

Journal of the House

Friday, May 16, 2025

At nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon, the Speaker called the House to order.

Devotional Exercises

Devotional exercises were conducted by Howard Coffin, author and historian, Montpelier.

Pages Honored

In appreciation of their many services to the members of the General Assembly, the Speaker recognized the following named Pages who completed their service today and presented them with commemorative pins:

Austen N. Boulanger of South Burlington
Eleanor Brady of Williston
Atticus Lawler of East Montpelier
Braeden Schuren Burns of Montpelier
Naomi Isla Segal of Woodstock
Oscar Vulte of Brattleboro
Alex Young-Springer of Burlington

Senate Proposal of Amendment Concurred in

H. 481

The Senate proposed to the House to amend House bill, entitled

An act relating to stormwater management

The Senate proposed to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 1264 is amended to read:

§ 1264. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

* * *

(c) Prohibitions.

* * *

(7) In accordance with the schedule established under subdivision (g)(3) of this section, a person shall not discharge stormwater from impervious surface of three or more acres in size without first obtaining an individual permit or coverage under a general permit issued under this section if the discharge was never previously permitted or was permitted under an individual permit or general permit that did not incorporate the requirements of the 2002 Stormwater Management Manual or any subsequently adopted Stormwater Management Manual. The Secretary shall provide notice to all owners of property subject to the permit required under this subdivision.

(d) Exemptions.

* * *

(2) No permit is required under subdivision (c)(1), (5), or (7) of this section and for which a municipality has assumed full legal responsibility as part of a permit issued to the municipality by the Secretary. As used in this subdivision, "full legal responsibility" means legal control of the stormwater system, including a legal right to access the stormwater system, a legal duty to properly maintain the stormwater system, and a legal duty to repair and replace the stormwater system when it no longer adequately protects waters of the State. Notwithstanding the provisions of 24 V.S.A. § 3254 to the contrary, when a municipality assumes or has assumed full legal responsibility for a stormwater system, the municipality may assess municipal special assessment fees on users of the stormwater system provided that a majority of the property owners subject to the special assessment fee consented and the fee assessed is a fair apportionment to the user of the cost of the improvement in accordance with the benefits the user received.

* * *

(g) General permits.

* * *

(3) Within 120 days after the adoption by the Secretary of the rules required under subsection (f) of this section, the Secretary shall issue a general permit under this section for discharges of stormwater from impervious surface of three or more acres in size, when the stormwater discharge previously was not permitted or was permitted under an individual permit or general permit that did not incorporate the requirements of the 2002 Stormwater Management Manual or any subsequently adopted Stormwater Management Manual. Under the general permit, the Secretary shall:

(A) Establish a schedule for implementation of the general permit by geographic area of the State. The schedule shall establish the date by which an owner of impervious surface shall apply for coverage under this subdivision

(3). The schedule established by the Secretary shall require an owner of impervious surface subject to permitting under this subdivision to obtain coverage by the following dates:

(i) for impervious surface located within the Lake Champlain watershed, the Lake Memphremagog watershed, or the watershed of a stormwater-impaired water on or before October 1, ~~2023~~ 2028; and

(ii) for impervious surface located within all other watersheds of the State, ~~no~~ not later than October 1, ~~2033~~ 2038 or not later than five years after a binding stormwater-specific waste-load allocation has been established for that watershed, whichever occurs first.

(B) Establish criteria and technical standards, such as best management practices, for implementation of stormwater improvements for the retrofitting of impervious surface subject to permitting under this subdivision (3).

(C) Require that a discharge of stormwater from impervious surface subject to the requirements of this section comply with the standards of subsection (h) of this section for redevelopment of or renewal of a permit for existing impervious surface.

(D) Allow the use of stormwater impact fees, offsets, and phosphorus credit trading within the watershed of the water to which the stormwater discharges or runs off.

* * *

Sec. 2. REPEALS; SUNSET OF PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX CLEAN WATER SURCHARGE

(a) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.10 (sunset of clean water surcharge), as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 181, is repealed.

(b) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.11(a)(5) (effective date of sunset of clean water surcharge) is repealed.

Sec. 3. 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.1(b) is amended to read:

(b) Purpose and intent.

(1) The purpose of Secs. I.1–I.12 of this act is to promote the development and improvement of housing for Vermonters.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly:

(A) to extend the clean water surcharge to provide ~~an interim~~ a source of revenue for addressing water quality issues throughout the State; and

(B) to continue its work on identifying a long-term funding source or sources that are sufficient in scope and targeted in design to address these water quality issues; and

~~(C) once one or more long-term funding sources are identified and enacted, but not later than July 1, 2027, to reduce the amount of the clean water surcharge to 0.04 percent.~~

Sec. 4. 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.12 is amended to read:

Sec. I.12. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) Secs. I.1–I.12 shall take effect on July 1, 2017, ~~except that Sec. I.10 (allocating clean water surcharge revenue to Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund) shall take effect on July 1, 2027.~~

Sec. 5. 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, Sec. I.7(d) is amended to read:

(d) To compensate for this reduction of available property transfer tax revenue, it is the intent of the General Assembly through this act to provide for the transfer of \$2,500,000.00 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, as follows:

(1) Sec. D.100 of this act appropriates \$11,304,840.00 in fiscal year 2018 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Upon the effective date of this act, \$1,500,000.00 shall revert to the Fund, resulting in a fiscal year 2018 total appropriation to the Board of \$9,804,840.00. In fiscal year 2018 only, the amount of \$1,500,000.00 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund shall be transferred to the General Fund.

(2) As provided in Sec. I.9 of this act, ~~from July 1, 2017 until July 1, 2027~~, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602a, the first \$1,000,000.00 in revenue generated by the clean water surcharge of ~~0.2~~ 0.22 percent shall be transferred to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. In fiscal year 2018 only, the Commissioner shall transfer the amount of \$1,000,000.00 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund to the General Fund.

(3) ~~After July 1, 2027, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602a as amended in Sec. I.10 of this act, \$1,000,000.00 in total revenue generated by the clean water surcharge of 0.04 percent shall be transferred to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. [Repealed.]~~

(4) ~~As provided in Sec. I.11 of this act, the clean water surcharge will be repealed in its entirety on July 1, 2039. [Repealed.]~~

Sec. 6. 10 V.S.A. §§ 927 and 928 are amended to read:

§ 927. DEVELOPED LANDS IMPLEMENTATION ~~GRANT~~ PROGRAM

The Secretary shall administer a Developed Lands Implementation ~~Grant~~ Program to provide ~~grants or financing~~ financial assistance to persons who are required to obtain a permit to implement regulatory requirements that are necessary to achieve water quality standards. ~~The grant or financing program shall only be available in basins where a clean water service provider has met its annual goals or is making sufficient progress, as determined by the Secretary, towards those goals.~~ This grant program shall fund or provide financing for projects related to the permitting of impervious surface of three acres or more under subdivision 1264(g)(3) of this title and for a permit renewal under subdivision 1264(h)(2) of this title for a discharge to a stormwater-impaired water that was permitted under an individual permit or a general permit that did not incorporate the requirements of the 2002 Stormwater Management Manual or any subsequently adopted Stormwater Management Manual. Not more than 15 percent of the total grant amount awarded shall be used for administrative costs.

§ 928. MUNICIPAL STORMWATER IMPLEMENTATION ~~GRANT~~ PROGRAM

The Secretary shall administer a Municipal Stormwater Implementation Grant Program to provide ~~grants~~ financial assistance to any municipality required under section 1264 of this title to obtain or seek coverage under the municipal roads general permit, the municipal separate storm sewer systems permit, a permit for impervious surface of three acres or more, or a permit required by the Secretary to reduce the adverse impacts to water quality of a discharge or stormwater runoff. ~~The grant program shall only be available in basins where a clean water service provider has met its annual goals or is making sufficient progress, as determined by the Secretary, towards those goals.~~ Not more than 15 percent of the total grant amount awarded shall be used for administrative costs. This program also shall be available to a municipality to comply with a permit for impervious surface of three acres or more for a residential subdivision when the municipality assumes or has assumed full legal responsibility for the stormwater system of the residential subdivision under subdivision 1264(c)(7) of this title. Municipalities may receive assistance under this program for design or engineering services necessary for the formation of a municipal stormwater utility.

Sec. 7. 10 V.S.A. § 1389(e) is amended to read:

(e) Priorities. In making recommendations under subsection (d) of this section regarding the appropriate allocation of funds from the Clean Water Fund, the Board shall prioritize as follows:

(1) As a first priority, make recommendations regarding funding for the following grants and programs, which shall each be given equal priority:

(A) grants to clean water service providers to fund the reasonable costs associated with the inspection, verification, operation, and maintenance of clean water projects in a basin;

(B) the Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant under section 925 of this title;

(C) the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' agricultural water quality programs; and

(D) the Water Quality Enhancement Grants under section 926 of this title at a funding level of at least 20 percent of the annual balance of the Clean Water Fund, provided that the maximum amount recommended under this subdivision (D) in any year shall not exceed \$5,000,000.00; and

(E) funding to partners for basin planning, basin water quality council participation, education, and outreach as provided in subdivision 1253(d)(3) of this title, provided funding shall be at least \$500,000.00.

(2) As the next priority after reviewing funding requests for programs identified under subdivision (1) of this subsection:

(A) funding to programs or projects that address or repair riparian conditions that increase the risk of flooding or pose a threat to life or property;

(B) funding for education and outreach regarding the implementation of water quality requirements, including funding for education, outreach, demonstration, and access to tools for the implementation of the Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont, as adopted by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation;

(C) funding for the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Grant Program as provided in section 928 of this title, including at least \$1,000,000.00 annually for costs of complying with permitting requirements under subdivision 1264(c)(7) of this title;

(D) funding for innovative or alternative technologies or practices designed to improve water quality or reduce sources of pollution to surface waters, including funding for innovative nutrient removal technologies and community-based methane digesters that utilize manure, wastewater, and food residuals to produce energy; and

(E) funding to purchase agricultural land in order to take that land out of practice when the State water quality requirements cannot be remediated through agricultural Best Management Practices.

(3) As the next priority after reviewing funding requests under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, funding for the Developed Lands Implementation Grant Program as provided in section 927 of this title.

Sec. 7a. 10 V.S.A. § 1389a is amended to read:

§ 1389a. CLEAN WATER INVESTMENT REPORT

(a) Beginning on January 15, 2017, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Administration shall publish the Clean Water Investment Report. The Report shall summarize all investments, including their cost-effectiveness, made by the Clean Water Board and other State agencies for clean water restoration over the prior fiscal year. The Report shall include expenditures from the Clean Water Fund, the General Fund, the Transportation Fund, and any other State expenditures for clean water restoration, regardless of funding source.

(b) The Report shall include:

* * *

(7) Beginning on January 2028 and every four years thereafter, a review of the sufficiency of the Clean Water Surcharge to the Property Transfer Tax under 32 V.S.A. § 9602a, including an assessment of whether the revenue generated by the surcharge remains necessary to fulfill the State's clean water initiatives. The review shall include an assessment of whether the Clean Water Surcharge should be continued, whether the amount of the surcharge should be adjusted, and whether the surcharge should be repealed at a specified date.

* * *

Sec. 8. RECOMMENDED APPROPRIATION; PRIORITIES

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Clean Water Board shall recommend \$5,000,000.00 from the Clean Water Fund in fiscal year 2027 to the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Program in 10 V.S.A. § 928 for costs of complying with permitting requirements under 10 V.S.A.

§ 1264(c)(7), including for residential subdivisions when the municipality assumes full legal responsibility for the stormwater system.

(b) Before January 1, 2032, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall provide properties subject to the three-acre stormwater permit under 10 V.S.A. § 1264(c)(7) additional priority points when awarding financing under the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Program and under the Developed Lands Implementation Program when residential housing used as primary residences are located on the relevant properties.

Sec. 9. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PUBLIC RESOURCE GUIDE

(a) On or before January 1, 2027, the Secretary of Natural Resources shall publish a Public Resource Guide to Stormwater Management that informs persons subject to stormwater operating permits under 10 V.S.A. § 1264 with information and resources related to complying with and paying for stormwater permitting requirements. The Resource Guide shall be user friendly and designed to encourage the public to engage with the Agency of Natural Resources in finding solutions to stormwater permitting needs.

(b) The Resource Guide shall:

(1) summarize the statutory requirements for stormwater permits, with specific emphasis on the three-acre stormwater permit required under 10 V.S.A. § 1264(c)(7), including why the permits are required;

(2) recommend available, practical, cost-effective measures for how persons subject to stormwater permit requirements can address parcel-based issues, including:

(A) the lack of a homeowner's association to assume permitting responsibility;

(B) lack of available property to implement stormwater management, including whether and how a person subject to stormwater permits can implement an off-site offset project to comply with permitting requirements; and

(C) how to address or manage stormwater runoff from other stormwater systems entering stormwater systems subject to permitting;

(3) recommend resources where funding for compliance with stormwater permitting requirements may be accessed or applied for, including how to apply for financial assistance from the Agency of Natural Resources;

(4) provide a contact at the Agency of Natural Resources that can assist persons subject to stormwater permitting by answering questions, providing referrals to creative or alternative solutions for achieving permit compliance, and recommending available financial resources; and

(5) provide a model bylaw or ordinance for the formation of a municipal stormwater utility.

(c) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit a copy of the Resource Guide to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy and the House Committee on Environment. The Secretary shall also make the Resources available free of cost to the public from the Agency's website.

Sec. 10. 10 V.S.A. § 1389(e)(2)(C) is amended to read:

(C) funding for the Municipal Stormwater Implementation Program as provided in section 928 of this title, ~~including at least \$1,000,000.00 annually for costs of complying with permitting requirements under subdivision 1264(e)(7) of this title;~~

Sec. 11. 24 V.S.A. § 3616 is amended to read:

§ 3616. RENTS; RATES

(a) A municipal corporation, through its board may establish rates, rents, or charges to be paid as the board may prescribe. The board may establish annual charges separately for bond repayment, fixed operations and maintenance costs and variable operations and maintenance costs dependent on flow.

