

Journal of the House

Thursday, March 12, 2026

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

Devotional Exercises

A moment of silence was observed in lieu of a devotional.

Message from the Senate No. 25

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 House proposal of amendment to Senate bill of the following title:

S. 60. An act relating to establishing the Farm and Forestry Operations Security Special Fund to provide payments for farm and forestry operation losses due to weather conditions.

And has concurred therein.

The Senate has considered a bill originating in the House of the following title:

H. 649. An act relating to captive insurance companies.

And has passed the same in concurrence.

The Senate has adopted a proposed amendment to the Vermont Constitution entitled:

Prop 4. Declaration of rights; government for the people; equality of rights.

In the adoption of which the concurrence of the House is requested.

Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Vermont Referred to Committee

Proposal 4

Subject: Declaration of rights; government for the people; equality of rights

Sec. 1. PURPOSE

(a) This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to specify that the government must not deny equal treatment under the law on account of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin. The Constitution is our founding legal document stating the overarching values of our society. This amendment is in keeping with the values espoused by the current Vermont Constitution. Chapter I, Article 1 declares "That all persons are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent, and unalienable rights." Chapter I, Article 7 states "That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people." The core value reflected in Article 7 is that all people should be afforded all the benefits and protections bestowed by the government, and that the government should not confer special advantages upon the privileged. This amendment would expand upon the principles of equality and liberty by ensuring that the government does not create or perpetuate the legal, social, or economic inferiority of any class of people. This proposed constitutional amendment is not intended to limit the scope of rights and protections afforded by any other provision in the Vermont Constitution.

(b) Providing for equality of rights as a fundamental principle in the Constitution would serve as a foundation for protecting the rights and dignity of historically marginalized populations and addressing existing inequalities. This amendment would reassert the broad principles of personal liberty and equality reflected in the Constitution of the State of Vermont with authoritative force, longevity, and symbolic importance.

Sec. 2. Article 23 of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is added to read:

Article 23. [Equality of rights]

That the people are guaranteed equal protection under the law. The State shall not deny equal treatment under the law on account of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted or applied to prevent the adoption or implementation of measures intended to provide equality of treatment and opportunity for members of groups that have historically been subject to discrimination.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

The amendment set forth in Sec. 2 shall become a part of the Constitution of the State of Vermont on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November 2026 when ratified and adopted by the people of this State in accordance with the provisions of 17 V.S.A. chapter 32.

Was read by title and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

House Bills Introduced

House bills of the following titles were severally introduced, read the first time, and referred to committee or placed on the Notice Calendar as follows:

H. 927

By the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs,
House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections for the 2026 legislative session

Pursuant to House Rule 48, placed on the Notice Calendar.

H. 928

By the Committee on Environment

House bill, entitled

An act relating to technical corrections to fish and wildlife statutes

Pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, to the Committee on Ways and Means.

H. 929

By Reps. Arsenault of Williston, Burkhardt of South Burlington, Graning of Jericho, and Krasnow of South Burlington,

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the form of school budgets

To the Committee on Education.

Senate Bill Referred

S. 243

Senate bill, entitled

An act relating to distributing funds to the Vermont Language Justice Project

Was read the first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services.

Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar

Bills Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), affecting the revenue of the State, the following House bills were referred to the Committee on Ways and Means:

H. 294

House bill, entitled

An act relating to commissary and telecommunications prices in State correctional facilities and fair compensation for incarcerated labor

H. 657

House bill, entitled

An act relating to enabling unaccompanied homeless youth to obtain certain services without parental consent

**Pending Entry on the Notice Calendar
Bills Referred to the Committee on Appropriations**

Pending entry on the Notice Calendar, and pursuant to House Rule 35(a), carrying an appropriation, the following House bills were referred to the Committee on Appropriations:

H. 718

House bill, entitled

An act relating to building energy efficiency

H. 775

House bill, entitled

An act relating to creating tools for housing production

Communication from Rep. McFaun of Barre Town

“March 11, 2026

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

It is with deep regret that I inform you that because of family responsibilities I feel it necessary for me to resign from my position as a Representative in the Vermont House.

