip, we had planned to power up in Brattleboro. But the only charger fast enough to keep us on schedule had a line of cars waiting, which would have made me late for a few meetings. As Governor, I have State Police security, so I got another ride and was on my way. But others don’t have that luxury.

“Now to be clear, I still believe EVs are the right way to go. But we have to recognize that many are hesitant because it needs to be easier, more convenient and more affordable to make the switch.

“We have made great strides, but we need to make sure we are investing in the fastest chargers available. And with all the new EVs and electric heating

and cooling systems coming online, we have some serious work to do to make sure our electric grid can accommodate it.

“So, let’s continue to build the foundation that will make it possible and practical for Vermonters to make this transition, so we can meet our climate goals.

“And we need to do the same when it comes to housing.

“We have invested almost a half a billion dollars in this area over the last two years, and we are seeing some progress. But we won’t be able to make the most of this opportunity if we don’t address the decades-old regulations that are holding us back.

“These were put in place at a time when Vermont was growing at a record pace and the spike in development raised legitimate concerns about preserving farmland and our small-town character. But now, those regulations are making it more difficult to renovate and modernize housing stock we desperately need. Worse yet, some restrict the ability to build homes that fit the needs of more diverse, or lower income families.

“They are threatening the vitality of the very places they were intended to protect.

“They empower very small groups of residents to stand in the way of projects – not because of a legitimate environmental threat, but because they simply don’t want it in their backyard.

“For example, a project to build over a hundred units in Middlebury has local support and fits the town plan. But because of the size of the town, it is not exempt from Act 250 – and a single opponent could derail it. This is a much needed, well-planned project in Addison county’s economic center and the type of targeted development we should all support.

“Then there is the homeless shelter in Hartford that is being held up with the help of local zoning laws.

“And in Castleton, a proposed senior living project has been denied approval under its current plan because local zoning requires a kitchen in every unit. But the plan includes memory care units without kitchens. This project would let older Vermonters stay in the community they love, and free up their larger homes for young families. It would also create desperately needed skilled nursing beds, and give practical training for the nursing students right next door. It’s literally a win, win, win. But now, because it won’t work without the memory care units, it’s future is in question.

“Here’s the bottom line: the failure to update a system that was meant to curtail development is contributing to the housing crisis we face today.

“I know a number of you are working to change this. For any legislators who ran on housing as a priority, I hope you join us at the table. Because in order to make the most of the hundreds of millions of dollars we’ve invested and build homes as quickly and affordably as we can, we need smart regulations that reflect the realities of today, and we need them this session.

“Pairing decent affordable housing with the best education system in the country is a critical way for us to revitalize every region.

“With these tools, we can attract more who want to live, work and raise families in the healthiest and safest state in the country with the very best opportunities for their kids, from cradle to career.

“Now, I know how that sounds. It’s a big goal.

“But part of what makes me so confident is that we could do it with the \$2 billion we spend today to educate about 80,000 kids.

“This year, I’ll once again propose continued expansion in childcare and pre-K programs. As we recover from the pandemic, let’s do more to reverse learning loss, support quality standards, and strengthen the social and emotional health of students and staff. We will build on our work with Senator Sanders by devoting federal funds to afterschool and summer programs with a focus on trades training. And we’ll help schools expand computer science, like cybersecurity and coding, and support scholarships in areas with critical workforce shortages.

“From pre-school to afterschool, tech ed and trades training to adult education, we must continue our work to build a more flexible system – one that gives every child – regardless of where they live – more choices and better outcomes.

“As we think about all our priorities, we must address the impacts of inflation.

“There’s no denying people are facing tremendous cost pressures. Just over the last year, energy costs are up 13%. Car repairs by almost 12%. And basic food costs are up across the board with chicken, milk, cheese and potatoes all increasing 13% or more. Just a dozen eggs or a box of cereal can easily cost over five dollars.

“So, I want to be clear: this isn’t the time to increase the burden on anyone. And we certainly can’t ask lower- and middle-income families to cover the costs for their wealthier neighbors.

“We must find ways to achieve our shared goals without adding taxes and fees because this only increases the cost of living.

“That’s one reason my Administration followed through to create a voluntary paid family and medical leave program.

“Now, I know some of you don’t think this goes far enough and feel Vermonters can afford another tax. But by doing this without a payroll tax on workers, we are not forcing those who don’t need it, and can’t afford it, to pay for someone who can.

“And importantly, we’re getting it done. Next year, employers will be able to give this benefit to their workers with flexibility to cover the costs and customize a plan.

“We will be able to see for ourselves how well it works, how much it costs, and who needs our help to level the playing field. We’ll learn from it, improve it, and get us all where we want to go faster, with less political conflict, and without putting it on overburdened workers.

“It’s good, smart and thoughtful governing, and it’s the type of balanced approach we need to consider across the board.

“That includes our effort to increase the number of workers and reverse our demographics.

“Long before the pandemic, this was our biggest challenge. But the last two years put the number of people leaving the workforce on steroids.

“In 2019, we were moving in the right direction, but still had about 3,300 fewer workers than we did in 2009. Unfortunately, our most recent data shows a gap of 22,500. That’s right. The gap is nearly seven times what it was in 2019.

“There is no one solution. That’s why we must look at every proposal and understand if, and how, it will increase the number of people working in Vermont or help bring new Vermonters here. It’s about staying focused and having the commitment to chip away at this problem.

“This is what we have been doing with investments in tech centers, expanding internships and apprenticeships, and building adult training programs that help people learn new skills for better paying jobs. The budget I’ll present in two weeks will continue to invest in our workforce.

“But we can’t just train our way out of this. It’s not as simple as just getting the unemployed back to work, because there are currently about three job openings for every one unemployed Vermonter.

“Everything I’ve talked about today – from making Vermont more affordable, building more housing, creating the best education system in the country, and ensuring safe, clean, healthy communities – all these things are necessary to keep and attract more people.

“And more people means more workers, more homeowners, more students in our schools, more volunteers in our communities, more customers for small businesses, and importantly, more taxpayers, so we don’t need to raise taxes.