(b) The rates, rents, or charges may be based upon:

(1) the metered consumption of water on premises connected with the sewer system, however, the board may determine no user will be billed for fixed operations and maintenance costs and bond payment less than the average single-family charge;

(2) the number of equivalent units connected with or served by the sewage system based upon their estimated flows compared to the estimated flows from a single-family dwelling, however, the board may determine no user will be billed less than the minimum charge determined for the single-family dwelling charge for fixed operations and maintenance costs and bond payment;

* * *

(6) for groundwater, surface, or stormwater an equivalent residential unit based on an average or median of the area of impervious surface on residential property within the municipality; or

(7) any combination of these bases, provided the combination is equitable.

* * *

Sec. 12. STUDY COMMITTEE ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
AND CREATION OF REGIONAL STORMWATER UTILITY
DISTRICTS

(a) Creation. There is created the Study Committee on the Creation of Regional Stormwater Utility Districts to review the feasibility and benefit of creating regional stormwater utility districts to facilitate implementation and compliance with the water quality laws of the State.

(b) Membership. The Study Committee shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation or designee;

(2) a representative of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) a representative of a municipality subject to the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit, appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(4) a representative of a municipality with a population under 2,500 persons, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(5) a representative of the Green Mountain Water Environment Association, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(6) a commercial or industrial business owner subject to the three-acre stormwater permit or other stormwater requirements, appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(7) a representative of an environmental advocacy organization, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(8) a representative of a regional planning commission, appointed by the Committee on Committees; and

(9) a representative of a municipality with a designated downtown area served by water and sewer infrastructure that is not subject to a MS4 permit, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(c) Powers and duties. The Study Committee shall review the feasibility of establishing regional stormwater utility districts in the State. The Study Committee shall:

(1) review current statutory authority for the development of regional stormwater utility districts comprised of multiple municipalities, including identifying any potential disincentives or obstacles to utility formation;

(2) propose an approach the State could use for implementing a regional stormwater utility that would allow the utilities to assume liability and responsibility for compliance with water quality laws, including how a utility could assume responsibility for:

(A) securing the permitting of properties subject to the three-acre stormwater permit; and

(B) achieving the phosphorus reduction targets for the three-acre stormwater permitted properties within the utility district;

(3) review and recommend cost-effective and equitable approaches for regional level revenue raising and distribution of project funding for the purpose of stormwater controls to meet total maximum daily load plans (TMDLs) including:

(A) consider prior revenue-raising recommendations made in the 2017 Clean Water Report from the Office of the State Treasurer;

(B) recommend whether and how to authorize a regional stormwater utility to assess fees or charges to all landowners, residents, and businesses within the regional stormwater utility district for the purpose of stormwater controls to meet TMDLs;

(C) propose how a regional stormwater utility district could be eligible for Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund awards and access State-level financial assistance for the design, construction, and operation and maintenance of regulatory and nonregulatory stormwater systems, including from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund;

(D) recommend whether and how a regional stormwater utility can allocate resources and cost-effectively and equitably achieve pollutant reduction measures that are not fully achieved by regulated sites, as might be articulated in a regional stormwater management plan; and

(E) recommend whether and how a regional stormwater utility could improve the management of parcel-based issues in a more cost-effective and equitable manner, such as how a regional utility could address regulation of stormwater systems lacking a homeowners' association or other accountable

entity or how a regional utility could improve management of upstream properties that drain into stormwater systems subject to permitting;

(4) recommend whether stormwater permitting for municipalities or others could be streamlined to improve the application process, permit renewal, or fee requirements;

(5) propose how statute should be amended to implement any of the recommendations of the Study Committee, including stormwater management planning for purposes of overall regional phosphorus pollutant reductions; and

(6) estimate a cost to operate proposed regional stormwater utility districts.

(d) Assistance. The Study Committee shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

(e) Report. On or before January 15, 2027, the Study Committee shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Environment and on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Government Operations with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Environmental Conservation or designee shall call the first meeting of the Study Committee.

(2) The Commissioner of Environmental Conservation or designee shall be the Chair.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Study Committee shall cease to exist on March 1, 2027.

(g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Study Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than eight meetings. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Natural Resources.

Sec. 13. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, except that Sec. 10 (future Clean Water Fund priorities) shall take effect October 1, 2032.

Which proposal of amendment was considered and concurred in.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 53

Rep. Cordes of Bristol, for the Committee on Health Care, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas and Medicaid coverage for doula services

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment as follows:

First: By striking out Sec. 7, state plan amendment, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 7 to read as follows:

Sec. 7. STATE PLAN AMENDMENT

Not later than July 1, 2026, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall seek a state plan amendment from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to allow Vermont's Medicaid program to provide coverage for doula services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 1901n, as added by this act.

Second: In Sec. 8, effective dates, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) Sec. 5 (33 V.S.A. § 1901n; Medicaid coverage for doula services) shall take effect on the later of July 1, 2026 or approval of the state plan amendment requested pursuant to Sec. 7 of this act.

Rep. Branagan of Georgia, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

Rep. Mrowicki of Putney, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Health Care.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up, read the second time, the report of the Committee on Health Care agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 401

House bill, entitled

An act relating to exemptions for food manufacturing establishments

Was taken up and, pending consideration of the Senate proposal of amendment, on motion of **Rep. Durfee of Shaftsbury**, action on the bill was postponed until May 20, 2025.

Action on Bill Postponed

H. 488

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the fiscal year 2026 Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation

Was taken up and, pending consideration of the report of the Committee of Conference, on motion of **Rep. Corcoran of Bennington**, action on the bill was postponed until May 21, 2025.

**Report of Committee of Conference Adopted; Bill Ordered
Delivered to the Governor Forthwith**

H. 494

The Speaker placed before the House the following Committee of Conference report:

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Committee of Conference to which were referred the disagreeing votes of the two Houses upon House Bill entitled:

H.494. An act relating to capital construction and State bonding.

Respectfully reports that it has met and considered the same and recommends that the Senate recede from its proposals of amendment and that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Legislative Intent * * *

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that of the \$111,965,288.44 authorized in this act, not more than \$61,969,761.44 shall be appropriated in the first year of the biennium, and the remainder shall be appropriated in the second year.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that in the second year of the biennium, any amendments to the appropriations or authorities granted in this act shall take the form of the Capital Construction and State Bonding Adjustment Bill. It is the intent of the General Assembly that unless otherwise indicated, all appropriations in this act are subject to capital budget adjustment.

Sec. 2. STATE BUILDINGS

(a) The following sums are appropriated to the Department of Buildings and General Services, and the Commissioner is authorized to direct funds appropriated in this section to the projects contained in this section; however, no project shall be canceled unless the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions are notified before that action is taken.

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026:

- (1) Statewide, major maintenance: \$6,493,401.00
- (2) Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance: \$1,500,000.00
- (3) Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program: \$75,000.00
- (4) Rutland, Asa Bloomer Building roof repair and sewage system upgrades: \$1,500,000.00
- (5) Rutland, multimodal garage renovation: \$600,000.00
- (6) Middlesex, Print and Postal uninterruptable power supply upgrade: \$58,279.44
- (7) Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement: \$2,000,000.00
- (8) Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs: \$1,500,000.00

(c) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027:

- (1) Statewide, major maintenance: \$8,500,000.00
- (2) Statewide, planning, reuse, and contingency: \$250,000.00
- (3) Statewide, physical security enhancements: \$250,000.00
- (4) Statewide, three-acre parcel stormwater compliance: \$1,100,000.00
- (5) Statewide, Art in State Buildings Program: \$75,000.00
- (6) Pittsford, Academy firing range upgrades \$200,000.00
- (7) Montpelier, State House replacement of historic interior finishes: \$50,000.00
- (8) Montpelier, 120 State Street HVAC – steam lines interior renovation: \$2,000,000.00
- (9) Middlesex, Vermont State Archives roof replacement, main building: \$1,000,000.00

(10) Waterbury, State Office Complex historic core roof replacement:
\$2,000,000.00

(11) Burlington, 32 Cherry St. parking garage repairs:
\$500,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$13,726,680.44

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$15,925,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 2 \$28,951,680.44

Sec. 3. HUMAN SERVICES

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Agency of Human Services for the following projects:

(1) Statewide, planning, design, and construction for HVAC system upgrades at correctional facilities: \$4,000,000.00

(2) Statewide, accessibility upgrades at correctional facilities:
\$2,000,000.00

(3) Statewide, correctional facility safety and security upgrades:
\$225,000.00

(4) St. Johnsbury, Northeast Correctional Complex (NECC) door control system replacements: \$1,000,000.00

(5) St. Albans, Northwest State Regional Correctional Facility (NWSCF) roof replacement: \$1,000,000.00

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Agency of Human Services for the following projects:

(1) Statewide, planning, design, and construction for HVAC system upgrades at correctional facilities: \$1,000,000.00

(2) Statewide, correctional facility safety and security upgrades:
\$200,000.00

(3) Rutland, Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility (MVRCF) door control system replacements: \$500,000.00

(4) St. Johnsbury, Northeast Correctional Complex (NECC) door control system replacements: \$2,600,000.00

(5) Newport, Northern State Correctional Facility (NSCF) sprinkler system upgrades: \$500,000.00

(c) Notwithstanding 29 V.S.A. § 152(a)(20), the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services is authorized to transfer any unexpended project balances between the amount appropriated in subdivision (a)(5) of this section and the amount appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 3(b)(1), as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, Sec. 3 (NWSCF, booking expansion, planning, design, and construction), and the Commissioner of Finance and Management may release the amount notwithstanding 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 27(a) (NWSCF; funding request for federal detainees).

<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$8,225,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$4,800,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 3</u>	<u>\$13,025,000.00</u>

Sec. 4. COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

<u>(1) Major maintenance at statewide historic sites:</u>	<u>\$550,000.00</u>
<u>(2) Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves:</u>	<u>\$46,000.00</u>
<u>(3) Roadside historic site markers:</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
<u>(4) Bennington, Battle Monument, maintenance of safety fencing, restoration, planning, and design:</u>	<u>\$425,000.00</u>

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the following projects:

<u>(1) Major maintenance at statewide historic sites:</u>	<u>\$550,000.00</u>
<u>(2) Vermont Underwater Historic Preserves:</u>	<u>\$46,000.00</u>
<u>(3) Roadside historic site markers:</u>	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$1,046,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$621,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 4</u>	<u>\$1,667,000.00</u>

Sec. 5. GRANT PROGRAMS

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

<u>(1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program:</u>	<u>\$300,000.00</u>
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(2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 for the Building Communities Grants established in 24 V.S.A. chapter 137:

(1) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(2) To the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Division for Historic Preservation, for the Historic Barns Preservation Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(3) To the Vermont Council on the Arts for the Cultural Facilities Grant Program, the sum of which may be used to match funds that may be made available from the National Endowment for the Arts, provided that all capital funds are made available to the Cultural Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(4) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Recreational Facilities Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(5) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Human Services and Educational Facilities Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(6) To the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Regional Economic Development Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(7) To the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program: \$300,000.00

(c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the sums appropriated in subdivisions (a)(5) and (b)(5) of this section be equally allocated between grants for human services and grants for educational facilities.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$2,100,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$2,100,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 5 \$4,200,000.00

Sec. 6. VETERANS' HOME

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Vermont Veterans' Home for the following projects:

(1) Replacement of air handlers: \$710,000.00

(2) Expansion of laundry facilities: \$340,000.00

(b) The Chief Executive Officer of the Vermont Veterans' Home is authorized to transfer any unexpended project balances between the amounts appropriated in subdivisions (a)(1)–(2) of this section.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$1,050,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 6 \$1,050,000.00

Sec. 7. UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

(a) The sum of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the University of Vermont for construction, renovations, and major maintenance.

(b) The sum of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the University of Vermont for the projects described in subsection (a) of this section.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$1,500,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$1,500,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 7 \$3,000,000.00

Sec. 8. VERMONT STATE COLLEGES

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Vermont State Colleges for the following projects:

(1) Statewide, construction, renovations, and major maintenance: \$1,500,000.00

(2) Johnson, the central heating plant replacement: \$1,500,000.00

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Vermont State Colleges for the following projects:

(1) Statewide, construction, renovations, and major maintenance:
\$1,500,000.00

(2) Johnson, central heating plant replacement: \$3,500,000.00

(c) For the amounts appropriated in subdivisions (a)(2) and (b)(2) of this section, the Vermont State Colleges shall work with Efficiency Vermont to develop a central heating plant replacement.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$3,000,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$5,000,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 8 \$8,000,000.00

Sec. 9. NATURAL RESOURCES

(a) The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation for dam safety and hydrology projects.

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the following projects:

(1) Park infrastructure and rehabilitation, improvement, and three-acre rule compliance: \$3,500,000.00

(2) Public lands access infrastructure: \$700,000.00

(c) The sum of \$1,105,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Fish and Wildlife for major maintenance and infrastructure projects.

(d) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation for the following projects:

(1) State match, drinking water supply, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund: \$590,000.00

(2) Dam safety and hydrology projects: \$500,000.00

(e) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for the following projects:

(1) Park infrastructure and rehabilitation, improvement, and three-acre rule compliance: \$2,500,000.00

(2) Public lands access infrastructure: \$700,000.00

(f) The sum of \$1,029,360.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Fish and Wildlife for major maintenance and infrastructure projects.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$5,805,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$5,319,360.00

Total Appropriation – Section 9 \$11,124,360.00

Sec. 10. CLEAN WATER INITIATIVES

(a) The sum of \$3,000,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for water quality grants and contracts.

(b) The sum of \$4,000,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation for municipal pollution control grants.

(c) The sum of \$200,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for water quality improvements to forest access roads.

(d)(1) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for the following projects:

(A) Agricultural water quality projects: \$800,000.00

(B) Land conservation and water quality projects: \$2,000,000.00

(2) A grant issued under subdivision (1)(A) of this subsection:

(A) shall not be considered a State grant under 6 V.S.A. chapter 215, subchapter 3 for purposes of calculating the maximum amount of a State water quality assistance award under 6 V.S.A. § 4824 or 4826; and

(B) may be used to satisfy a grant recipient's cost-share requirements.

(e) The sum of \$10,000,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation for clean water implementation projects.

(f) In FY 2026 and FY 2027, any agency that receives funding from this section shall consult with the State Treasurer to ensure that the projects are capital eligible.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$10,000,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$10,000,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 10	\$20,000,000.00
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Sec. 11. MILITARY

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Military Department for the following projects:

<u>(1) Major maintenance, renovations, and ADA compliance at State armories:</u>	<u>\$1,272,838.00</u>
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<u>(2) Northwest Regional Readiness Center, planning and design:</u>	<u>\$1,343,333.00</u>
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(b) The sum of \$1,310,167.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the Military Department for major maintenance, renovations, and ADA compliance at State armories.