My resignation is effective April 3, 2026.

It has been a great honor to serve my constituents and the people of Vermont for so many years. Being a Representative has been one of the most important and rewarding positions I have ever held. I will miss being here with all the friends I have made over the years working together to help make the lives of Vermonters better.

Sincerely,

Francis “Topper” McFaun”

Amendment Offered; Question Divided; Third Reading; Bill Passed**H. 512**

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the regulation of the event ticketing market

Was taken up and, pending third reading of the bill, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** moved to amend the bill as follows:

First: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 2B, in section 2479f, by striking out subdivision (a)(3) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) “Reseller” means a person engaged in the resale of tickets, except that “reseller” does not include an individual reselling a ticket purchased for personal use for a single event.

Second: In Sec. 1, 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 2B, in section 2479f, by striking out subdivision (c)(3) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) This subsection shall not apply to the resale of a ticket under a written contract with the ticket issuer for the resale of tickets at a price greater than 110 percent of the price of the original ticket if the written contract is executed prior to July 1, 2026.

Thereupon, **Rep. Donahue of Northfield** asked that the question be divided by its two instances of amendment, and the Speaker ruled the question was divisible in that manner.

Thereafter, the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Donahue of Northfield in the first instance of amendment?, was disagreed to.

Thereupon, the question, Shall the bill be amended as offered by Rep. Donahue of Northfield in the second instance of amendment?, was disagreed to.

Thereafter, the bill was read the third time and passed.

Third Reading; Bills Passed

House bills of the following titles were severally taken up, read the third time, and passed:

H. 573

House bill, entitled

An act relating to the first certification of an emergency examination

H. 578

House bill, entitled

An act relating to penalties and procedures for animal cruelty offenses

H. 686

House bill, entitled

An act relating to expanding identification of certain lobbying advertisements

H. 744

House bill, entitled

An act relating to procedures for arrest without a warrant

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 753

Rep. Torre of Moretown, for the Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to utility service disconnections and ratepayer protections

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE

This act may be cited as the “Vermont Energy Equity Law.”

Sec. 2. UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS; REPORT

For the purpose of providing policymakers with the data necessary for monitoring and responding to trends in the residential electric and gas sectors, particularly with respect to safeguarding the welfare of ratepayers, the Commissioner of Public Service shall conduct an annual assessment of involuntary residential service disconnections. The assessment shall take into consideration the monthly disconnection reports prepared by electric and gas utilities pursuant to Public Utility Commission, Disconnection of Residential Gas, Electric, and Water Service (CVR 30-000-3300), Rule 3.308(B); relevant consumer assistance records maintained by the Consumer Affairs and Public Information Division; and any other data deemed appropriate by the Commissioner. The Commissioner shall report findings and recommendations related to the assessment to the House Committee on Energy and Digital Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Finance on or before January 15, 2027, and annually thereafter. The report required by this section may be

included in the Department's Annual Energy Report to the General Assembly or may be submitted in a standalone report, in the Commissioner's discretion.

Sec. 3. UTILITY SERVICE DISCONNECTIONS; RULEMAKING

On or before January 1, 2028, or upon the initiation of any rulemaking pertaining to Public Utility Commission, Disconnection of Residential Gas, Electric, and Water Service (CVR 30-000-3300), Rule 3.300, whichever occurs first, the Public Utility Commission shall adopt rules that:

(1) curtail electric utility service disconnections during periods of extreme heat, as defined by the Commission, which may include a lower temperature threshold for households comprising persons who are 62 years of age or older;

(2) clarify that, in Rule 3.301(G), a licensed physician assistant or a nurse practitioner may issue a physician's certificate; and

(3) require due consideration of medical judgment regarding the duration of a health hazard indicated in a physician's certificate when establishing the disconnection protection period for a health hazard.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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

Second Reading; Bill Amended; Third Reading Ordered

H. 849

Rep. LaLonde of South Burlington, for the Committee on Judiciary, to which had been referred House bill, entitled

An act relating to a civil action for damages for interference with State or federal constitutional rights by any government official

Reported in favor of its passage when amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 12 V.S.A. chapter 205 is added to read:

CHAPTER 205. DEPRIVATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

§ 5797. CIVIL ACTION

(a) Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, subjects or causes to be subjected any citizen of the State of Vermont or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of

any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution of the United States shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress, except that in any action brought against a judicial officer for an act or omission taken in the officer's judicial capacity, injunctive relief shall not be granted unless a declaratory decree was violated or declaratory relief was unavailable.