“So, let’s continue to make this a priority this session because it’s the key to being able to invest in all the things we need and want, and to giving every region of the state more opportunity to grow and prosper.

“I’d like to wrap up by going back to the 14-county tour.

“We stopped in Island Pond and there was a guy putting up Christmas lights at the American Legion. He stopped what he was doing and came over to talk. As he came closer, it became clear he wasn’t happy, in fact I’d say he was pretty angry, and he had a lot to say.

“He went on to tell me that we – all of us here – are crushing him. That Montpelier could care less about what they did to folks like him, in places like Island Pond.

“Now, I tried not to argue with him. He’s a Vermonter. I’m the Governor. And this is America. He has every right to give me a piece of his mind, and it’s my job to listen.

“But what struck me – and stuck with me – is that the problems he described, and the pain they caused, are the same things I see. In a lot of ways, he was right. Despite our best intentions, his community has fallen behind

“The distance between regions, the gap in opportunity, has been growing for decades.

“Springfield is a good example. Only 40 or so years ago, it was a worldwide leader in manufacturing with thousands of great jobs and the highest per capita income in the state. It’s a similar story for Barre, Bellows Falls, Bennington, St. Johnsbury, Rutland and Newport.

“There are many places that – not that long ago – were economic engines for their region. But as the economy has changed and evolved, we haven’t done enough to help them adapt.

“This work takes more than a bumper sticker and good intentions. Because governing is never as simple as a slogan, or the headline tries to make it.

“The good news is, we can help turn these places around.

“But we have to remember the decisions we make in this building have real-life consequences on people who don’t show up at fundraisers. Who don’t have the time to call, write, tweet or testify in the State House – because they are too busy working, trying to make ends meet, and raise their family.

“But they still expect us to look out for them. And when we don’t, they lose faith and trust in government.

“What we learned through Irene and COVID, is that when we put politics aside, when we focus on the people who need our help most, when we work together to solve problems – we can get the results that make a difference.

“And I’m telling you, the challenges that people face in all these struggling communities are just as urgent as any pandemic or any flood.

“If you don’t think so, talk to the members of the Rural Caucus.

“Or let’s go visit the American Legion in Island Pond or the Village School in Irasburg. Or other places like Athens, Corinth, Danby, Isle La Motte, Roxbury, Sheffield, Westmore or Woodford – and many more like them, who need us to hear what they’re saying and work together to make real change.

“My fellow Vermonters: these are big challenges.

“But we find ourselves at a rare moment in history, with one-time money that those who came before us could only dream of, to tackle issues we have faced for decades.

“This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And the only thing that could stand in its way is us.

“So, let’s not squander it.

“This year, we can shorten the distance between reality and opportunity; give every community the chance to catch up; to act on a vision for their future and help them see it through; to attract new people and new jobs; put more kids in their schools; restore their downtowns; reclaim their character; and renew their identity.

“In this moment, we have a chance to transform *what is* into *what can be*; and the only way we can do it, is together.”

Benediction

The Benediction was pronounced by The Reverend Doctor Robert A. Potter, Pastor, of the Potter Chapel, Wheelock, Vermont.

Dissolution

The Governor, having completed his inaugural message, was escorted from the Hall by the Committee.

The Supreme Court was escorted from the Hall by the Sergeant at Arms.

There being no further business, the President declared the Joint Assembly to be dissolved.

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

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY, January 20, 2023

1:00 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. 5. 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 Friday, January 20, 2023, at one o'clock in the afternoon to receive the budget message of the Governor.

Presiding Officer

Honorable David E. Zuckerman, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

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

Committee Appointed

Senator Philip E. Baruth of Chittenden-Central 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 Ann E. Cummings, of Washington District
Senator Andrew J. Perchlik, of Washington District
Representative Diane M. Lanpher, of Vergennes
Representative Emilie K. Kornheiser, of Brattleboro
Representative Patrick M. Brennan, of Colchester

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

Governor's Budget Message

“Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Mr. Pro Tem, members of the General Assembly, and fellow Vermonters:

“Two weeks ago, I asked that we focus on the fundamentals in order to seize upon the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity we have before us.

“I asked you to consider the outcomes and costs of every decision we make on the families and places that need our help most. And to prioritize communities – your communities – that have been left behind for far too long.

“We’ve seen incredible revenue growth over the last two years because the economy has been supercharged by the sheer volume of federal funds. But we know that’s only temporary. So, it’s critical we act now to close the distance between regions and families.

“We can give every town the chance to catch up, act on their vision, and importantly, help them follow through to restore their vitality, reclaim their character, and renew their identity.

“Because of the extraordinary moment we are in, this is undoubtedly the most significant budget I have presented in my time as Governor.

“It’s also the biggest and most complex.

“So let’s get right to it and talk numbers.

“Across all funds, this is an \$8.4 billion budget, with \$2.3 billion in the General Fund; \$2.1 billion in the Education Fund; and \$335 million in the Transportation Fund.

“And as we do every year, we’ve fully funded our pension and retirement obligations, which this year took \$444 million.

“Then there’s the Capital Bill, which funds State infrastructure, totaling \$108 million of borrowed money over the next two years. At a time when interest rates are high and we have one-time dollars, it’s important we’re careful about what we put on the credit card.

“Another thing to keep in mind: we’re still making our way through the billion dollars in ARPA funds allocated over the last two years for broadband; water, sewer and stormwater; climate change; housing, and economic revitalization.

“But we know these windfalls won’t last forever, which is why we were thoughtful, deliberate, and very disciplined when we put together this year’s budget.

“We’ve been over, and over, and over these decisions. In fact, I made some changes as recently as yesterday – because I want to be sure we get the best return from every dollar.

“As a result, the budget I present today, invests significant resources into our shared priorities.

“It also reflects a firm commitment to using surplus funds, and the majority of growth in the base budget, for one-time expenses, one-time initiatives, and seeding new ideas. Because if we allow the base budget to grow with temporary and unsustainable revenue, we will create a cliff when these stimulus dollars go away – putting us on a path that eventually leads to deep and painful cuts.

“My friends, it is essential for all of us to recognize that every decision we make is one Vermonters will live with long after all this one-time money is gone.