<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$2,616,171.00</u>
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<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$1,310,167.00</u>
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<u>Total Appropriation – Section 11</u>	<u>\$3,926,338.00</u>
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Sec. 12. AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MARKETS

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the following projects:

<u>(1) Renovations to the Vermont Building at the Eastern States Exposition:</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
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<u>(2) Upgrades to the heat systems serving the Vermont State University Randolph Campus and the Vermont Agricultural and Environmental Laboratory:</u>	<u>\$3,500,000.00</u>
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(b) The sum of \$1,500,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for renovations to the Vermont Building at the Eastern States Exposition.

(c) For the amount appropriated in subdivision (a)(2) of this section, the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall negotiate the maintenance of propane summer boilers and update the memorandum of understanding with Vermont State University. The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services is additionally authorized to transfer any unexpended project balances between the amount appropriated in subdivision (a)(2) of this section and the amounts appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 12(b)(1) (Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory Heat Plant, construction).

<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$5,000,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 12</u>	<u>\$6,500,000.00</u>

Sec. 13. PUBLIC SAFETY

(a) The sum of \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Department of Public Safety for Rutland Field Station.

(b) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2027 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Department of Public Safety for the following projects:

(1) Shaftsbury Field Station, land acquisition, planning, and design:
\$150,000.00

(2) Rutland Field Station: \$1,645,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$2,000,000.00

Appropriation – FY 2027 \$1,795,000.00

Total Appropriation – Section 13 \$3,795,000.00

Sec. 14. JUDICIARY

(a) The following sums are appropriated in FY 2026 to the Judiciary for the following projects:

(1) Woodstock Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system: \$100,000.00

(2) Essex County Courthouse, connector and security upgrades:
\$3,685,910.00

(3) Lamoille County Courthouse, purchase and installation of backup power system: \$190,000.00

(b) The sum of \$1,100,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction.

Appropriation – FY 2026 \$5,075,910.00

Total Appropriation – Section 14 \$5,075,910.00

Sec. 15. VERMONT RURAL FIRE PROTECTION

(a) The sum of \$125,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Department of Public Safety for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the dry hydrant program.

(b) The sum of \$125,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2027 to the Department of Public Safety for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the project described in subsection (a) of this section.

<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$125,000.00</u>
<u>Appropriation – FY 2027</u>	<u>\$125,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 15</u>	<u>\$250,000.00</u>

Sec. 16. VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The sum of \$700,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2026 to the Vermont Historical Society to mitigate water infiltration at the roof, foundation, and basement of the Spaulding Building in Barre.

<u>Appropriation – FY 2026</u>	<u>\$700,000.00</u>
<u>Total Appropriation – Section 16</u>	<u>\$700,000.00</u>

* * * Funding * * *

Sec. 17. REALLOCATION OF FUNDS; TRANSFER OF FUNDS

(a) The following sums are reallocated to the Department of Buildings and General Services from prior capital appropriations to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act:

(1) of the amount appropriated in 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 2(c)(5), as amended by 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 139, Sec. 1 (108 Cherry Street, parking garage repairs): \$399,803.36

(2) of the amount appropriated in 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 50, Sec. 2(c)(18), as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 180, Sec. 2 (108 Cherry Street, parking garage repairs): \$37,519.86

(3) of the amount appropriated in in 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 13(a), as amended by 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 139, Sec. 9 (Middlesex Field Station): \$371.89

(4) of the amount appropriated in 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 50, Sec. 12(a)(2) (Middlesex Field Station): \$18,309.45

(5) of the amount appropriated in 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 50, Sec. 12(c), as amended by 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 180, Sec. 10, as further amended by 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 35 (Williston Public Safety Field Station): \$2,220,099.10

(6) of the amount appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 2(b)(3) (statewide, planning, reuse, and contingency): \$425,000.00

(7) of the amount appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 2(c)(7) (Northern State Correctional Facility, planning and construction for the boiler replacement): \$1,000,000.00

(8) of the amount appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 3(b)(5), as added by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, Sec. 3 (South Burlington, justice-involved men, feasibility study for reentry facility): \$125,000.00

(9) of the amounts appropriated in 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 26, Sec. 2(b) (various projects): \$58,279.44

(10) of the amounts appropriated in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 2(b) (various projects): \$23,237.47

(11) of the amounts appropriated in 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 2(b) (various projects): \$73,784.44

(b) The following sums appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development from prior capital appropriations are reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act:

(1) of the amount appropriated in 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 5(c)(3), as amended by 2020 Acts & Resolves No. 139, Sec. 3 (Highgate Native American Cemetery): \$12,042.00

(2) of the amount appropriated in 2017 Acts & Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(m), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (Downtown Transportation Fund pilot project): \$67,000.00

(c) The following sums appropriated to the Agency of Transportation from prior capital appropriations are reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act:

(1) of the amount appropriated in 2020 Acts and Resolves No. 139, Sec. 12(b)(1) (Lamoille Valley Rail Trail): \$112.31

(2) of the amount appropriated in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(c) (Municipal Mitigation Program): \$19,342.69

(3) of the amount appropriated in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(l)(2), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (Better Roads Grant Program): \$41,238.46

(d) Of the amount appropriated to the Department of Buildings and General Services in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 2(b)(4) (Bennington, Battle Monument, construction of safety fencing), \$419,000.00 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Sec. 4 of this act.

(e) Of the amount appropriated to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(e)(1)(B), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (phosphorus removal equipment), \$115,000.00 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act.

(f) Of the amount appropriated to the Agency of Education in 2021 Acts and Resolves No. 50, Sec. 6(a) (funding emergency projects), \$19,549.00 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act.

(g) Of the amount appropriated to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(b)(2) (ecosystem restoration and protection), \$249.01 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Secs. 2–16 of this act.

(h) Of the amount appropriated from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments to the Vermont Veterans' Home in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1103(a)(7) and authorized in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 18(d)(7) (design for the renovation of the Brandon and Cardinal units), \$1,500,000.00 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Sec. 19 of this act.

(i) Of the amount appropriated from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments to the Department of Buildings and General Services in 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 113, Sec. B.1103(a)(9) and authorized in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 18(d)(10) (111 State Street; renovation of the stack area), \$200,000.00 is reallocated to defray expenditures authorized in Sec. 19 of this act.

(j) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 701a(c)(2), the Department of Buildings and General Services may retain for the same purposes the unexpended amounts not reallocated in this act that were appropriated in the following capital construction acts:

(1) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 13(b)(2), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 10 (East Cottage); and

(2) 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 2(b) (various projects).

(k) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 701a(c)(2), the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets may retain for the same purposes the unexpended amount not reallocated in this act appropriated in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(e)(1)(B), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (phosphorus removal equipment).

(l) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 701a(c)(2), the Department of Environmental Conservation may retain for the same purposes the unexpended amounts not reallocated in this act that were appropriated in the following capital construction acts:

(1) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(f)(2)(A), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (Standard EcoSystem Restoration and Protection programs);

(2) 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 11(b) (pollution control); and

(3) 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 42, Sec. 10(a)(2) (dam safety and hydrology projects).

(m) Notwithstanding 32 V.S.A. § 701a(c)(2), the Agency of Transportation may retain for the same purposes the unexpended amounts not reallocated in this act that were appropriated in the following capital construction acts:

(1) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(c) (Municipal Mitigation Program); and

(2) 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 84, Sec. 11(l), as added by 2018 Acts and Resolves No. 190, Sec. 8 (Municipal Mitigation Program).

Bonded Dollars \$5,074,938.48

Cash \$1,700,000.00

Total Reallocations and Transfers – Section 17 \$6,774,938.48

Sec. 18. GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS AND APPROPRIATIONS

(a) The State Treasurer is authorized to issue general obligation bonds in the amount of \$100,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding the appropriations made in Secs. 2–16 of this act. The State Treasurer, with the approval of the Governor, shall determine the appropriate form and maturity of the bonds authorized by this section consistent with the underlying nature of the appropriation to be funded.

(b) The State Treasurer is authorized to issue additional general obligation bonds in the amount of \$6,890,350.00 that were previously appropriated but unissued under 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, as amended by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, for the purpose of funding the appropriations in this act.

Total Revenues – Section 18 \$106,890,350.00

Sec. 19. FY 2026 AND 2027; CAPITAL PROJECTS; FY 2026
APPROPRIATIONS ACT; INTENT; AUTHORIZATIONS

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that in addition to the issuance of general obligation bonds, eligible capital projects may be funded from the Fund established in 32 V.S.A. § 1001b.

(b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly to authorize certain capital projects eligible for funding by 32 V.S.A. § 1001b in this act but appropriate the funds for these projects in the FY 2026 Appropriations Act. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that the FY 2026 Appropriations Act appropriate funds to the Fund established in 32 V.S.A. § 1001b for projects in FY 2027.

(c) Authorizations; Capital Infrastructure subaccount. In FY 2026, spending authority for the following capital projects from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments are authorized as follows:

(1) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide major maintenance: \$1,506,599.00

(2) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide planning, reuse, and contingency: \$250,000.00

(3) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for statewide physical security enhancements: \$250,000.00

(4) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for State House repointing: \$219,500.00

(5) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for an uninterruptable power supply system for the Middlesex print and postal facility: \$250,000.00

(6) to the Department of Buildings and General Services for the Judiciary for renovations at the Windsor County Courthouse in White River Junction: \$6,900,000.00

(7) to the Vermont Veterans' Home for the design and construction of the American unit: \$1,500,000.00

(8) to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for infrastructure improvements that are either municipally leased for a term of at least 30 years or municipally owned and that support the development of new or rehabilitated housing, provided that a grant agreement shall be in place between the State and the municipality prior to the release of funds:

\$2,500,000.00

(9) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Lake Champlain Walleye Association, Inc. to upgrade and repair the Walleye rearing, restoration, and stocking infrastructure:

\$25,000.00

(10) to the Department of Public Safety for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force for the dry hydrant program:

\$35,000.00

(d) Authorizations; Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves subaccount. In FY 2026, spending authority is authorized from the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves subaccount of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments to the Agency of Natural Resources for the Department of Environmental Conservation for the State match to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and Clean Water State Revolving Fund, in accordance with the provisions of 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 78, Sec. C.108(b), in the amount of \$14,500,000.00.

(e) Transfer. Notwithstanding 29 V.S.A. § 152(a)(20), the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services is authorized to transfer any unexpended project balances between the amount appropriated in subdivision (c)(7) of this section and the amounts appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 15(b)(1) (emergency generator and boiler plant replacement).

* * * Policy * * *

* * * Capital Budgeting Process * * *

Sec. 20. 32 V.S.A. § 701a is amended to read:

§ 701a. CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION BILL

* * *

(d)(1) On or before November 15 each year, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall require each entity to which spending authority has been authorized by a capital construction act enacted in a legislative session that was two or more years prior to the current legislative session to submit a report on the current fund balances of each authorized project with unexpended funds. The report shall include plans for the unexpended funds, any projects or contracts the funds are assigned to, and an anticipated timeline for expending the funds.

(2) On or before ~~December 15 each year~~ the third Tuesday of every annual session, the Commissioner of Finance and Management shall submit in a consolidated format the reports required by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions.

* * *

Sec. 21. 32 V.S.A. § 310 is amended to read:

§ 310. FORM OF ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET AND 10-YEAR
CAPITAL PROGRAM PLAN

* * *

(b) The capital budget request for the following biennium shall be presented as the next increment of the 10-year plan. Elements of the plan shall include:

* * *

(2) Comprehensive cost and financing assessment.

(A) Amounts appropriated and expended for the current fiscal year and for the preceding fiscal year shall be indicated for capital programs and for individual projects. For the five fiscal years preceding these, the assessment shall include the aggregate amounts appropriated and expended for individual projects, which amounts shall be categorized by funding type and presented in a format that concisely displays the funding stream and project phases for each individual project over time. The assessment shall indicate further the source of funds for any project that required additional funding and a description of any authorized projects that were delayed.

* * *

Sec. 22. 32 V.S.A. § 1001b is amended to read:

§ 1001b. CASH FUND FOR CAPITAL AND ESSENTIAL INVESTMENTS

* * *

(e) Spending authority. Any entity authorized to make expenditures from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount shall have not more than ~~two~~ three years from the end of the legislative session in which the act authorizing the expenditure was enacted to encumber the funds. Any remaining unencumbered funds shall remain part of the Fund account.

Sec. 22a. CASH FUND; JOINT FISCAL OFFICE; REPORT

On or before December 15, 2025, the Joint Fiscal Office shall submit a report to the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions on considerations for use of the Cash Fund for Capital and Essential Investments under 32 V.S.A. § 1001b that:

(1) provides the historical context, including the economic rationale, for the Cash Fund;

(2) compares financial management practices for expenditures made through cash and through bonded dollars, including long-term financial impacts;

(3) distinguishes between the intended uses of the Capital Infrastructure subaccount and the Other Infrastructure, Essential Investments, and Reserves subaccount;

(4) describes, for each year since the Cash Fund's inception:

(A) the sources of funds; and

(B) the annual expenditures from the Capital Infrastructure subaccount; and

(5) outlines the current legislative process by which appropriations are made from the Cash Fund.

* * * Buildings and General Services * * *

Sec. 23. TRANSFER OF RANDALL MEADOW PROPERTY IN THE
TOWN OF WATERBURY

Notwithstanding 29 V.S.A. § 166(b), the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services is authorized to survey, subdivide, and transfer to the Town of Waterbury the portion of land in the Waterbury State Office Complex (Parcel ID # 69622111909 as designated on the Town of Waterbury's Tax Parcel Maps) that is commonly referred to as the "Randall Meadow," provided that the Commissioner may transfer the Randall Meadow property only once:

(1) the parcel has been subdivided to reflect stormwater management needs of the Waterbury State Office Complex to the satisfaction of the Commissioner;

(2) any permits required for transfer have been obtained; and

(3) the Commissioner and the Town of Waterbury have created a plan to align the transfer with the current lease for the parcel.