(b) For purposes of this section, "color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage" includes color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage of the United States and of any U.S. state or territory or the District of Columbia.

(c) Any defense available to a defendant under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 is likewise and to the same extent available to any defendant in an action brought under subsection (a) of this section. This subsection does not alter, amend, create, or support a qualified or absolute immunity defense in any other action or proceeding brought under any other provision of Vermont law.

(d) It is the intent of the General Assembly that, in construing this section, the courts of this State will be guided by the construction of 42 U.S.C. § 1983, as amended, as interpreted by the courts of the United States.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: "An act relating to a civil action for damages for deprivation of federal constitutional rights by any government official"

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

Pending the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Judiciary?, **Rep. Houghton of Essex Junction** demanded the Yeas and Nays, which demand was sustained by the Constitutional number. The Clerk proceeded to call the roll and the question, Shall the bill be amended as recommended by the Committee on Judiciary?, was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 97. Nays, 39.

Those who voted in the affirmative are:

Arsenault of Williston
Austin of Colchester
Bartholomew of Hartland
Bartley of Fairfax
Berbeco of Winooski
Birong of Vergennes
Bishop of Colchester

Eastes of Guilford
Emmons of Springfield
Feltus of Lyndon
Garofano of Essex
Goldman of Rockingham
Goodnow of Brattleboro
Graning of Jericho

Micklus of Milton
Mihaly of Calais
Minier of South Burlington
Morgan, L. of Milton
Morgan, M. of Milton
Morris of Springfield
Morrow of Weston

Black of Essex	Greer of Bennington	Mrowicki of Putney
Bluemle of Burlington	Harple of Glover	Nigro of Bennington
Boyden of Cambridge	Headrick of Burlington	Noyes of Wolcott
Brady of Williston	Holcombe of Norwich	Nugent of South Burlington
Branagan of Georgia	Hooper of Randolph	Ode of Burlington *
Brown of Richmond	Hooper of Burlington	Olson of Starksboro
Burkhardt of South Burlington *	Houghton of Essex Junction	Pezzo of Colchester
Burrows of West Windsor	Howard of Rutland City	Pouech of Hinesburg
Campbell of St. Johnsbury	Hoyt of Hartford	Priestley of Bradford
Carris Duncan of Whitingham	Hunter of Manchester	Quimby of Lyndon
Casey of Montpelier	James of Manchester	Rachelson of Burlington
Chapin of East Montpelier	Kascenska of Burke	Scheu of Middlebury
Charlton of Chester	Kimbell of Woodstock	Sheldon of Middlebury
Cina of Burlington	Kornheiser of Brattleboro	Sibilia of Dover
Cole of Hartford	Krasnow of South Burlington	Squirrell of Underhill
Conlon of Cornwall	Lalley of Shelburne	Stevens of Waterbury
Cooper of Pownal	LaLonde of South Burlington	Sweeney of Shelburne
Corcoran of Bennington	LaMont of Morristown	Taylor of Milton
Critchlow of Colchester	Logan of Burlington	Tomlinson of Winooski
Dodge of Essex *	Long of Newfane	Torre of Moretown
Dolan of Essex Junction	Lueders of Lincoln	Waszazak of Barre City
Dolgin of St. Johnsbury	Luneau of St. Albans City	Waters Evans of Charlotte
Donahue of Northfield	Masland of Thetford	White of Waitsfield
Duke of Burlington	McCann of Montpelier	White of Bethel
Durfee of Shaftsbury	McGill of Bridport	Wood of Waterbury
		Yacovone of Morristown