“We’ve taken a lot of time to make sure this budget is *investing*, rather than just *spending* – in areas that will put us in a much stronger economic and fiscal position to generate more dollars in the future.

“Over my life, I’ve found that spending money is actually pretty easy. But investing it to get the best return is much more difficult.

“I also know there is no one big idea, no quick fix, to the challenges we face.

“It’s really about focusing on the fundamentals and following through on what we started. This approach will be far more impactful than any flashy new initiative to grab headlines.

“So I’m asking each of you – but especially those not on the appropriations committees – to take the time to understand this budget, and ask questions about what it does for the cities and towns you represent.

“If we do this right, we will lift your communities up and give them a brighter future – where families aren’t struggling to make ends meet, and schools are once again full of healthy kids; where employers are creating – and filling – good jobs; and where there are good homes people can afford in safe, healthy neighborhoods and vibrant downtowns.

“This is too important to let slip through our fingers, so we must not squander this opportunity.

“Perhaps the most valuable thing we could do with this year’s surplus is make sure we get every single penny of the federal funding available to us in the next few years.

“Now, I know it’s hard to keep up with all the federal programs, like ARPA, ESSER, GEER, CRF, IIJA, IRA and more.

“That’s because this is the biggest infusion of federal dollars since the New Deal of the 1930s.

“And we have *even more* opportunities as the result of new money on the table through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and other federal programs.

“From roads and bridges to clean water, wastewater, pollution control and broadband, we can fund infrastructure projects that are essential to revitalize communities in every region.

“But to draw down this money, we must be able to pay our state share. So, my budget commits \$150 million to take full advantage of these federal programs.

“Now, I understand committing today’s dollars to match future federal funding may not be appealing, so let me explain why investing it now, is the best strategy:

“First, for every one of these state dollars, we get at least four federal dollars back. I think our Treasurer would agree, that’s a pretty good return on investment.

“Second, if we can’t fund it in the future, we will lose out on critical infrastructure funds, or have to cut state programs to find the match.

“Third, this is an investment that will inject money and jobs into the economy for the next several years, which we’ll need to sustain state revenue and continue to invest in our priorities.

“Finally, and importantly, this is about real projects in your communities.

“It means roads – like Route 78 in Swanton, Route 2 between Cabot and Danville, Route 5 in Brattleboro, and 22A through Benson – will get rebuilt with wider shoulders for all users and improvements to address water quality. And clean water projects will move forward in Bethel, Northfield, Springfield, Craftsbury and Rutland.

“The bottom line is, there are many projects that have been on the books for decades, and we’ve been handed the opportunity to move them forward, now.

“So as you go through your process, keep in mind, I feel *very* strongly about this strategy.

“In order to strengthen communities for generations to come, we need to make this commitment this year.

“To help make sure the billions in federal money we’ve received is benefiting more regions, we’re using data to identify towns and villages that don’t have the tools to go after state funding, and have missed out because of it. Places like Halifax, Reading, West Fairlee, Sutton, Rupert, Montgomery, Alburgh, and many more – they all need our help to level the playing field.

“With \$3 million I’ve included in Budget Adjustment, we can help these towns, and many others, identify projects, apply for funds, and help see it through when funding is secured.

“And we can do more in this budget to help smaller towns, and more rural parts of the state with \$3 million to put the final touches on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail; add \$3 million in one-time funding to Working Lands; and dedicate \$10 million to strengthen agriculture by increasing processing capacity.

“To drive more growth and vitality in every region, let's stay focused on attracting more employers in more sectors.

“That’s why we’ve worked to strengthen relationships across Canada, especially in Quebec, where we established a business office in Montreal last year.

“We’ve already brought 13 new businesses here and have many more looking for locations to do the same. But we sometimes lose out because we don’t have the facilities they need. And with our permitting process, it would just take too long to build.

“I propose we learn from a model that’s worked in places like St. Albans and invest \$10 million to help local partners – like regional development corporations – build facilities in the regions that need them most.

“And we can treat RDCs and downtown organizations like the real partners they are, with an increase in their base budgets – because they are vital to our work to strengthen communities.

“Three years ago, we worked together to dedicate millions in state funds to clean up old contaminated industrial sites. Since then, we’ve funded dozens of projects to turn Brownfields into valuable assets, like housing in Hartford and Rockingham, a new small business in Weathersfield, and a new dental office in Newbury. So, my budget puts another \$12.5 million toward this work.

“This is a win for the environment, a win for the economy, and a win for our state coffers in the future.

“If you’ll work with me on all these investments – from basic infrastructure to new and revitalized buildings and stronger downtowns – we can give more places an opportunity to restore their vitality and close the gap between regions.

“This also means keeping our communities and families in mind as we address climate change.

“The fact is, 70% of Vermonters rely on fossil fuels to heat their homes. To change this, we need to help people through this transition, not punish them.

“We must also answer some tough questions, which I get asked all the time, like: Can our electrical grid handle the load needed for a cleaner and more affordable energy future? How will we make sure people stay warm, or charge

their vehicles, when – not if – the power goes out? And most importantly, how do we make sure lower and moderate-income families can afford the switch?

“Now, there *are* solutions to these questions, and I share the sense of urgency here. But we’ve got to get this right.

“Doing this strategically – with the understanding we can’t hurt the very people we’re trying to help – will ultimately get us where we all want to go faster and with much less conflict.

“So my budget dedicates funding to our Climate Office to develop a real plan, outlining exactly what work needs to be done, on what timeline, and at what cost. And we’ll bring this plan back to you, so everyone can see the details.

“Because as is the case for any project, like roads, bridges and buildings, the Legislature has an *obligation* to debate and vote on these specifics, in bill form, and then send it to the governor for action.

“Real plans get real results, so let’s join together to do what we’ve done with transportation projects, capital projects and clean water – and do this work right.

“It’s important to know, there are some meaningful steps we are taking right now while we do the more detailed planning.

“We’re currently investing nearly a quarter billion dollars of ARPA money to reduce emissions and increase resiliency.