Sec. 24. 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, Sec. 27 is amended to read:

Sec. 27. CAPITOL COMPLEX FLOOD RECOVERY; SPECIAL
COMMITTEE

* * *

(c) The Commissioner of Buildings and General Services shall provide quarterly updates to the Special Committee on the planning process for Capitol Complex flood recovery and shall provide timely notification to the City of Montpelier and the Montpelier Commission for Recovery and Resilience of alterations to proposals and plans for Capitol Complex flood recovery.

* * *

* * * Human Services * * *

Sec. 25. REPEAL

2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, Sec. 31 (potential reuse of Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility Site; feasibility; report) is repealed.

* * * Vermont Veterans' Home * * *

Sec. 26. USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS; EMERGENCY GENERATOR AND
BOILER REPLACEMENT; ELEVATOR UPGRADE

If the Commissioner of Finance and Management offsets any capital funds appropriated in 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 15 (b)(1)–(2) (emergency generator and boiler plant replacement; elevator upgrade) with federal funds, then any offset amounts shall be reused for future capital construction projects as part of the capital budget process.

* * * Sergeant at Arms * * *

Sec. 27. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 69, Sec. 15b, as added by 2024 Acts and Resolves No. 162, Sec. 8, is amended to read:

Sec. 15b. SERGEANT AT ARMS

The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated in FY 2025 to the Sergeant at Arms for the following projects:

(1) the replacement of State House cafeteria furnishings; and

(2) the purchase and installation at the State House of an X-ray machine designed to screen baggage.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 28. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.

WENDY K. HARRISON

ROBERT PLUNKETT

RUSSELL H. INGALLS

Committee on the part of the Senate

ALICE M. EMMONS

JAMES A.R. GREGOIRE

TROY HEADRICK

Committee on the part of the House

Which was considered and adopted on the part of the House.

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the bill was ordered delivered to the Governor forthwith pursuant to Joint Rule 15.

Joint Resolution Adopted

J.R.H. 5

Joint resolution authorizing limited remote joint committee voting through the remainder of calendar year 2025

Was taken up and adopted on the part of the House.

**Rules Suspended, Immediate Consideration; Second Reading;
Proposal of Amendment Agreed to; Third Reading Ordered**

S. 12

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to sealing criminal history records

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, was taken up for immediate consideration.

Rep. Dolan of Essex Junction, for the Committee on Judiciary, recommended that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. chapter 230 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 230. EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING OF CRIMINAL
HISTORY RECORDS

§ 7601. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Court” means the Criminal Division of the Superior Court.

(2) “Criminal history record” means all information documenting an individual’s contact with the criminal justice system, including data regarding identification, arrest or citation, arraignment, judicial disposition, custody, and supervision.

(3) ~~“Predicate offense” means a criminal offense that can be used to enhance a sentence levied for a later conviction and includes operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or other substance in violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201, domestic assault in violation of section 1042 of this title, and stalking in violation of section 1062 of this title. “Predicate offense” shall not include misdemeanor possession of cannabis, a disorderly conduct offense under section 1026 of this title, or possession of a controlled substance in violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a), 4231(a), 4232(a), 4233(a), 4234(a), 4234a(a), 4234b(a), 4235(b), or 4235a(a)~~ “Criminal justice purposes” means the investigation, apprehension, detention, adjudication, or correction of persons suspected, charged, or convicted of criminal offenses. “Criminal justice purposes” also includes criminal identification activities; the collection, storage, and dissemination of criminal history records; and screening for criminal justice employment.

(4) “Qualifying crime” means:

~~(A) a misdemeanor offense that is not:~~

~~(i) a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;~~

~~(ii) an offense involving sexual exploitation of children in violation of chapter 64 of this title;~~

~~(iii) an offense involving violation of a protection order in violation of section 1030 of this title;~~

~~(iv) prostitution as defined in section 2632 of this title, or prohibited conduct under section 2601a of this title; or~~

~~(v) a predicate offense;~~

~~(B) a violation of subsection 3701(a) of this title related to criminal mischief;~~

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- ~~(C) a violation of section 2501 of this title related to grand larceny;~~
- ~~(D) a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary, excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, as defined in subdivision 1201(b)(2) of this title;~~
- ~~(E) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4223 related to fraud or deceit;~~
- ~~(F) a violation of section 1802 of this title related to uttering a forged or counterfeited instrument;~~
- ~~(G) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a) related to possession and cultivation of cannabis;~~
- ~~(H) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4231(a) related to possession of cocaine;~~
- ~~(I) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4232(a) related to possession of LSD;~~
- ~~(J) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4233(a) related to possession of heroin;~~
- ~~(K) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234(a) related to possession of depressant, stimulant, and narcotic drugs;~~
- ~~(L) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234a(a) related to possession of methamphetamine;~~
- ~~(M) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4234b(a) related to possession of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine;~~
- ~~(N) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4235(b) related to possession of hallucinogenic drugs;~~
- ~~(O) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4235a(a) related to possession of ecstasy; or~~
- ~~(P) any offense for which a person has been granted an unconditional pardon from the Governor.~~
- (A) all misdemeanor offenses except:
- (i) a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;
- (ii) a violation of chapter 64 of this title relating to sexual exploitation of children;
- (iii) a violation of section 1030 of this title relating to a violation of an abuse prevention order, an order against stalking or sexual assault, or a protective order concerning contact with a child;
- (iv) a violation of chapter 28 of this title related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of a vulnerable adult;

(v) a violation of subsection 2605(b) or (c) of this title related to voyeurism;

(vi) a violation of subdivisions 352(1)–(10) of this title related to cruelty to animals;

(vii) a violation of section 5409 of this title related to failure to comply with sex offender registry requirements;

(viii) a violation of section 1455 of this title related to hate motivated crimes;

(ix) a violation of subsection 1304(a) of this title related to cruelty to a child;

(x) a violation of section 1305 of this title related to cruelty by person having custody of another;

(xi) a violation of section 1306 of this title related to mistreatment of persons with impaired cognitive function;

(xii) a violation of section 3151 of this title related to female genital mutilation;

(xiii) a violation of subsection 3258(b) of this title related to sexual exploitation of a minor;

(xiv) a violation of subdivision 4058(b)(1) of this title related to violation of an extreme risk protection order;

(xv) an offense committed in a motor vehicle as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4 by a person who is the holder of a commercial driver's license or commercial driver's permit pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39; and

(xvi) any offense that would require registration as a sex offender pursuant to chapter 167, subchapter 3 of this title; and

(B) the following felonies:

(i) a violation of section 1201 of this title related to burglary, excluding any burglary into an occupied dwelling, unless the person was 25 years of age or younger at the time of the offense and did not carry a dangerous or deadly weapon during the commission of the offense;

(ii) designated felony property offenses as defined in subdivision (5) of this section;

(iii) offenses relating to possessing, cultivating, selling, dispensing, or transporting regulated drugs, including violations of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a) and (b), 4231(a) and (b), 4232(a) and (b), 4233(a) and (b), 4233a(a),

4234(a) and (b), 4234a(a) and (b), 4234b(a) and (b), 4235(b) and (c), or 4235a(a) and (b); and

(iv) any offense for which a person has been granted an unconditional pardon from the Governor.

(5) “Designated felony property offense” means:

(A) section 1801 of this title related to forgery and counterfeiting;

(B) section 1802 of this title related to uttering a forged or counterfeited instrument;

(C) section 1804 of this title related to counterfeiting paper money;

(D) section 1816 of this title related to possession or use of credit card skimming devices;

(E) section 2001 of this title related to false personation;

(F) section 2002 of this title related to false pretenses or tokens;

(G) section 2029 of this title related to home improvement fraud;

(H) section 2030 of this title related to identity theft;

(I) section 2501 of this title related to grand larceny;

(J) section 2531 of this title related to embezzlement;

(K) section 2532 of this title related to embezzlement by officers or servants of an incorporated bank;

(L) section 2533 of this title related to embezzlement by a receiver or trustee;

(M) section 2561 of this title related to receiving stolen property;

(N) section 2575 of this title related to retail theft;

(O) section 2582 of this title related to theft of services;

(P) section 2591 of this title related to theft of rented property;

(Q) section 2592 of this title related to failure to return a rented or leased motor vehicle;

(R) section 3016 of this title related to false claims;

(S) section 3701 of this title related to unlawful mischief;

(T) section 3705 of this title related to unlawful trespass;

(U) section 3733 of this title related to mills, dams, or bridges;

(V) section 3761 of this title related to unauthorized removal of human remains;

(W) section 3766 of this title related to grave markers and ornaments;

(X) chapter 87 of this title related to computer crimes; and

(Y) 18 V.S.A. § 4223 related to fraud or deceit in obtaining a regulated drug.

§ 7602. EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING OF RECORD,

POSTCONVICTION; PROCEDURE

~~(a)(1) A person may file a petition with the court requesting expungement or sealing of the criminal history record related to the conviction if:~~

~~(A) the person was convicted of a qualifying crime or qualifying crimes arising out of the same incident or occurrence;~~

~~(B) the person was convicted of an offense for which the underlying conduct is no longer prohibited by law or designated as a criminal offense;~~

~~(C) pursuant to the conditions set forth in subsection (g) of this section, the person was convicted of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) or § 1091 related to operating under the influence of alcohol or other substance, excluding a violation of those sections resulting in serious bodily injury or death to any person other than the operator, or related to operating a school bus with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02 or more or operating a commercial vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more; or~~

~~(D) pursuant to the conditions set forth in subsection (h) of this section, the person was convicted under 1201(c)(3)(A) of a violation of subdivision 1201(a) of this title related to burglary when the person was 25 years of age or younger, and the person did not carry a dangerous or deadly weapon during commission of the offense.~~

~~(2) The State's Attorney or Attorney General shall be the respondent in the matter.~~

~~(3) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner an order of expungement and provide notice of the order in accordance with this section.~~

~~(4) This section shall not apply to an individual licensed as a commercial driver pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39 seeking to seal or expunge a record of a conviction for a felony offense committed in a motor vehicle as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4.~~

~~(b)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:~~

~~(A) At least five years have elapsed since the date on which the person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least five years previously.~~

~~(B) The person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new incident or occurrence since the person was convicted for the qualifying crime.~~

~~(C) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

~~(D) The court finds that expungement of the criminal history record serves the interests of justice.~~

~~(2) The court shall grant the petition and order that all or part of the criminal history record be sealed pursuant to section 7607 of this title if the conditions of subdivisions (1)(A), (B), and (C) of this subsection are met and the court finds that:~~

~~(A) sealing the criminal history record better serves the interests of justice than expungement; and~~

~~(B) the person committed the qualifying crime after reaching 19 years of age.~~

~~(c)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:~~

~~(A) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction.~~

~~(B) The person has not been convicted of a felony arising out of a new incident or occurrence in the last seven years.~~

~~(C) The person has not been convicted of a misdemeanor during the past five years.~~

~~(D) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

~~(E) After considering the particular nature of any subsequent offense, the court finds that expungement of the criminal history record for the qualifying crime serves the interests of justice.~~

~~(2) The court shall grant the petition and order that all or part of the criminal history record be sealed pursuant to section 7607 of this title if the conditions of subdivisions (1)(A), (B), (C), and (D) of this subsection are met and the court finds that:~~

~~(A) sealing the criminal history record better serves the interests of justice than expungement; and~~

~~(B) the person committed the qualifying crime after reaching 19 years of age.~~

~~(d) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, unless the court finds that expungement would not be in the interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged in accordance with section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:~~

~~(1) The petitioner has completed any sentence or supervision for the offense.~~

~~(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

~~(e) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section for a conviction for possession of a regulated drug under 18 V.S.A. chapter 84, subchapter 1 in an amount that is no longer prohibited by law or for which criminal sanctions have been removed:~~

~~(1) The petitioner shall bear the burden of establishing that his or her conviction was based on possessing an amount of regulated drug that is no longer prohibited by law or for which criminal sanctions have been removed.~~

~~(2) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that the amount of the regulated drug specified in the affidavit of probable cause associated with the petitioner's conviction was the amount possessed by the petitioner.~~

~~(f) Prior to granting an expungement or sealing under this section for petitions filed pursuant to subdivision 7601(4)(D) of this title, the court shall make a finding that the conduct underlying the conviction under section 1201 of this title did not constitute a burglary into an occupied dwelling, as defined in subdivision 1201(b)(2) of this title. The petitioner shall bear the burden of establishing this fact.~~

~~(g) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(C) of this section, only petitions to seal may be considered or granted by the court. This subsection shall not apply to an individual licensed as a commercial driver pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39. Unless the court finds that sealing would not be in the interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed in accordance with section 7607 of this title if the following conditions are met:~~

~~(1) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction, or if the person has successfully completed the terms and conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least 10 years previously.~~

~~(2) At the time of the filing of the petition:~~

~~(A) the person has only one conviction of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201, which shall be construed in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 1211; and~~

~~(B) the person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new incident or occurrence since the person was convicted of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a).~~

~~(3) Any restitution ordered by the court has been paid in full.~~

~~(4) The court finds that sealing of the criminal history record serves the interests of justice.~~

~~(h) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(D) of this section, unless the court finds that expungement or sealing would not be in the interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged or sealed in accordance with section 7606 or 7607 of this title if the following conditions are met:~~

~~(1) At least 15 years have elapsed since the date on which the person successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction, or the person has successfully completed the terms and conditions of an indeterminate term of probation that commenced at least 15 years previously.~~

~~(2) The person has not been convicted of a crime arising out of a new incident or occurrence since the person was convicted of a violation of subdivision 1201(c)(3)(A) of this title.~~

~~(3) Any restitution ordered by the court has been paid in full.~~

~~(4) The court finds that expungement or sealing of the criminal history record serves the interests of justice.~~

(a) Petition.

(1) A person may file a petition with the court requesting expungement of a criminal history record related to a conviction if the person was convicted of an offense for which the underlying conduct is no longer prohibited by law or designated as a criminal offense.

(2) A person may file a petition with the court requesting sealing of a criminal history record related to a conviction if the person was convicted of a qualifying crime or qualifying crimes arising out of the same incident or occurrence.

(3) Whichever office prosecuted the offense resulting in the conviction, the State's Attorney or Attorney General, shall be the respondent in the matter unless the prosecuting office authorizes the other to act as the respondent.