Those who voted in the negative are:

Bailey of Hyde Park	Hango of Berkshire	Nielsen of Brandon
Bosch of Clarendon *	Harvey of Castleton	North of Ferrisburgh
Boutin of Barre City	Higley of Lowell	Oliver of Sheldon
Burditt of West Rutland	Howland of Rutland Town	Page of Newport City
Canfield of Fair Haven	Keyser of Rutland City	Pinsonault of Dorset
Casey of Hubbardton	Labor of Morgan	Powers of Waterford
Coffin of Cavendish	Laroche of Franklin	Pritchard of Pawlet
Demar of Enosburgh	Maguire of Rutland City	Southworth of Walden
Dickinson of St. Albans Town	Malay of Pittsford	Tagliavia of Corinth
Dobrovich of Williamstown*	Marcotte of Coventry	Taylor of Mendon
Galfetti of Barre Town	McCoy of Poultney	Walker of Swanton
Goslant of Northfield	McFaun of Barre Town	Wells of Brownington
	Morrissey of Bennington	Winter of Ludlow
	Nelson of Derby	

Those members absent with leave of the House and not voting are:

Bos-Lun of Westminster	Gregoire of Fairfield	Satcowitz of Randolph
Brigham of St. Albans Town	Kleppner of Burlington	Steady of Milton
Burke of Brattleboro	Lipsky of Stowe	Stone of Burlington
Burt of Cabot	O'Brien of Tunbridge	

Christie of Hartford

Parsons of Newbury

Rep. Bosch of Clarendon provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

As a retired Federal employee of 39 plus years of service and an observer during that time of legal cases against Federal officials acting within their official scope of duty, I believe this bill to be clearly beyond our reach with regard to Federal officials.”

Rep. Burkhardt of South Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes today on behalf of my community members and members of surrounding communities who were terrorized by ICE yesterday. I vote yes on behalf of the hundreds of South Burlington school children who were placed in harm’s way by the irresponsible actions of ICE yesterday. I vote yes for local law enforcement officials who were not consulted before yesterday’s action but did their best to try to protect our community members as they exercised their Constitutional right to protest. Finally, I vote yes for the communities who face persecution by ICE every day.”

Rep. Dobrovich of Williamstown provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

Regardless of your position on the reasons or ideology that prompted the creation of H.849, it reflects the principles articulated in Federalist Number 51, where James Madison explained that ‘double security’ protects the rights of the people through checks in government. However, I do not feel enough testimony was taken to understand the impact the thousands of government employees that this will affect outside of those that this is intended to single out.”

Rep. Dodge of Essex provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I support this bill because it ensures that our Constitution remains a living document. As we witness a wave of abuses by armed federal agents, our job is to defend Vermonters’ rights, and that includes their rights to seek remedy.”

Rep. Ode of Burlington provided the following vote explanation:

“Madam Speaker:

I vote yes to protect and defend Vermonters’ precious Constitutional rights.”

Thereupon, third reading was ordered.

**Joint Senate Resolution Adopted in Concurrence with Proposal of
Amendment; Rules Suspended, Messaged to Senate Forthwith**

J.R.S. 43

Joint Senate resolution, entitled

Joint resolution providing for a Joint Assembly to vote on the retention of six Superior Court Judges

Was taken up and pending the question, Shall the House adopt the resolution in concurrence?, **Rep. Arsenault of Williston** moved that the House propose to the Senate that the resolution be amended in its Resolved clause, following “That the two Houses meet in Joint Assembly on”, by striking out “Thursday, March 19, 2026” and inserting in lieu thereof “Wednesday, March 25, 2026”

Which was agreed to, and the resolution was adopted in concurrence with proposal of amendment.

On motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the rules were suspended and House action on the resolution was ordered messaged to the Senate forthwith.

Adjournment

At five o'clock and two minutes in the afternoon, on motion of **Rep. McCoy of Poultney**, the House adjourned until tomorrow at nine o'clock and thirty minutes in the forenoon.