“On top of this, we’re receiving new funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, so we can weatherize *more* homes and provide *more* incentives to purchase electric vehicles, appliances and cleaner home heating options.

“And my budget invests \$5 million, adding to the \$8.5 million Senator Leahy secured, for a Clean Heat Homes initiative, which combines the work to weatherize homes, install clean heat systems, and make electrical upgrades. This approach will be easier and reach more people than our current programs.

“We can continue to take big steps forward to reduce emissions, in a way that brings more Vermonters into this effort and makes sure all our communities are benefitting. This is the only way to achieve our goals and make a difference.

“There’s no question, in order to have strong communities, we have to stay focused on health and safety.

“On top of our work during the pandemic, more is needed to stabilize our healthcare system. The workforce shortage and our demographics means we see older, sicker patients, with fewer providers to care for them. So, while we work on the underlying fundamentals, I propose another \$10 million in one-time stabilization.

“We also need to make sure those who can leave the hospital, but still need care as they recover, have support from home health agencies. To help them do that, we should eliminate their provider tax – freeing up about \$6 million for these home health agencies, which is especially important due to recent federal cuts to Medicare rates.

“Next, let’s help more vulnerable Vermonters access critical dental services.

“Today, it’s next to impossible for many Medicaid patients to get dental care because Medicaid only pays 50% of the commercial rate. This makes it very difficult to sustain a dental office in communities with a high percentage of these patients.

“Access to dental services, for both adults and kids, reduces chronic disease and has other positive impacts on physical and mental health, self-esteem, and even on the ability to get a good job.

“So let’s help these families, by increasing the Medicaid rate to 75% of the commercial rate.

“As we continue to address substance abuse and addiction, we’re following through on last year’s historic commitment to prevention work; putting more money toward life-saving measures like Narcan; and funding work to bring treatment and residential beds back online.

“And because we see a tremendous overlap between substance abuse and mental health, I propose \$9.2 million to fund a two-year pilot that helps primary care doctors better address both; and does so in a way that supports kids and families in more areas of the state.

“As I said two weeks ago, we have a lot of ground to make up in our mental health system.

“If you’ll work with me in BAA, we can add up to a dozen youth mental health beds, which will get kids in crisis the help they need, and reduce pressure on emergency departments.

“In this year’s budget, we can also expand mental health treatment in the Northeast Kingdom, which currently has no local option except the emergency department. So, let’s support the launch of a psychiatric urgent care to help fill a gap in this region, as we work to do the same across the state.

“All of this intersects with public safety challenges.

“Violent, mentally ill adults need both treatment and a secure setting. But if they don’t meet specific federal criteria, they can’t stay in the State Psychiatric Hospital. So, my Administration has identified beds to help address the gap, without impacting the budget. And in the Capital Bill, we’re funding work to plan for a new facility to do the same for violent youth.

“We can also invest in law enforcement and victims’ services with almost \$2 million to fund the Criminal Justice Council’s work to improve training curriculum; and also to add resources to train officers on Fair and Impartial Policing and stabilize support for victims of violent crime.

“I also propose \$1.3 million to fill a perennial funding gap for E911 due to fewer landlines in Vermont. But this may be part of a larger conversation we need to have about dispatch, because we find ourselves in the same intersection we’ve been stalled at for decades. So, we need to ask ourselves two basic questions before going much further: Should we provide a statewide system that all communities use? And if so, will we ask all communities to pay their share, or do we fund it all with state funds? That’s really the crux of the issue, the sticking point has always been about who pays and who doesn’t. So only after we answer those basic questions, can we develop a plan for the future.

“To reduce violence and drug activity in a lasting way, I’ve dedicated \$10 million to help communities unify the work of local public safety and human services teams on the ground. We’re developing this model in Bennington right now, and we expect to see good results, so we need to be prepared to swiftly replicate it across the state. If we get this right, this could be a powerful way to help all communities turn a critical corner.

“Our public safety work always includes attention to root causes, which is why so many of our investments are focused on prevention and economic security. And this includes housing.

“That’s why we’ll continue with our comprehensive plan to address homelessness. We’ve already dedicated more than \$400 million for emergency housing, shelter beds, temporary rental assistance and paying down back rent.

My budget funds another \$26 million in one-time dollars this year and sustains General Assistance housing.

“But these programs are meant to be transitional, and a bridge to housing security. They weren’t the long-term solution before the pandemic and won’t be the solution after.

“We need to step up our efforts to provide permanent homes for these families, and others across the spectrum.

“One way to do it is through VHIP (the Vermont Housing Improvement Program), which – on its own – has already helped us move 300 families out of homelessness. And because it improves existing buildings, it revitalizes neighborhoods *and* has helped us increase the number of units at about one-tenth the cost of other investments. So, let’s continue this work, with \$20 million through BAA and this budget.

“Our Healthy Homes initiative is another tool for improving the quality of older stock, and the health of Vermonters. So, we’ll dedicate an additional \$10 million to make sure families – primarily in mobile home parks – have clean drinking water and functional wastewater systems.

“As we continue to focus the vast majority of these funds on affordable units for low-income families, including \$21.5 million to VHCB this year, we can’t forget those with middle-incomes are also struggling to find a home they can afford.

“Last year, we worked together on a new approach. But it’s far from enough, especially in communities where housing quality has decreased, along with a decline in employers, jobs, workers and students.

“So this year, let’s put another \$20 million toward “missing middle” to start a revolving loan fund, providing low-interest loans to help bridge the gap in order to make it possible to create more middle income rental units.

“There is no doubt we need to invest more in this area. But it’s not just about the money. Even with the hundreds of millions of dollars we’ve spent over the last several years, we still need to add thousands of homes to meet the demand.

“So the smallest housing investment in this budget – \$500,000 – may be the most important, because it will help municipalities make updates to zoning laws that *I hope* we pass this session.

“As I said two weeks ago, if we want to see these investments turn into actual homes at the speed and quantity we need, we must make regulatory reform a priority.

“Since I came to office, we have nearly doubled our state investment in childcare subsidies and helped sustain the system throughout the pandemic.

“It’s clear we agree, investing in kids to give them a strong foundation is a priority.