(4) The court shall grant the petition without hearing if the petitioner and the respondent stipulate to the granting of the petition. The respondent shall file the stipulation with the court, and the court shall issue the petitioner an order of sealing and provide notice of the order to all Vermont State entities provided by the petitioner and all entities required to receive notice pursuant to subsection 7607(a) of this title.

(5) This section shall not apply to an individual who is the holder of a commercial driver's license or commercial driver's permit pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39 seeking to seal a record of a conviction for a misdemeanor or felony offense committed in a motor vehicle as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4.

(b) Offenses that are no longer prohibited by law. For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged if the following conditions are met:

(1) The petitioner has completed any sentence or supervision for the offense.

(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

(c) Qualifying misdemeanors. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying misdemeanor pursuant to subdivision (a)(2) of this section, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the following conditions are met:

(1) At least three years have elapsed since the date on which the person completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.

(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

(3) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would be contrary to the interests of justice.

(d) Qualifying felony offenses. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying felony pursuant to subdivision (a)(2) of this section, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the following conditions are met:

(1) At least seven years have elapsed since the date on which the person completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.

(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

(3) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would be contrary to the interests of justice.

(e) Qualifying DUI misdemeanor. For petitions filed to seal a qualifying DUI misdemeanor pursuant to subdivision (a)(2) of this section, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the following conditions are met:

(1) At least 10 years have elapsed since the date on which the person completed the terms and conditions of the sentence.

(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

(3) The person is not the holder of a commercial driver's license or commercial driver's permit pursuant to 23 V.S.A. chapter 39.

(4) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would be contrary to the interests of justice.

(f) Fish and Wildlife Offenses. Sealing a criminal history record related to a fish and wildlife offense shall not void any fish and wildlife license suspension or revocation imposed pursuant to the accumulation of points related to the sealed offense. Points accumulated by a person shall remain on the person's license and, if applicable, completion of the remedial course shall be required as set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 4502.

§ 7603. ~~EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING OF RECORD, NO~~
~~CONVICTION; PROCEDURE~~

(a) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall issue an order sealing the criminal history record related to the citation or arrest of a person:

(1) within 60 days after the final disposition of the case if:

(A) the court does not make a determination of probable cause at the time of arraignment; ~~or~~

(B) the charge is dismissed before trial with or without prejudice; or

(C) the defendant is acquitted of the charges; or

(2) at any time if the prosecuting attorney and the defendant stipulate that the court may grant the petition to seal the record.

(b) If a party objects to sealing ~~or expunging~~ a record pursuant to this section, the court shall schedule a hearing to determine if sealing ~~or expunging~~ the record serves the interests of justice. The defendant and the prosecuting attorney shall be the only parties in the matter.

(c), (d) [Repealed.]

~~(e) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall issue an order expunging a criminal history record related to the citation or arrest of a person:~~

~~(1) within 60 days after the final disposition of the case if:~~

~~(A) the defendant is acquitted of the charges; or~~

~~(B) the charge is dismissed with prejudice;~~

~~(2) at any time if the prosecuting attorney and the defendant stipulate that the court may grant the petition to expunge the record. [Repealed.]~~

~~(f) Unless either party objects in the interests of justice, the court shall issue an order to expunge a record sealed pursuant to subsection (a) or (g) of this section eight years after the date on which the record was sealed. [Repealed.]~~

(g) A person may file a petition with the court requesting sealing or expungement of a criminal history record related to the citation or arrest of the person at any time. The court shall grant the petition and issue an order sealing or expunging the record if it finds that sealing or expunging the record serves the interests of justice; or if the parties stipulate to sealing or expungement of the record.

~~(h) The court may expunge any records that were sealed pursuant to this section prior to July 1, 2018 unless the State's Attorney's office that prosecuted the case objects. Thirty days prior to expunging a record pursuant to this subsection, the court shall provide to the State's Attorney's office that prosecuted the case written notice of its intent to expunge the record. [Repealed.]~~

§ 7604. NEW CHARGE

If a person is charged with a criminal offense after he or she has filed a petition for expungement pursuant to this chapter has a criminal charge pending at the time the petition for sealing or expungement is before the court, the court shall not act on the petition until disposition of the new charge.

§ 7605. DENIAL OF PETITION

If a petition for expungement or sealing is denied by the court pursuant to this chapter, no further petition shall be brought for at least two years, unless a shorter duration is authorized by the court.

§ 7606. EFFECT OF EXPUNGEMENT

(a) Order and notice. Upon finding that the requirements for expungement have been met, the court shall issue an order that shall include provisions that its effect is to annul the record of the arrest, conviction, and sentence and that such person shall be treated in all respects as if the person had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense. The court shall provide notice of the expungement to the respondent, Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting agency, the Restitution Unit of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services, and any other entity that may have a record related to the order to expunge. The VCIC shall provide notice of the expungement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center.

(b) Effect.

(1) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the person whose record is expunged shall be treated in all respects as if ~~he or she~~ the person had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense.

(2) In any application for employment, license, or civil right or privilege or in an appearance as a witness in any proceeding or hearing, a person may be required to answer questions about a previous criminal history record only with respect to arrests or convictions that have not been expunged. A State entity that inquires about a person's criminal history record shall advise the person of the person's right not to disclose expunged records pursuant to this subdivision.

(3) The response to an inquiry from any person regarding an expunged record shall be that "NO CRIMINAL RECORD EXISTS."

(4) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of the person whose record has been expunged to rely on it as a bar to any subsequent proceedings for the same offense.

(c) Process.

(1) The court shall remove the expunged offense from any accessible database that it maintains.

(2) Until all charges on a docket are expunged, the case file shall remain publicly accessible.

(3) When all charges on a docket have been expunged, the case file shall be destroyed pursuant to policies established by the Court Administrator.

(d) Special index.

(1) The court shall keep a special index of cases that have been expunged together with the expungement order. The index shall list only the name of the person convicted of the offense, ~~his or her~~ the person's date of birth, the docket number, and the criminal offense that was the subject of the expungement.

(2) The special index and related documents specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be confidential and shall be physically and electronically segregated in a manner that ensures confidentiality and that limits access to authorized persons.

(3) Inspection of the expungement order may be permitted only upon petition by the person who is the subject of the case. The Chief Superior Judge may permit special access to the index and the documents for research purposes pursuant to the rules for public access to court records.

(4) ~~[Repealed]. [Repealed.]~~

(5) The Court Administrator shall establish policies for implementing this subsection.

§ 7607. EFFECT OF SEALING

(a) Order and notice. ~~Upon entry of an order to seal, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the person whose record is sealed shall be treated in all respects as if the person had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense and that its effect is to annul the record of arrest, conviction, and sentence. The court shall provide notice of the sealing to the respondent, Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting agency, the Restitution Unit of the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services, and any other entity that may have a record related to the order to seal. The VCIC shall provide notice of the sealing to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center~~ send a copy of any order sealing a criminal history record to all of the parties and attorneys representing the parties, including to the prosecuting agency that prosecuted the offense, the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting agency, and any other Vermont State entity identified by the petitioner that may have a record subject to the sealing order. VCIC shall provide notice of the sealing order to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center.

(b) Effect.

(1) Except as provided in ~~subdivision~~ subsection (c) of this section, upon entry of a sealing order, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the person whose record is sealed shall be treated in all respects as if ~~he or she~~ the person had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense.

(2) In any application for employment, license, or civil right or privilege or in an appearance as a witness in any proceeding or hearing, a person may be required to answer questions about a previous criminal history record only with respect to arrests or convictions that have not been sealed. A State entity that inquires about a person's criminal history record shall advise the person of the person's right not to disclose sealed records pursuant to this subdivision.

(3) The response to an inquiry from any member of the public regarding a sealed record shall be that "NO CRIMINAL RECORD EXISTS."

(4) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of the person whose record has been sealed to rely on it as a bar to any subsequent proceeding for the same offense.

(c) Exceptions. A party seeking to use a sealed criminal history record, pursuant to the exceptions established in this subsection, in a court proceeding shall, prior to any use of or reference to the record in open court or in a public filing, notify the court of the party's intent to do so. The court shall thereafter determine whether the record may be used prior to its disclosure in the proceeding. If a party submits a filing that contains a sealed record or a reference to a sealed record, that filing shall be filed under seal and remain under seal unless the court permits the use of the sealed record. This shall not apply to the use of a sealed record pursuant to subdivision (8) of this subsection. Use of a sealed record pursuant to an exception shall not change the effect of sealing under subsection (b) of this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or a sealing order:

(1) An entity or person that possesses a sealed record, or an attorney for such entity or person, may continue to use it the record for any litigation or claim arising out of the same incident or occurrence or involving the same defendant, including use of the record in reasonable anticipation of litigation.

(2) A criminal justice agency as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a and the Attorney General may use the criminal history record sealed in accordance with section 7602 or 7603 of this title without limitation for criminal justice purposes as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a section 7601 of this title.

(3) A defendant may use a sealed criminal history record in the defendant's criminal proceeding.

(4) A sealed record of a prior violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) shall be admissible as a predicate offense for the purpose of imposing an enhanced penalty for a subsequent violation of that section, in accordance with the provisions of 23 V.S.A. § 1210.

(5) A person or a court in possession of an order issued by a court regarding a matter that was subsequently sealed may file or cite to that decision in any subsequent proceeding. The party or court filing or citing to that decision shall ensure that information regarding the identity of the defendant in the sealed record is redacted.

(6) The Vermont Crime Information Center and Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall have access to sealed criminal history records without limitation for the purpose of responding to queries to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System regarding firearms transfers and attempted transfers.

(7) The State's Attorney, the Attorney General, the person who is the subject of a sealed record, and the attorney for the person who is the subject of the record shall disclose information contained in a sealed criminal history record when required to meet discovery obligations.

(8) The person whose criminal history records have been sealed pursuant to this chapter and the person's attorney may access and use the sealed records.

(9) A law enforcement agency may inspect and receive copies of the sealed criminal history records of any applicant who applies to the agency to be a law enforcement officer or a current employee for the purpose of internal investigation.

(10) Persons or entities conducting research shall have access to a sealed criminal history record to carry out research pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2056b.

(11) Information and materials gathered by the Department for Children and Families during a joint investigation with law enforcement, including law enforcement affidavits and related references to such information and materials, are not criminal history records as defined in subdivision 7601(2) of this title and are considered Department records that shall be maintained and may be utilized as statutorily prescribed by 33 V.S.A. chapter 49 and produced in response to a court order.

(12) Information and materials gathered by Adult Protective Services during a joint investigation with law enforcement, including law enforcement affidavits and other investigative materials, are not criminal history records as defined in subdivision 7601(2) of this title and are considered records of the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, which shall be maintained and may be utilized as authorized by 33 V.S.A. chapter 69 and produced in response to a court order.

(d) Process.

(1) The court shall bar viewing of the sealed offense in any accessible database that it maintains.

(2) Until all charges on a docket have been sealed, the case file shall remain publicly accessible.

(3) When all charges on a docket have been sealed, the case file shall become exempt from public access.

(4) When a sealing order is issued by the court, any person or entity, except the court, that possesses criminal history records and has been provided notice of the order shall:

(A) bar viewing of the sealed offense in any accessible database that it maintains or remove information pertaining to the sealed records from any publicly accessible database that the person or entity maintains; and

(B) clearly label the criminal history record as "SEALED" to ensure compliance with this section.

(e) Special index.

(1) The court shall keep a special index of cases that have been sealed together with the sealing order. The index shall list only the name of the person convicted of the offense, ~~his or her~~ the person's date of birth, the docket number, and the criminal offense that was the subject of the sealing.

(2) The special index and related documents specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be confidential and shall be physically and electronically segregated in a manner that ensures confidentiality and that limits access to authorized persons.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, inspection of the sealing order may be permitted only upon petition by the person who is the subject of the case. The Chief Superior Judge may permit special access to the index and the documents for research purposes pursuant to the rules for public access to court records.

~~(4) The Court Administrator shall establish policies for implementing this subsection.~~

(f) Victims Compensation Program. Upon request, the ~~Victim's~~ Victims Compensation Program shall be provided with a copy, redacted of all information identifying the offender, of the affidavit for the sole purpose of verifying the expenses in a victim's compensation application submitted pursuant to section 5353 of this title.

(g) Restitution. The sealing of a criminal record shall not affect the authority of the Restitution Unit to enforce a restitution order in the same manner as a civil judgment pursuant to subdivision 5362(c)(2) of this title.

§ 7608. VICTIMS

(a) At the time a petition is filed pursuant to this chapter, the respondent shall give notice of the petition to any victim of the offense who is known to the respondent. The victim shall have the right to offer the respondent a statement prior to any stipulation or to offer the court a statement. The

disposition of the petition shall not be unnecessarily delayed pending receipt of a victim's statement. The respondent's inability to locate a victim after a reasonable effort has been made shall not be a bar to granting a petition.

(b) As used in this section, "reasonable effort" means attempting to contact the victim by first-class mail at the victim's last known address ~~and~~, by telephone at the victim's last known phone number, and by email at the victim's last known email address.

§ 7609. ~~EXPUNGEMENT OF~~ SEALING CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS
OF AN INDIVIDUAL A PERSON 18-21 YEARS OF AGE

(a) Procedure Petition. ~~Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the record of the criminal proceedings for an individual who was 18-21 years of age at the time the individual committed a qualifying crime shall be expunged within 30 days after the date on which the individual successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction of the qualifying crime, absent a finding of good cause by the court. The court shall issue an order to expunge all records and files related to the arrest, citation, investigation, charge, adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and probation related to the sentence. A copy of the order shall be sent to each agency, department, or official named in the order. Thereafter, the court, law enforcement officers, agencies, and departments shall reply to any request for information that no record exists with respect to such individual. Notwithstanding this subsection, the record shall not be expunged until restitution and surcharges have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.~~

(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person who was 18-21 years of age at the time the person committed a qualifying crime may file a petition with the court requesting sealing of the criminal history record related to the qualifying crime after 30 days have elapsed since the person completed the terms and conditions for the sentence for the qualifying crime. The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be sealed if the following conditions are met:

(A) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

(B) The respondent has failed to show that sealing would be contrary to the interests of justice.

(2) Order, notice, and effect of sealing shall comply with the provisions of subsections 7607(a) and (b) of this title.