“But these investments haven’t solved the problem when it comes to making sure all families can find childcare.

“That’s why this budget makes an additional and ongoing commitment of \$56 million – for a total of nearly \$120 million a year – to expand access to, and affordability of, childcare.

“Using existing, sustainable revenue growth – not a new tax – this funding would achieve three important goals:

“First, we can increase equity for families in regions with fewer providers available. Currently, regardless of income, a family gets less money if there is not a specific type of childcare center in their area. These subsidies should be about the needs of the family, so let’s fix this.

“Second, we’ve made huge progress to help expand access to afterschool. And I want to thank Senator Sanders for his partnership. But some of these programs aren’t eligible for our subsidy, keeping them out of reach for many families. So, I once again propose to change this, and this budget includes the funding to do just that.

“Third, we can expand our childcare subsidy to cover families at 400% of the federal poverty level, giving *thousands* more kids the early care and learning they need.

“Now I know this proposal will get resistance from some, because they want a new tax to pay for it.

“But remember the debate around clean water funding? I made the case we could pay for it with existing resources. Instead, some suggested a whole host of taxes: on gas, soda, coffee, haircuts, auto repairs, rental cars, parking, prescription drugs, storage units, and even snowmaking equipment. And others said we should increase the rooms and meals tax, the property transfer tax, and motor vehicle fees. And the list goes on.

“But after all that, we actually found we *could* do it with existing resources.

“And we can do the same here, to help many more families with childcare; open afterschool programs to kids in need; and make sure families who need help get it – regardless of where they live.

“Importantly, it puts us well on our way to the comprehensive system we agree should be built. And it achieves all this without asking families with less to pay for families with more.

“Similar to paid family and medical leave, we can show it’s possible to fund priorities, without raising taxes.

“With this approach, we’ll do so much more for our kids, families and communities, with greater impact now, and for years to come.

“This investment in childcare – done in a way that makes Vermont more affordable, not less – plays a role in growing our workforce.

“But as I’ve said, there is no single solution to our workforce shortage. So my budget also dedicates new funding to help us educate, train, retain, and recruit more workers.

“When I came to office, the State was investing \$25 million a year to the Vermont State College system. From the start, I proposed increases, and you’ve championed many as well. Fast forward to today, and with the \$2.5 million more I’m proposing, our annual investment could grow to \$48 million.

“The State Colleges are important to our regional economies, so they need to be financially sound. And to be candid, some of the decisions they’ve made, and will need to make, will be tough to swallow. But they’re adjusting to the realities of today, and are better positioned than ever, to prepare our future workforce. So, to help them finish this transition, I’ll also dedicate an additional \$9 million in one-time bridge funding, and \$10 million for transitional infrastructure.

“And with another \$10 million, we can launch a two-year pilot that reduces CCV tuition by 50% for those programs targeted to the specific fields we know are in demand, including childcare and education, accounting, IT, engineering and more.

“To sum it all up, I’m proposing \$78.2 million across all funds to our State Colleges.

“We should also continue to support UVM’s Upskill Vermont Scholarship, and free tuition through VSAC’s 802 Opportunity program, with a total of

\$6.4 million this year to give low-income Vermonters free courses, helping them gain new skills for good jobs.

“Last year, we worked together to create a scholarship program to help make trades education more affordable, opening new career opportunities for students and adults in every county. It’s been successful, so we should make this \$1 million investment ongoing.

“At this point, most of us realize we need workers in every sector. But I continue to believe we have to focus on the trades.

“Without tradespeople, we can’t keep the lights on, or the water running. We can’t keep the roads, or the vehicles on them, safe. We can’t build the houses or businesses we need, maintain our hospitals or schools, or keep up with our climate mitigation projects. Without them, we really can’t do much.

“I remember being a kid at Spaulding. As you might imagine, I was a gear head. I loved working with my hands to create and build things. It helped me understand how things work, or why they don’t. I had a knack for it and really enjoyed it, and still do.

“But I also remember how it felt being caught between two worlds, one taking me on the traditional path to college, and the other was literally building that path instead of just envisioning it.

“I’d take my college prep classes in the morning, and then head off to the vocational center in the afternoon. At that time, the vocational program was typically for those kids who, “weren’t going to make it” on what was considered “the normal path.” There was a deafening stigma attached, and I was stuck right between those two worlds, with neither group of kids understanding why I was with them. I guess that may have been the start of me being a centrist.

“We knew then, and we know today, that looking at these students as just “shop kids” couldn’t be further from the truth.

“And if you don’t believe me, I can introduce you to lots of electricians, plumbers and contractors who’d be happy to talk to you about how rewarding, and lucrative, it is. I think most of us have recognized just how smart they are when we needed them on a weekend to bail us out of a jam, with an electrical problem, a water heater leak, or a sewer pipe failure.

“I believe everyone is born with a gift. Sometimes you just need to explore long enough to find it.

“And who knows, maybe someday in the future, another one of those “shop kids” will become governor.

“Everyone, from teachers and guidance counselors to parents and policy makers, needs to make a *real* effort to end the stigma around CTE and trades training. Because these are great careers, that present endless possibilities for smart, talented, and hardworking kids.

“We can also do more outside our education system to increase the number of workers.

“We should continue helping employers train future workers with another \$1 million through our internship program.

“Let’s also invest \$5 million in the Vermont Training Program to meet the increased demand from companies across the state, and to bring more federal CHIPS and Science Act dollars to Vermont, supporting President Biden’s goal to grow semiconductor jobs.

“And I propose we continue investing in recruitment tools that help attract more people, like our relocated worker program.

“But if we really want to keep and attract workers, we need to make it more affordable to live, work and retire here.

“That’s why I propose a \$17 million tax relief package that starts by asking you, once again, to fully eliminate the tax on military pensions.

“Veterans are some of the best trained and motivated workers available. It’s long past time to make it possible for them to start second careers *here*, and not in one of the 38 other states that don’t tax military pensions like we do.

“We can also expand our social security tax exemption for seniors, and the Earned Income Tax Credit – a highly effective anti-poverty tool – to put more money in the pockets of hard-working, low-income families.

“And we should join the 29 other states that offer their business owners a federal tax cut without reducing state revenue by a single penny.

“Here’s the bottom line: if we want to make a bigger dent in our workforce shortage, we need to keep and attract more people to our state.

“Part of this effort also includes making Vermont more welcoming and inclusive. So my budget commits over \$4 million to help refugees, immigrants and new Americans settle into our communities.

“And I want to take a minute to talk about the importance of immigration.

“From the Scottish that settled farms in the Kingdom, to the French Canadians who came south into St. Albans to work on the railroad. From the Italians in Barre who helped build the granite industry, and the Polish in West Rutland that filled the quarries and factories, to the Bosnians, Somalis and Congolese who fled war, violence and oppression in search of a new life in Burlington and Winooski – a city whose name reminds us of our Indigenous population.

“We are a state, and a nation, of immigrants.

“President Reagan said, “Other countries may seek to compete with us; but in one vital area, as a beacon of freedom and opportunity that draws the people of the world, no country on earth comes close. This, I believe, is one of the most important sources of American greatness.”

“Today, that source of greatness is broken, with real challenges on both sides of the argument. And that’s part of the problem – it’s an argument. It’s not a conversation. It’s just two sides talking over one another, with nobody listening, and no compromise in sight, and both sides setting themselves up for the next election.

“So once more, Vermont can lead the way.

“With compassion and courage, we can do our part to welcome those bold or desperate enough to leave their lives, and all they’ve ever known, behind to travel thousands of miles just to live the American dream.

“There’s nothing more American than this, and the fact is, we need them. We need their diversity and culture, their ingenuity and labor, their hope and optimism.

“So, let’s do our part here in this “brave little state” to fulfill our nation’s promise and once more, light the way to that shining city on a hill.

“This budget is thoughtful, deliberate, disciplined, and carefully built to make the most of the historic resources available to us.

“It’s focused on investing, not just spending, to get the best results and grow revenue, so we can move families and communities ahead.

“It prioritizes the regions and people who need our help most, to deliver an increasingly healthy and vibrant economy in each of your communities.

“It funds work to lift Vermonters up with the dignity of a good job and stable housing and letting them keep more of what they earn.

“The choices we make this session, right or wrong, will have tremendous consequences on our state long into the future. So, let’s make the right decisions, not just the easy ones.

“Because there are moments in history – rare opportunities – to have a truly historic impact for those we serve.

“My fellow Vermonters, that moment is here. That moment is real. And it’s our duty to meet it, together.”

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 16, 2023

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. 10. Joint resolution providing for the election of a Sergeant at Arms, and three Trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at ten o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon to elect a Sergeant at Arms, and three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College. In case election of all such officers 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 officers are elected.

Presiding Officer

Honorable David E. Zuckerman, President of the Senate, in the Chair.

Clerk

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

Statement by Presiding Officer

Pursuant to our Constitution and statutes we are assembled here today in Joint Assembly for the election of a Sergeant at Arms and three Trustees for the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College.

With respect to the election of all of these officers, if a contest exists, then the voting must be done by written ballot. This mandate is set forth in 2 V.S.A. §12 and in Joint Rule 10(a). The chair now calls to the attention of the Joint Assembly the test 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 no objection, the chair may put the question to the joint assembly by voice vote.

(b) If two or more offices are filled, each office will be voted upon and decided separately. If two or more vacancies for the same office are to be filled, nominations for all vacancies will be received before voting begins for the first vacancy, but each vacancy will be voted upon and decided separately. The joint assembly may limit the number and length of nominating and seconding speeches for each candidate.

(c) Election to any office is by majority of the votes cast, exclusive of spoiled and blank ballots. After two votes have been taken for any vacancy without an election, all nominees except the two having the highest number of votes on the second ballot shall be withdrawn, and voting shall then continue until a candidate is elected. In no event shall the involuntary removal of nominees result in fewer than two nominees remaining in the contest.

(d) The person who first nominated a candidate may withdraw that candidate's name at any time; a withdrawal may be complete or may be limited to one or more vacancies. A candidate for any office having more than one vacancy who is defeated for the first vacancy shall automatically be a candidate for successive vacancies, unless the nomination is voluntarily withdrawn.

Number and Length of Nominating and Second Speeches

For purposes of this Joint Assembly all nominations for these offices will be received by the Chair prior to voting, presented in alphabetical order.

And there will be one nominating speech of not more than three minutes

and not more than two seconding speeches of not more than one minute for each nominee.

Statement of Presiding Officer

We have two sets of elections today:

- a. First, To elect a Sergeant at Arms.
- b. Second, To elect three UVM Trustees.

For the elections that are not contested the provisions of Joint Rule 10(a) will apply.

This means that election may be by voice vote if there is no objection.

For the election of the three trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, as there is a contest, the election shall be by ballot.

Tellers Appointed

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

Senator Ruth E. Hardy, of Addison District, as Chief Teller
Senator Andrew J. Perchlik, of Washington District
Senator Tanya C. Vyhovsky, of Chittenden-Central District
Representative Kate Logan, of Burlington
Representative Thomas Burditt, of West Rutland
Representative Esme Cole, of Hartford
Representative Erin Brady, of Williston

Election of Sergeant at Arms

The Joint Assembly then proceeded to the election of a Sergeant at Arms.

For the office of Sergeant at Arms, Representative Alice M. Emmons of Springfield nominated *Janet C. Miller*, of Montpelier.

The nomination was seconded by Senator Russell H. Ingalls of Essex District.

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

Whereupon, no other nominations being made, the vote was taken *viva voce* pursuant to Joint Rule 10(a), and the Chair declared that

JANET C. MILLER, of Montpelier

was unanimously elected to the office of Sergeant at Arms for a term of two years, from and including the first day of March, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

Election of the UVM Trustees

The Joint Assembly then proceeded to the election of three Trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, each for a term of six years, from and including the first day of March, 2023.

Statement by the Presiding Officer

The Chair reminds the Joint Assembly that nominations for the office of three University of Vermont and State Agricultural College Trustees would be received in alphabetical order, with one nominating speech of not more than three minutes and not more than two seconding speeches of not more than one minute for each nominee.