(b) Exceptions.

(1) A criminal history record that includes both qualifying and nonqualifying offenses shall not be eligible for expungement sealing pursuant to this section.

~~(2) The Vermont Crime Information Center shall retain a special index of sentences for sex offenses that require registration pursuant to chapter 167, subchapter 3 of this title. This index shall only list the name and date of birth of the subject of the expunged files and records, the offense for which the subject was convicted, and the docket number of the proceeding that was the subject of the expungement. The special index shall be confidential and shall be accessed only by the Director of the Vermont Crime Information Center and an individual designated for the purpose of providing information to the Department of Corrections in the preparation of a presentence investigation in accordance with 28 V.S.A. §§ 204 and 204a. [Repealed.]~~

~~(c) Petitions. An individual who was 18–21 years of age at the time the individual committed a qualifying crime may file a petition with the court requesting expungement of the criminal history record related to the qualifying crime after 30 days have elapsed since the individual completed the terms and conditions for the sentence for the qualifying crime. The court shall grant the petition and issue an order sealing or expunging the record if it finds that sealing or expunging the record serves the interests of justice. [Repealed.]~~

§ 7610. CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD SEALING SPECIAL FUND

There is established the Criminal History Record Sealing Special Fund, which shall be managed in accordance with 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Fees collected pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1431(e) for the filing of a petition to seal a criminal history record of a violation of 23 V.S.A. § 1201(a) shall be deposited into and credited to this Fund. This Fund shall be available to the

Office of the Court Administrator, the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Vermont Crime Information Center to offset the administrative costs of sealing such records. Balances in the Fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried forward and remain in the Fund.

§ 7611. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE

A State or municipal employee or contractor or any agent of the court, including an attorney and an employee or contractor of the attorney, or a law enforcement officer as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2351a who knowingly accesses

or discloses sealed criminal history record information without authorization shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000.00. Each unauthorized disclosure shall constitute a separate civil violation.

Sec. 2. RIGHT TO NOT DISCLOSE EXPUNGED OR SEALED

CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS

(a) The Secretary of Administration shall notify all State administrative entities of the obligation to notify persons of the right not to disclose an expunged record pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7606(b)(2) or a sealed record pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7607(b)(2).

(b) The Court Administrator shall notify the Judicial Branch of the obligation to notify persons of the right not to disclose an expunged record pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7606(b)(2) or a sealed record pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7607(b)(2).

Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A. § 7041 is amended to read:

§ 7041. DEFERRED SENTENCE

(a) Upon an adjudication of guilt and after the filing of a presentence investigation report, the court may defer sentencing and place the respondent on probation upon such terms and conditions as it may require if a written agreement concerning the deferring of sentence is entered into between the State's Attorney and the respondent and filed with the clerk of the court.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the court may defer sentencing and place the respondent on probation without a written agreement between the State's Attorney and the respondent if the following conditions are met:

(1) [Repealed.]

(2) the crime for which the respondent is being sentenced is not a listed crime as defined in subdivision 5301(7) of this title;

(3) the court orders a presentence investigation in accordance with the procedures set forth in V.R.C.P. Rule 32, unless the State's Attorney agrees to waive the presentence investigation;

(4) the court permits the victim to submit a written or oral statement concerning the consideration of deferment of sentence;

(5) the court reviews the presentence investigation and the victim's impact statement with the parties; and

(6) the court determines that deferring sentence is in the interests of justice.

(c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the court may not defer a sentence for a violation of section 3253a (aggravated sexual assault of a child), section 2602 (lewd and lascivious conduct with a child unless the victim and the defendant were within five years of age and the act was consensual), 3252(c) (sexual assault of a child under 16 unless the victim and the defendant were within five years of age and the act was consensual), 3252(d) or (e) (sexual assault of a child), 3253(a)(8) (aggravated sexual assault), or 3253a (aggravated sexual assault of a child) of this title.

(d) Entry of deferment of sentence shall constitute an appealable judgment for purposes of appeal in accordance with 12 V.S.A. § 2383 and V.R.A.P. Rule 3. Except as otherwise provided, entry of deferment of sentence shall constitute imposition of sentence solely for the purpose of sentence review in accordance with section 7042 of this title. The court may impose sentence at any time if the respondent violates the conditions of the deferred sentence during the period of deferment.

(e) Upon violation of the terms of probation or of the deferred sentence agreement, the court shall impose sentence. Upon fulfillment of the terms of probation and of the deferred sentence agreement, the court shall strike the adjudication of guilt and discharge the respondent. Except as provided in subsection (h) of this section, the record of the criminal proceedings shall be ~~expunged~~ sealed upon the discharge of the respondent from probation, absent a finding of good cause by the court. The court shall issue an order to ~~expunge~~ seal all records and files related to the arrest, citation, investigation, charge, adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and probation related to the deferred sentence. Copies of the order shall be sent to each agency, department, or official named therein. Thereafter, the court, law enforcement officers, agencies, and departments shall reply to any request for information that no record exists with respect to such person upon inquiry in the matter. Notwithstanding this subsection, the record shall not be ~~expunged~~ sealed until restitution has been paid in full.

(f) A deferred sentence imposed under subsection (a) or (b) of this section may include a restitution order issued pursuant to section 7043 of this title. Nonpayment of restitution shall not constitute grounds for imposition of the underlying sentence.

(g) [Repealed.]

(h) The Vermont Crime Information Center shall retain a special index of deferred sentences for sex offenses that require registration pursuant to subchapter 3 of chapter 167 of this title. This index shall only list the name and date of birth of the subject of the ~~expunged~~ sealed files and records, the offense for which the subject was convicted, and the docket number of the

proceeding that was the subject of the ~~expungement~~ sealing. The special index shall be confidential and may be accessed only by the director of the Vermont Crime Information Center and a designated clerical staffperson for the purpose of providing information to the Department of Corrections in the preparation of a presentence investigation in accordance with 28 V.S.A. §§ 204 and 204a.

Sec. 4. APPLICATION TO DEFERRED SENTENCES

Sec. 3 of this act shall apply prospectively to sentences issued on or after July 1, 2025.

Sec. 5. 24 V.S.A. § 2296b is added to read:

§ 2296b. EXPUNGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL VIOLATION RECORDS

(a) Expungement. Two years following the satisfaction of a judgment resulting from an adjudication of a municipal violation, the Judicial Bureau shall make an entry of “expunged” and notify the municipality of such action, provided the person has not been adjudicated for any subsequent municipal violations during that time. The data transfer to the municipality shall include the name, date of birth, ticket number, and offense. Violations of offenses adopted pursuant to chapter 117 of this title shall not be eligible for expungement under this section.

(b) Effect of expungement.

(1) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the individual whose record is expunged shall be treated in all respects as if the individual had never been adjudicated of the violation.

(2) Upon an entry of expunged, the case will be accessible only by the Clerk of the Court for the Judicial Bureau or the Clerk’s designee. Adjudications that have been expunged shall not appear in the results of any Judicial Bureau database search by name, date of birth, or any other data identifying the defendant. Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, any documents or other records related to an expunged adjudication that are maintained outside the Judicial Bureau’s case management system shall be destroyed.

(3) Upon receiving an inquiry from any person regarding an expunged record, the Judicial Bureau and the municipality shall respond that “NO RECORD EXISTS.”

(c) Exception for research entities. Research entities that maintain adjudication records for purposes of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating criminal justice data shall not be subject to the expungement requirements established in this section. Research entities shall abide by the policies

established by the Court Administrator and shall not disclose any identifying information from the records they maintain.

(d) Policies for implementation. The Court Administrator shall establish policies for implementing this section.

(e) Application. This section shall apply to municipal violations that occur on and after July 1, 2025.

Sec. 6. 23 V.S.A. § 2303 is amended to read:

§ 2303. EXPUNGEMENT OF VIOLATION RECORDS

* * *

(e) Application. This section shall apply to motor vehicle violations that occur on and after July 1, 2021.

Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

Rep. Ode of Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Judiciary.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was read the second time, the report of the Committee on Judiciary agreed to, and third reading ordered.

**Second Reading; Proposal of Amendment Agreed to;
Third Reading Ordered**

S. 109

Rep. Rachelson of Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

Reported in favor of its passage in concurrence with proposal of amendment by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

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

§ 164. ADULT COURT DIVERSION PROGRAM

(a) Purpose.

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

(2) The program shall be designed to provide a restorative option for persons alleged to have caused harm in violation of a criminal statute or who have been charged with violating a criminal statute as well as for victims or those acting on a victim's behalf who have been allegedly harmed by the ~~responsible party~~ person referred to the program. The diversion program can accept referrals to the program as follows:

* * *

(c) Adult diversion program policy and referral requirements.

* * *

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

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

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

* * *

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

§ 71. APPOINTMENT AND TERM OF SUPERIOR JUDGES

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

* * *

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

§ 1102. JUDICIAL BUREAU; JURISDICTION

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

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

* * *

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

* * *

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

§ 1106. HEARING

* * *

(d) A Unless otherwise provided by law, a law enforcement officer may void or amend a complaint issued by that officer by so marking the complaint and returning it to the Bureau, regardless of whether the amended complaint is a lesser included violation. At the hearing, a law enforcement officer may, unless otherwise provided by law, void or amend a complaint issued by that officer in the discretion of that officer.

* * *

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

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

Sec. 6. 12 V.S.A. § 5 is amended to read:

§ 5. DISSEMINATION OF ELECTRONIC CASE RECORDS

(a) The Court shall not permit public access via the ~~Internet~~ internet to criminal, family, or probate case records. The Court may permit criminal justice agencies, as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a, ~~Internet~~ internet access to criminal case records for criminal justice purposes, as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2056a.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the Court shall provide licensed Vermont attorneys in good standing with access via the internet, through the Judiciary's public portal website or otherwise, to nonconfidential criminal, family, and probate case records.

(c) This section shall not be construed to prohibit the Court from providing electronic access to:

(1) court schedules of the Superior Court or opinions of the Criminal Division of the Superior Court;

(2) State agencies in accordance with data dissemination contracts entered into under Rule 12 of the Vermont Rules for Public Access to Court Records; or

(3) decisions, recordings of oral arguments, briefs, and printed cases of the Supreme Court.

Sec. 7. 12 V.S.A. § 4937 is amended to read:

§ 4937. ATTORNEY'S FEES

When a mortgage contains an agreement on the part of the mortgagor to pay the mortgagee, in the event of foreclosure, the attorney's fees incident thereto, and claim is made therefor in the complaint, ~~upon hearing~~, the court in which the complaint is brought shall allow such fee as in its judgment is just.

Sec. 8. 13 V.S.A. § 4013 is amended to read:

§ 4013. ZIP GUNS; ~~SWITCHBLADE KNIVES~~

A person who possesses, sells, or offers for sale a weapon commonly known as a "zip" gun, ~~or a weapon commonly known as a switchblade knife, the blade of which is three inches or more in length~~, shall be imprisoned not more than 90 days or fined not more than \$100.00, or both.

Sec. 9. EXPUNGEMENT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS

The court shall order the expungement of criminal history records of convictions of 13 V.S.A. § 4013 for possessing, selling, or offering for sale a switchblade knife that occurred prior to July 1, 2025. The process and effect for expungement of these records shall be as provided for in 13 V.S.A. § 7606 and shall be completed by the court and all entities subject to the order not later than July 1, 2026.

Sec. 10. 13 V.S.A. § 5351(7) is amended to read:

(7) "Victim" means:

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

(B) an intervenor who is physically injured or killed in an attempt to assist the person described in subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7) or ~~the~~ police a protected professional as defined in subdivision 1028(d)(1) of this title;

(C) a surviving immediate family member of a homicide victim, including a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, or other survivor who may suffer severe emotional harm as a result of the victim's death as determined on a case-by-case basis in the discretion of the Board; or

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

Sec. 11. 13 V.S.A. § 7282 is amended to read:

§ 7282. SURCHARGE

* * *

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

Sec. 12. 14 V.S.A. § 2 is amended to read:

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

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

* * *

Sec. 13. 14 V.S.A. § 3068 is amended to read:

§ 3068. HEARING

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

§ 4051. STATUTORY FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY

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

VERMONT STATUTORY FORM POWER OF ATTORNEY IMPORTANT
INFORMATION

* * *

GRANT OF SPECIFIC AUTHORITY (OPTIONAL)

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

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

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

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

() Consent to the modification or termination of a noncharitable irrevocable trust under 14A V.S.A. § 411

() Make a gift, subject to the limitations of 14 V.S.A. § 4047 (gifts) and any special instructions in this power of attorney

~~() Consent to the modification or termination of a noncharitable irrevocable trust under 14A V.S.A. § 411~~

- () Create, amend, or change rights of survivorship
- () Create, amend, or change a beneficiary designation
- () Waive the principal's right to be a beneficiary of a joint and survivor annuity, including a survivor benefit under a retirement plan
- () Exercise fiduciary powers that the principal has authority to delegate
- () Authorize another person to exercise the authority granted under this power of attorney
- () Disclaim or refuse an interest in property, including a power of appointment
- () Exercise authority with respect to elective share under 14 V.S.A. § 319
- () Exercise waiver rights under 14 V.S.A. § 323
- () Exercise authority over the content and catalogue of electronic communications and digital assets under 14 V.S.A. chapter 125 (Vermont Revised Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act)
- () Exercise authority with respect to intellectual property, including, without limitation, copyrights, contracts for payment of royalties, and trademarks
- () Convey, or revoke or revise a grantee designation, by enhanced life estate deed pursuant to 27 V.S.A. chapter 6 or under common law.

* * *

Sec. 15. 14A V.S.A. § 1316 is amended to read:

§ 1316. OFFICE OF TRUST DIRECTOR

Unless the terms of a trust provide otherwise, the rules applicable to a trustee apply to a trust director regarding the following matters:

- (1) acceptance under section 701 of this title;
- (2) giving of bond to secure performance under section 702 of this title;
- (3) reasonable compensation under section 708 of this title;
- (4) resignation under section 705 of this title;
- (5) removal under section 706 of this title; and
- (6) vacancy and appointment of successor under section 704 of this title.