For the election of these trustees, we will be operating under the temporary rules set forth in J.R.S. 11.

The adoption of J.R.S. 11 permits the Joint Assembly to elect the three Trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agriculture College by a plurality vote.

Nominations for UVM Trustees

Senator Richard J. McCormack of Windsor nominated *Representative John L. Bartholomew* of Hartland. The nomination was seconded by Representative Charles “Butch” Shaw of Pittsford and by Representative Michael McCarthy of St. Albans City.

Representative Laura Sibia of Dover then nominated *Representative Monique Priestly* of Bradford. The nomination was seconded by Representative Sara Coffey of Guilford.

Representative Rebecca Holcombe of Norwich then nominated *Shapleigh Smith, Jr.* of Morristown. The nomination was seconded by Representative Martin LaLonde of South Burlington.

Representative Tiffany Bluemle of Burlington then nominated *Representative Tristan Toleno* of Brattleboro. The nomination was seconded by Representative James Harrison of Chittenden.

Summary of Names Placed in Nomination

The four names placed in nomination and on the ballot for the office of Trustee of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College are as follows:

John L. Bartholomew, of Hartland
Monique Priestly, of Bradford
Shapleigh Smith, Jr., of Morristown
Tristan Toleno, of Brattleboro

Review of Voting Procedure

Prior to the taking of any ballots, the Chair reviewed the “plurality” procedure for choosing candidates, by quoting verbatim from the text of J.R.S. 11, as follows:

(1) All candidates for the office of trustee shall be voted upon and decided on the same ballot; members may vote for any number of candidates up to and including the maximum number of vacancies to be filled, which in this case shall be three.

(2) The three candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected to fill the three vacancies.

(3) In the event that the first balloting for the trustee vacancies results in a tie vote for one or more of the three vacant positions, then voting shall continue on successive ballots until the vacancies have been filled, again by election declared of those candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

Results of Balloting for University of Vermont and State Agricultural College Trustees

The ballots were taken and counted, and the result was as follows:

Total ballots.....	178
Necessary for election.....	three greatest numbers of votes
Bartholomew.....	88
Priestly.....	111*
Smith.....	127*
Toleno.....	136*
Write in votes.....	2

Whereupon the Chair declared that

TRISTAN TOLENO, of Brattleboro

having received the greatest number of total votes cast is hereby declared duly elected as a Trustee of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College for a term of six years, commencing March 1, 2023.

The Chair further declared that

SHAPLEIGH SMITH, JR, of Morristown

having received the next greatest number of votes cast is hereby duly elected as a Trustee of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College for a term of six years, commencing March 1, 2023.

The Chair further declared that

MONIQUE PRIESTLY, of Bradford

having received the third greatest number of the total votes cast is hereby duly elected a Trustee of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College for a term of six years, commencing March 1, 2023.

Dissolution

The purposes 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 28, 2023

1:00 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. 16. Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of a Chief Justice and four Associate Justices of the Supreme Court and eight Superior Court Judges.

Whereas, declarations have been submitted by the following Justices and Judges that they be retained for another six-year term: the Honorable Chief Justice Paul Reiber, Justice Harold Eaton, Jr., Justice Karen Carroll, Justice William Cohen, Justice Nancy Waples, Judge Alison Arms, Judge Thomas Carlson, Judge Cortland Corsones, Judge Justin Jiron, Judge Michael Kainen, Judge Mary Morrissey, Judge A. Gregory Rainville and Judge Kirstin Schoonover, and

Whereas, the procedures of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention require numerous public hearings and the review of information provided by each Justice and Judge and the comments of members of the Vermont bar and the public, and

Whereas, the Committee anticipates that it will be unable to fulfill its responsibilities under 4 V.S.A. § 608(b) to evaluate the judicial performance of the Justices and Judges seeking to be retained in office by March 9, 2023, the date specified in 4 V.S.A. § 608(e), and for a vote in Joint Assembly to be held on March 16, 2023, the date specified in 2 V.S.A § 10(b), and

Whereas, 4 V.S.A. § 608(g) permits the General Assembly to defer action on the retention of Justices and Judges to a subsequent Joint Assembly when the Committee is not able to make a timely recommendation, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at one o'clock in the afternoon to vote on the retention of a Chief Justice and four Associate Justices of the Supreme Court and eight Superior Court Judges. In case the vote to retain said Justices and 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 David E. Zuckerman, 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 the statutes we are assembled here today in Joint Assembly to cast our votes on the retention of a Chief Justice and Four Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, and eight Superior Judges.

This year we are again operating under the Judicial Selection Act passed in 1966, and as amended in subsequent years. The procedure for retention of incumbent Justices of the Supreme Court and incumbent Superior Judges will be in accordance with this Act. The Act as amended sets the date for holding the joint assemblies for the retention of judges to be the eleventh Thursday of the session, in order to give the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention adequate time to consider the judges who are up for review. This year pursuant to statute which permits this, 4 V.S.A. § 608, we have delayed this Joint Assembly from the eleventh Thursday of the session (which was March 16) to the present date of March 28th.

The act requires that the vote will be by *written* ballot on the specific question:

“Shall the following Judges be retained in office?”

There will be two separate written ballots: one containing the names of all of the Justices for the Supreme Court and one containing the names of all of the Judges of the Superior Court.

Retention of Supreme Court Justices

We shall first proceed to the vote on the retention of the five Justices of the Supreme Court. Nominations are not received from the floor, rather, each Justice who seeks retention files a declaration of intention to state for retention with the Secretary of State. By this means, the name of each Justice is automatically placed in nomination and considered for retention pursuant to the terms of the Judicial Selection Act.

In addition, the Judicial Selection Act provides that when a Justice does so declare for retention, the question to be decided shall automatically be:

“Shall the following Justices of the Supreme Court be retained in office?”

The statute provides that the vote on this question shall be by *one* written ballot containing the names of all of the Justices.