Sec. 16. 33 V.S.A. § 5204(b)(2)(A) is amended to read:

(2)(A)(i) The Family Division of the Superior Court shall hold a hearing under subsection (c) of this section to determine whether jurisdiction should be transferred to the Criminal Division under subsection (a) of this section if the delinquent act set forth in the petition is:

- (I) [Repealed.]
 - (II) human trafficking or aggravated human trafficking in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2652 or 2653;
 - (III) defacing a firearm's serial number in violation of ~~13 V.S.A. § 4024~~ 13 V.S.A. § 4026; or
 - (IV) straw purchasing of firearm in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 4025; and
- (ii) the child had attained 16 years of age but not 19 years of age at the time the act was alleged to have occurred.

Sec. 17. 33 V.S.A. § 5225 is amended to read:

§ 5225. PRELIMINARY HEARING; RISK ASSESSMENT

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

(b) Risk and needs screening.

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

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

* * *

Sec. 18. 27 V.S.A. § 348 is amended to read:

§ 348. INSTRUMENTS CONCERNING REAL PROPERTY VALIDATED

(a) When an instrument of writing shall have been on record in the office of the clerk in the proper town for a period of 15 years, and there is a defect in the instrument because it omitted to state any consideration or was not sealed, witnessed, acknowledged, validly acknowledged, or because a license to sell was not issued or is defective, the instrument shall, from and after the expiration of 15 years from the filing thereof for record, be valid. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any rights acquired by grantees, assignees, or encumbrancers under the instruments described in the preceding sentence, nor shall this section apply to conveyances or other instruments of writing, the validity of which is brought in question in any suit now pending in any courts of the State.

* * *

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

(e) A power of attorney made for the purpose of conveying, leasing, mortgaging, or affecting any interest in real property that has been acknowledged and signed in the presence of at least one witness shall be valid, notwithstanding its failure to comply with 14 V.S.A. § 3503 or the requirements of the Emergency Administrative Rules for Remote Notarial Acts adopted by the Vermont Secretary of State, unless within three years after recording, an action challenging its validity is commenced and a copy of the complaint is recorded in the land records of the town where the power of attorney is recorded. This subsection shall not apply to a power of attorney obtained by fraud or forgery.

(f) Notwithstanding section 305 of this title, a deed, mortgage, lease, or other instrument executed for the purpose of conveying or encumbering real property executed by a person purporting to act as the agent or attorney-in-fact for the party named in the deed, mortgage, lease, or other instrument that has been recorded for at least 15 years in the land records where the real property is located shall be valid even if no power of attorney authorizing and empowering an agent or attorney-in-fact appears of record, unless, within 15 years after recording, an action challenging the validity of the deed, mortgage, lease, or other instrument is commenced and a copy of the complaint is recorded in the land records of the town where the property is located. This subsection shall not apply to an instrument obtained by fraud or forgery.

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

§ 1003. STATE OFFICERS

* * *

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

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

* * *

Sec. 20. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 27, Sec. 5 (forensic facility report) is amended to read:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

Sec. 21. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 40, Sec. 4 is amended to read:

Sec. 4. REPEALS

* * *

(c) 28 V.S.A. § 126 (Coordinated Justice Reform Advisory Council) is repealed on ~~July 1, 2028~~ July 1, 2025.

Sec. 22. REPEAL

2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Secs. 99 and 100 (amendments to 18 V.S.A. §§ 4810(d)–(j) and 4811 that prohibited public inebriates from being incarcerated in a Department of Corrections’ facility) are repealed.

Sec 23. 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 105 is amended to read:

Sec. 105. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

(c) ~~Secs. 99 and 100 (amending 18 V.S.A. §§ 4910 and 4811) shall take effect on July 1, 2025. [Deleted.]~~

* * *

Sec. 24. FIREARM SURRENDER ORDER COMPLIANCE WORKING
GROUP; REPORT

(a) Creation. The Office of the Attorney General shall convene a Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group to develop a uniform process to ensure compliance with court orders to surrender firearms. The Working Group shall examine the statutory or policy changes necessary to create a uniform process to monitor compliance, support entities charged with storing and returning surrendered firearms pursuant to court orders, and identify a stable and reliable funding source for any additional resources needed to monitor compliance.

(b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Attorney General or designee, who shall be the chair;

(2) the Chief Superior Court Judge or designee;

(3) the Defender General or designee;

(4) one State’s Attorney or designee, appointed by the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs;

(5) a member, appointed by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;

(6) a member of the Vermont State Police, appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety;

(7) a police chief, appointed by the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police; and

(8) a federal firearms licensee, appointed by the Attorney General.

(c) Consultation. The Working Group shall consult with stakeholders including:

(1) the Commissioner of Corrections;

(2) family law practitioners;

(3) victim advocates;

(4) advocates from culturally specific advocacy organizations that work with domestic violence victims;

(5) the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs;

(6) the Vermont Office of the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms;

(7) the Vermont Medical Society;

(8) the Commissioner of Mental Health;

(9) the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services; and

(10) the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence.

(d) Report. On or before November 15, 2025, the Working Group shall report its recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary and to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee. The report shall include:

(1) a workable statewide compliance model that is adaptable to both the Family and Criminal Divisions of the Superior Courts and that ensures:

(A) accountability of respondents and defendants while addressing safety needs of the plaintiffs and victims; and

(B) proper storage and return of firearms surrendered pursuant to court orders; and

(2) recommendations for any legislative changes necessary to support the model.

(e) Meetings. The Task Force shall meet not more than six times.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task Force who are not employees of the State of Vermont or who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings.

Sec. 25. 15A V.S.A. § 3-504 is amended to read:

§ 3-504. GROUNDS FOR TERMINATING RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT
AND CHILD

(a) If a respondent answers or appears at the hearing and asserts parental rights, the court shall proceed with the hearing expeditiously. If the court finds, upon clear and convincing evidence, that any one of the following grounds exists and that termination is in the best interests of the minor, the court shall order the termination of any parental relationship of the respondent to the minor:

* * *

(2) In the case of a minor over six months of age at the time the petition is filed, the respondent did not exercise parental responsibility for a period of at least six months immediately preceding the filing of the petition. In making a determination under this subdivision, the court shall consider all relevant factors, which may include the respondent's failure to:

(A) make reasonable and consistent payments, in accordance with the respondent's financial means, for the support of the minor, although legally obligated to do so;

(B) regularly communicate or visit with the minor; or

(C) during any time the minor was not in the physical custody of the other parent, manifest an ability and willingness to assume legal and physical custody of the minor.

* * *

Sec. 26. Sec. 1. 15 V.S.A. § 202 is amended to read:

§ 202. PENALTY FOR DESERTION OR NONSUPPORT

A married person who, without just cause, shall desert or willfully neglect or refuse to provide for the support and maintenance of ~~his or her~~ the person's spouse and children, leaving them in destitute or necessitous circumstances or a parent who, without lawful excuse, shall desert or willfully neglect or refuse to provide for the support and maintenance of ~~his or her~~ the child ~~or an adult child possessed of sufficient pecuniary or physical ability to support his or her~~

~~parents, who unreasonably neglects or refuses to provide such support when the parent is destitute, unable to support himself or herself, and resident in this State,~~ shall be imprisoned not more than two years or fined not more than \$300.00, or both. Should a fine be imposed, the court may order the same to be paid in whole or in part to the needy spouse,~~parent,~~ or to the guardian, custodian, or trustee of the child. The Office of Child Support attorneys, in addition to any other duly authorized person, may prosecute cases under this section in Vermont Superior Court.

Sec. 27. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 19, Sec. 5 is amended to read:

Sec. 5. [Deleted.]

Sec. 28. 2023 Acts and Resolves No. 19, Sec. 6 is amended to read:

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

* * *

~~(b) Sec. 5 (marriage licenses; 32 V.S.A. § 1712) shall take effect on July 1, 2025. [Deleted.]~~

* * *

Sec. 29. 13 V.S.A. § 7556 is amended to read:

§ 7556. APPEAL FROM CONDITIONS OF RELEASE OR BAIL

REVOCATION DENIAL

(a) A person who is detained, or whose release on a condition requiring ~~him or her~~ the person to return to custody after specified hours is continued, after review of ~~his or her~~ the person's application pursuant to subsection 7554(d) or (e) of this title by a judicial officer, other than a judge of the court having original jurisdiction over the offense with which ~~he or she~~ the person is charged or a Justice of the Supreme Court, may move the court having original jurisdiction over the offense with which ~~he or she~~ the person is charged to amend the order. The motion shall be determined promptly.

(b) When a person is detained after a court denies a motion under subsection (a) of this section or when conditions of release have been imposed or amended by the judge of the court having original jurisdiction over the offense charged, an appeal may be taken to a single Justice of the Supreme Court who may hear the matter or at ~~his or her~~ the Justice's discretion refer it to the entire Supreme Court for hearing. No further appeal may lie from the ruling of a single Justice in matters to which this subsection applies. Any order so appealed shall be affirmed if it is supported by the proceedings below. If the order is not supported, the Supreme Court or single Justice hearing the matter may remand the case for a further hearing or may, with or without

additional evidence, order the person released. The appeal shall be determined forthwith.

(c)(1) When a person is released, with or without bail or other conditions of release, an appeal may be taken by the State to a single Justice of the Supreme Court who may hear the matter or at ~~his or her~~ the Justice's discretion refer it to the entire Supreme Court for hearing. No further appeal may lie from the ruling of a single Justice in matters to which this subsection applies. Any order so appealed shall be affirmed if it is supported by the proceedings below. If the order is not supported, the Supreme Court or single Justice hearing the matter may remand the case for a further hearing or may, with or without additional evidence, modify or vacate the order. The appeal shall be determined ~~forthwith~~ promptly.

(2) When a request to revoke bail pursuant to section 7575 of this title is denied, a prosecutor may appeal the court's order in accordance with the procedure outlined in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(d) A person held without bail under section 7553a of this title prior to trial shall be entitled to an independent, second evidentiary hearing on the merits of the denial of bail, which shall be a hearing de novo by a single Justice of the Supreme Court forthwith. Pursuant to 4 V.S.A. § 22 the Chief Justice may appoint and assign a retired justice or judge with ~~his or her~~ the retired justice's or judge's consent or a Superior judge or District judge to a special assignment on the Supreme Court to conduct that de novo hearing. Such hearing de novo shall be an entirely new evidentiary hearing without regard to the record compiled before the trial court; except, the parties may stipulate to the admission of portions of the trial court record.

(e) A person held without bail prior to trial shall be entitled to review of that determination by a panel of three Supreme Court Justices within seven business days after bail is denied.

Sec. 30. 28 V.S.A. § 818 is amended to read:

§ 818. EARNED TIME; REDUCTION OF TERM

* * *

(b) The earned time program implemented pursuant to this section shall comply with the following standards:

* * *

(4) The Department shall:

(A) ensure that all victims of record are notified of the earned time program at its outset and made aware of the option to receive notifications from the Department pursuant to this subdivision;

(B) provide timely notice not less frequently than every 90 days to the offender, and to any victim who opts to receive the notice, any time the offender receives a reduction in ~~his or her~~ the offender's term of supervision pursuant to this section;

(C) maintain a system that documents and records all such reductions in each offender's permanent record; and

(D) record any reduction in an offender's term of supervision pursuant to this section on a monthly basis and ensure that victims who want information regarding changes in ~~scheduled~~ an offender's minimum release dates have access to such information.

* * *

Sec. 31. VICTIM NOTIFICATION SYSTEM TASK FORCE; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Victim Notification System Task Force to review and improve the responsiveness of Vermont's victim notification system.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee;

(2) the Executive Director of the Center for Crime Victim Services or designee;

(3) the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee;

(4) a member, appointed by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;

(5) the Victims Service Director of the Vermont State Police; and

(6) two persons who are either victims or survivors of crimes, appointed by the Center for Crime Victim Services.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall study the current state of Vermont's victim notification system, including:

(1) improving victims' accessibility to information;

(2) ensuring that the entire notification process is trauma-informed, including all notifications, communications, and informational materials;

(3) expanding the use of automated notification systems in order to increase options and maximize communication choices for victims and survivors; and

(4) recommendations for necessary training and resources.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of Corrections.

(e) Report. On or before November 15, 2025, the Task Force shall submit its findings and recommendations as a written report in the form of proposed legislation to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee, the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Judiciary, and the Senate Committees on Institutions and on Judiciary.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Corrections or designee shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on February 15, 2026.

Sec. 32. ADULT INVOLUNTARY GUARDIANSHIP WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Adult Involuntary Guardianship Working Group to study jurisdiction of proceedings involving the involuntary guardianship of adults. The Working Group shall examine the advisability of consolidating adult involuntary guardianships under 14 V.S.A. chapter 111, subchapter 12 ("Title 14 involuntary guardianships") with guardianships for persons with developmental disabilities under 18 V.S.A. chapter 215 ("Title 18 guardianships"), or otherwise amending the statutes to ensure that respondents under Title 18 guardianships have access to voluntary guardianships that is equal to the access to voluntary guardianships available under Title 14.

(b) Membership. The Adult Involuntary Guardianship Working Group shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living or designee;

(2) the Chief Superior Court Judge or designee;

- (3) the Court Administrator or designee;
- (4) a superior judge with experience in Title 18 guardianships, appointed by the Chief Justice;
- (5) a probate judge, appointed by the Chief Justice;
- (6) a guardian ad litem, appointed by the Court Administrator;
- (7) an attorney with experience in adult guardianships, appointed by the Vermont Bar Association;
- (8) an attorney with experience in adult guardianships, appointed by Vermont Legal Aid;
- (9) an independent mental health evaluator, appointed by the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living; and
- (10) a member, appointed by the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

(c) Meetings.

(1) The Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) The Working Group shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(d) Report.

(1)(A) On or before December 15, 2025, the Working Group shall report its recommendations, including any proposed legislative changes, to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary, the House Committee on Human Services, and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

(B) The report shall recommend whether:

(i) Title 14 involuntary guardianship proceedings and Title 18 guardianship proceedings should be consolidated in one division of the Superior Court; or

(ii) Title 14 involuntary guardianship proceedings and Title 18 guardianship proceedings should remain in separate divisions of the Superior Court as provided for in existing law.