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

Tellers Appointed

Senator Andrew J. Perchlik, of Washington District, as Chief Teller
 Senator Tanya C. Vyhovsky, of Chittenden-Central District
 Senator Robert W. Norris, of Franklin District
 Representative Dara Torre, of Moretown
 Representative Paul Clifford, of Rutland City
 Representative Ashley Bartely, of Fairfax
 Representative Rey Garofano, of Essex

With respect to the retention of the incumbent Justices of the Supreme Court, we have declarations of intention to stand for retention to the office of Justice of the Supreme Court as follows:

Paul L. Reiber, Chief Justice
 Harold E. Eaton, Jr., Associate Justice
 Karen R. Carroll, Associate Justice
 William D. Cohen, Associate Justice
 Nancy J. Waples, Associate Justice

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

"Shall Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Associate Justice Harold E. Eaton be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Associate Justice Karen R. Carroll be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Associate Justice William D. Cohen be retained in office?"

Yes _____ No _____.

"Shall Associate Justice Nancy J. Waples 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 Justices to the Supreme Court is six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until their successors are elected and qualified.

To facilitate the procedure for this afternoon, the Chair will rule, unless there is objection, that debate on these five Justices shall be conducted separately. At the conclusion of the debate for all of the Justices, 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 Windsor District, Senator Richard J. McCormack, 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 the Member from Stannard, Representative Joseph J. Troiano, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Stannard, Representative Joseph J. Troiano, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Associate Justice Harold E. Eaton, Jr.

The Chair then recognized Senator Martine Gulick, of Chittenden-Central District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Associate Justice Karen R. Carroll.

The Chair then recognized Senator Brian P. Collamore, of Rutland District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Associate Justice William D. Cohen.

The Chair then recognized Senator Ruth E. Hardy, of Addison District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Associate Justice Nancy J. Waples.

Results of Balloting

Balloting then proceeded for the office of Justices of the Supreme Court, with the following results:

For Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber

Total votes cast.....	164
Necessary for a majority.....	83
For retention.....	161
Against retention.....	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

PAUL L. REIBER

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Associate Justice Harold E. Eaton, Jr.

Total votes cast.....	163
Necessary for a majority.....	82
For retention.....	160
Against retention.....	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

HAROLD E. EATON, JR.

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Supreme Court Justice for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Associate Justice, Karen R. Carroll

Total votes cast.....	164
Necessary for a majority.....	83
For retention.....	162
Against retention.....	2

Whereupon the Chair declared that

KAREN R. CARROLL

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Supreme Court Justice for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

For Associate Justice William D. Cohen

Total votes cast.....	161
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	157
Against retention.....	4

Whereupon the Chair declared that

WILLIAM D. COHEN

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Supreme Court Justice for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Associate Justice Nancy J. Waples

Total votes cast.....	164
Necessary for a majority.....	83
For retention.....	160
Against retention.....	4

Whereupon the Chair declared that

NANCY J. WAPLES

having received a majority of the total votes cast was duly elected to the office of Supreme Court Justice for a term of six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

Retention of Superior Court Judges

We shall now proceed to the vote of the Judges of the Superior Court. Again, nominations are not received from the floor; rather, each judge who seeks retention files a declaration of intention to stand for retention with the Secretary of State. By this means, the name of each judge is automatically placed in nomination and considered for retention pursuant to the terms of the Judicial Selection Act.

With respect to the retention of the incumbent Superior Court Judges, eight declarations of intention to stand for retention to the office of the Superior Court Judge were received, subsequently, one Superior Judge withdrew their retention declaration, as such, we have seven Superior Court Judges seeking retention and are as follows:

Alison S. Arms
Thomas Carlson
Cortland T. Corsones
Justin Jiron
Michael Kainen
Mary Morrissey
Kirstin Schoonover

The question to be decided in each of these cases shall be as follows:

“Shall Superior Judge Alison S. Arms be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Thomas Carlson be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Cortland T. Corsones be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Justin Jiron be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Michael R. Kainen be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Mary Morrissey be retained in office?”

Yes _____ No _____

“Shall Superior Judge Kirstin Schoonover 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 for each Superior Court Judge is six years, from and including the first day of April, 2023, and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

Committee Reports

The Chair then recognized the Member from Sheldon, Representative Thomas Oliver, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Alison S. Arms.

The Chair then recognized the Member from Williston, Representative Angela Arsenault, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Thomas Carlson

The Chair then recognized Senator Brian P. Collamore, of Rutland District, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Cortland T. Corsones.

The Chair then recognized Member from Rutland City, Representative William Notte, of Rutland City, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Justin Jiron.

The Chair then recognized Senator Richard J. McCormack, of Windsor District who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Michael R. Kainen.

The Chair then recognized Senator Martine Gulick, of Chittenden-Central District who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Mary Morrissey.

The Chair then recognized Member from Rutland City, Representative William Notte, who delivered the report of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention with respect to the candidacy of Superior Judge Kirstin Schoonover.

Results of Balloting

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

For Superior Judge Alison S. Arms

Total votes cast.....	161
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	161
Against retention.....	0

Whereupon the Chair declared that

ALISON S. ARMS

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, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Thomas Carlson.

Total votes cast.....	160
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	157
Against retention.....	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

THOMAS CARLSON

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, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Cortland T. Corsones

Total votes cast.....	160
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	156
Against retention.....	4

Whereupon the Chair declared that

CORTLAND T. CORSONES

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, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Justin Jiron

Total votes cast.....	159
Necessary for a majority.....	80
For retention.....	150
Against retention.....	9

Whereupon the Chair declared that

JUSTIN JIRON

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, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Michael R. Kainen

Total votes cast.....	159
Necessary for a majority.....	80
For retention.....	156
Against retention.....	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

MICHAEL R. KAINEN

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, 2023, and until his successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Mary Morrissey

Total votes cast.....	161
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	158
Against retention.....	3

Whereupon the Chair declared that

MARY MORRISSEY

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, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

For Superior Judge Kirstin Schoonover

Total votes cast.....	161
Necessary for a majority.....	81
For retention.....	159
Against retention.....	2

Whereupon the Chair declared that

KIRSTIN SCHOONOVER

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, 2023, and until her successor is elected and has qualified.

Dissolution

There being no further business, the Chair then declared the Joint Assembly dissolved.

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