(2) With respect to subdivisions (d)(1)(B)(i) and (ii) of this section, the report shall address:

(A) the judicial resources and oversight that would be required;

(B) whether, notwithstanding 12 V.S.A. §2553 or 2555, the Vermont Supreme Court should have appellate jurisdiction over guardianship proceedings;

(C) the relationship between guardianships under subdivisions (d)(1)(B)(i) and (ii) of this section and voluntary guardianships under 14 V.S.A. § 2671; and

(D) any other matters deemed relevant by the Working Group, including any matters not currently under the jurisdiction of Title 14 guardianships or Title 18 guardianships.

Sec. 33. 4 V.S.A. § 39 is amended to read:

§ 39. CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS; COUNTY COURTHOUSES

(a) On or before October 1 each year, any county requesting capital funds for its courthouse, or court operations, shall submit a request to the Court Administrator. As used in this subsection, “court operations” does not include operating expenses.

(b) The Court Administrator shall evaluate requests based on the following criteria:

(1) whether the funding request is consistent with a capital program developed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(3);

(2) whether the project that is the subject of the request has been included in the list of capital projects in the county’s budget pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(1), and, if so, the description of the project included in the budget;

(3) whether the county has established a capital reserve fund pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(3), and, if so, the amount of annual contributions the county has made to the fund;

(4) whether the funding request relates to an emergency that will affect the court operations and the administration of justice;

(2)(5) whether there is a State-owned courthouse in the county that could absorb court activities in lieu of this capital investment;

(3)(6) whether the county consistently has invested in major maintenance in the courthouse;

(4)(7) whether the request relates to a State-mandated function;

~~(5)~~(8) whether the request diverts resources of other current Judiciary capital priorities;

~~(6)~~(9) whether the request is consistent with the long-term capital needs of the Judiciary, including providing court services adapted to modern needs and requirements; and

~~(7)~~(10) any other criteria as deemed appropriate by the Court Administrator.

(c) Based on the criteria described in subsection (b) of this section, the Court Administrator shall make a recommendation to the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services regarding whether the county's request should be included as part of the Judiciary's request for capital funding in the Governor's annual proposed capital budget request.

(d) On or before January 15 of each year, the Court Administrator shall advise the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions of all county requests received and the Court Administrator's recommendations for the proposed capital budget request.

Sec. 34. REPORT

On or before January 15, 2026, the Court Administrator and a representative of the Association of County Judges appointed by the President of that Association shall jointly report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions on the progress made to implement the provisions of Sec. 33 of this act. The report shall include a description of the steps taken and processes considered, and any proposed legislative changes necessary, to ensure that capital budget requests for county courthouses include the information required by Sec. 33 of this act.

Sec. 35. 23 V.S.A. § 1210(c) is amended to read:

(c) Second offense. A person convicted of violating section 1201 of this title who has been convicted of another violation of that section within the last 20 years shall be fined not more than \$1,500.00 or imprisoned not more than two years, or both. At least ~~200~~ 80 hours of community service shall be performed, or 60 consecutive hours of the sentence of imprisonment shall be served and may not be suspended or deferred or served as a supervised sentence, except that credit for a sentence of imprisonment may be received for time served in a residential alcohol facility pursuant to sentence if the program is successfully completed.

Sec. 36. REPEAL

Sec. 35 of this act shall be repealed on July 1, 2028.

Sec. 37. FAMILY FORENSIC EVALUATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The General Assembly requests that the Chief Superior Judge, the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation, and the Executive Director of the Vermont Psychological Association work collaboratively to examine the following:

(1) the extent of the need for and geographic distribution of family forensic evaluators in complex parental rights and responsibilities cases heard in the Family Division;

(2) barriers to increasing the availability of family forensic evaluators in Vermont and whether protections regarding ethical complaints are warranted; and

(3) strategies for increasing the number of family forensic evaluators in Vermont.

(b) The General Assembly requests that the parties listed in subsection (a) of this section submit their recommendations to the General Assembly on or before November 1, 2025.

Sec. 38. CHILD AND PARENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION; TASK
FORCE; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Child and Parent Legal Representation Task Force to study the need and viability of an improved legal representation system for children and families who are involved in judicial or administrative proceedings concerning Children in Need of Care or Supervision (CHINS), relief from abuse petitions, or substantiations of abuse or neglect.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court or designee;

(2) the Court Administrator or designee;

(3) the Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families or designee;

(4) the Defender General or designee;

(5) the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate or designee;

(6) the Executive Director of Voices for Vermont's Children or designee; and

(7) the Executive Director of the Vermont Parent Representation Center, Inc.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall assess and determine whether reform of Vermont's legal representation for children and families is necessary by exploring the following topics:

(1) standards recommended by the American Bar Association, U.S. Children's Bureau, and the *Study of CHINS Case Processing in Vermont* authored by the National Center for State Courts and published in May of 2021;

(2) compliance with funding and reporting requirements in order for Vermont to leverage funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act;

(3) identifying the processes and amounts of Title IV-E funds and other funding sources to support any reformed system;

(4) using an interdisciplinary model of representation, including pay scales, performance measures, supervision and evaluation processes, and recommended caseloads for attorneys, social workers, and other child and family representatives; and

(5) other topics relevant to creating a reformed child and parent representation system.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Court Administrator's Office.

(e) Report. On or before December 15, 2025, the Task Force shall submit a report that proposes any necessary reforms to the legal representation system for children and families who are involved in CHINS proceedings, relief from abuse petitions, or substantiations of abuse or neglect, along with proposed legislation to implement such reforms to the Senate Committees on Judiciary and on Health and Welfare and the House Committees on Judiciary and on Human Services.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or designee shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of designee shall be the chair.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on May 15, 2026.

Sec. 39. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that Sec. 1 shall take effect on July 2, 2025 and Sec. 33 shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Rep. Burkhardt of South Burlington, for the Committee on Ways and Means, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Judiciary.

Rep. Squirrell of Underhill, for the Committee on Appropriations, recommended that the bill pass in concurrence with the proposal of amendment recommended by the Committee on Judiciary.

The bill, having appeared on the Notice Calendar, was taken up and read the second time.

Pending the question, Shall the House propose to the Senate to amend the bill as recommended by the Committee on Judiciary?, **Rep. Rachelson of Burlington** moved to amend the report of the Committee on Judiciary as follows:

First: By striking out Secs. 22 and 23 in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 22. [Deleted.]

Sec. 23. [Deleted.]

Second: In Sec. 24, Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group, in subsection (c), by striking out subdivisions (9) and (10) in their entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

(9) the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services;

(10) the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence; and

(11) the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife.

Third: In Sec. 24, Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group, in subsections (e) and (f), by striking out “Task Force” and inserting in lieu thereof “Working Group”

Fourth: By adding two new sections to be Secs. 25a and 25b to read as follows:

Sec. 25a. 33 V.S.A. § 5231(d) is amended to read:

(d) Termination of parental rights. If the Commissioner or the attorney for the child seeks an order terminating parental rights of one or both parents and transfer of custody to the Commissioner without limitation as to adoption, the court shall consider the best interests of the child in accordance with section

5114 of this title. The Department's Family Services Division shall not consider payment of child support to the Family Services Division to offset the cost of foster care as a factor in a petition to terminate parental rights.

Sec. 25b. 33 V.S.A. § 5317(d) is amended to read:

(d) Termination of parental rights. If the Commissioner or the attorney for the child seeks an order at disposition terminating the parental rights of one or both parents and transfer of legal custody to the Commissioner without limitation as to adoption, the court shall consider the best interests of the child in accordance with section 5114 of this title. The Department's Family Services Division shall not consider payment of child support to the Family Services Division to offset the cost of foster care as a factor in a petition to terminate parental rights.

Fifth: In Sec. 30, 28 V.S.A. § 818, in subdivision (b)(4)(D), by striking out "dates" and inserting in lieu thereof "dates date"

Sixth: In Sec. 31, Victim Notification System Task Force, by striking out subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee;
- (2) the Executive Director of the Center for Crime Victim Services or designee;
- (3) the Executive Director of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee;
- (4) a member, appointed by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;
- (5) the Victims Service Director of the Vermont State Police;
- (6) two persons who are either victims or survivors of crimes, appointed by the Center for Crime Victim Services; and
- (7) a member, appointed by the Commissioner of Corrections, who is familiar with the capability and technical operations of the VINE system.

Seventh: In Sec. 32, Adult Involuntary Guardianship Working Group, in subsection (d), by striking out subdivision (2) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (2) to read as follows:

(2) With respect to subdivisions (1)(B)(i) and (ii) of this subsection (d), the report shall address:

- (A) the judicial resources and oversight that would be required;

(B) whether, notwithstanding 12 V.S.A. § 2553 or 2555, the Vermont Supreme Court should have appellate jurisdiction over guardianship proceedings;

(C) the relationship between guardianships under subdivisions (1)(B)(i) and (ii) of this subsection (d) and voluntary guardianships under 14 V.S.A. § 2671;

(D) any legislative changes that would need to be made under either recommendation to ensure that respondents under Title 18 guardianships have access to voluntary guardianships that is equal to the access to voluntary guardianships available under Title 14; and

(E) any other matters deemed relevant by the Working Group, including any matters not currently under the jurisdiction of Title 14 guardianships or Title 18 guardianships.

Eighth: By striking out Sec. 38, Child and Parent Legal Representation Task Force, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 38 to read as follows:

**Sec. 38. CHILD AND PARENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION; TASK
FORCE; REPORT**

(a) Creation. There is created the Child and Parent Legal Representation Task Force to study the need and viability of an improved legal representation system for children and families who are involved in judicial or administrative proceedings concerning Children in Need of Care or Supervision (CHINS) or substantiations of abuse or neglect.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court or designee, who shall be the chair;

(2) the Court Administrator or designee;

(3) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

(4) the Defender General or designee;

(5) the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate or designee;

(6) the Executive Director of Voices for Vermont's Children or designee;

(7) the Executive Director of the Vermont Parent Representation Center, Inc.;

(8) the Attorney General or designee; and

(9) the Executive Director of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall assess and determine whether reform of Vermont's legal representation for children and families is necessary by exploring the following topics:

(1) standards recommended by the American Bar Association, U.S. Children's Bureau, and the *Study of CHINS Case Processing in Vermont* authored by the National Center for State Courts and published in May of 2021;

(2) compliance with funding and reporting requirements in order for Vermont to leverage funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act;

(3) identifying the processes and amounts of Title IV-E funds and other funding sources to support any reformed system;

(4) using an interdisciplinary model of representation, including pay scales, performance measures, supervision and evaluation processes, and recommended caseloads for attorneys, social workers, and other child and family representatives; and

(5) other topics relevant to creating a reformed child and parent representation system.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Court Administrator's Office.

(e) Report. On or before December 15, 2025, the Task Force shall submit a report that proposes any necessary reforms to the legal representation system for children and families who are involved in CHINS proceedings or substantiations of abuse or neglect, along with proposed legislation to implement such reforms to the Senate Committees on Judiciary and on Health and Welfare and the House Committees on Judiciary and on Human Services.

(f) Meetings.

(1) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or designee shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(3) The Task Force shall cease to exist on May 15, 2026.

Which was agreed to. Thereupon, the report of the Committee on Judiciary, as amended, was agreed to, and third reading ordered.

Message from the Senate No. 60

A message was received from the Senate by Ms. Gradel, its Assistant Secretary, as follows:

Madam Speaker:

I am directed to inform the House that:

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 167. An act relating to establishing the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Grant at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 266. An act relating to the 340B prescription drug pricing program.

And has passed the same in concurrence with proposal of amendment in the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

The Governor has informed the Senate that on the 15th day of May, he approved and signed bills originating in the Senate of the following titles:

S. 27. An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports.

S. 36. An act relating to the delivery and payment of certain services provided through the Agency of Human Services, services for persons who are incapacitated, and Human Services Board proceedings.

The Senate has on its part adopted concurrent resolutions originating in the House of the following titles:

H.C.R. 141. House concurrent resolution in memory of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) engineer Edward M. Hathaway.

H.C.R. 142. House concurrent resolution honoring Steven D. Faccio of Strafford for his inspiring leadership as a conservation biologist.

H.C.R. 143. House concurrent resolution honoring former Pawlet First Constable David Ricard Sr. for his outstanding municipal public service.

H.C.R. 144. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps.

H.C.R. 145. House concurrent resolution celebrating the 35th anniversary of the installation of the first piece of art for the Art in State Buildings Program.

H.C.R. 146. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Bennington Fire Department's management of the annual Bennington Battle Day Weekend Parade and festivities.

H.C.R. 147. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. Navy.

H.C.R. 148. House concurrent resolution in memory of distinguished Vermont attorney Richard T. Cassidy of Burlington.

H.C.R. 149. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 175th anniversary of the Bennington Fire Department.

H.C.R. 150. House concurrent resolution congratulating Bennington Lodge No. 567 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks on 125 years of community service and good fellowship.

Adjournment

At eleven o'clock and thirty-one minutes in the forenoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until Monday, May 19, 2025, at two o'clock and thirty minutes in the afternoon, pursuant to the provisions of J.R.S. 26.

Concurrent Resolutions Adopted

The following concurrent resolutions, having been placed on the Consent Calendar on the preceding legislative day, and no member having requested floor consideration as provided by Rule 16b of the Joint Rules of the Senate and House of Representatives, are hereby adopted on the part of the House:

H.C.R. 141

House concurrent resolution in memory of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) engineer Edward M. Hathaway

H.C.R. 142

House concurrent resolution honoring Steven D. Faccio of Strafford for his inspiring leadership as a conservation biologist

H.C.R. 143

House concurrent resolution honoring former Pawlet First Constable David Ricard Sr. for his outstanding municipal public service

H.C.R. 144

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps

H.C.R. 145

House concurrent resolution celebrating the 35th anniversary of the installation of the first piece of art for the Art in State Buildings Program

H.C.R. 146

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Bennington Fire Department's management of the annual Bennington Battle Day Weekend Parade and festivities

H.C.R. 147

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. Navy

H.C.R. 148

House concurrent resolution in memory of distinguished Vermont attorney Richard T. Cassidy of Burlington

H.C.R. 149

House concurrent resolution commemorating the 175th anniversary of the Bennington Fire Department

H.C.R. 150

House concurrent resolution congratulating Bennington Lodge No. 567 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks on 125 years of community service and good fellowship

[The full text of the concurrent resolutions appeared in the House Calendar Addendum on the preceding legislative day and will appear in the Public Acts and Resolves of the 2025 Biennial Session.]