
VBA Legislative Update – Week 16 April 26, 2025

→ **Senate Passes FY 26 Appropriations Bill.** Earlier this week, on a bi-partisan vote of 20-10, the Senate gave final approval to H.493, the FY 26 Appropriations bill. The Senate passed budget addresses many of the ongoing challenges Vermont faces, including the end of COVID-related federal funding. All statutorily-required reserves are filled, all pension obligations are met, and essential investments in housing, workforce, economic development, human services, and education are made. To develop this budget, the Senate Committee on Appropriations worked with administration officials, standing committees and many interested stakeholders, including members of the public and legislators. General Fund appropriations total \$2.479 billion. Total appropriations from all funds are \$9.1 billion.

Base Appropriations Include:

Housing

- Fully funds the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) at statutory level of \$36.9 million
- Provides \$2.0 million to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIR)
- Adds \$1.6 million to the base budget for the Land Access Opportunity Board
- Provides \$29.7 million for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) that assists homeless individuals, increasing the base by \$3.35 million

Human Services

- Provides a 5.5% rate increase for infant and toddler care in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in the Department for Children and Families – Child Development Division (DCF – CDD)
- Maintains \$19 million in General Fund for Child Care Financial Assistant Program
- Adds \$150,000 for child care worker apprenticeship program stipends
- Provides \$5.1 million General Fund (\$12.1 million Global Commitment) for a 2% increase for Designated Agencies, Specialized Service Agencies, and other non-Home Health Agency service providers
- Adds \$360,000 General Fund (\$855,000 Global Commitment) for alternatives to Emergency Room beds
- Funds Howard Center Outreach Program with \$160,000 General Fund and First Call grants that embed clinicians in pediatric offices with \$249,411 General Fund

Health Care

- Provides \$4.5 million General Fund (\$10.9 million Global Commitment) to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) for 2% rate increases
- Adds \$2.8 million General Fund (\$6.8 million Global Commitment) for match for Home and Community Based Services based on 2023 Rate Study

- Provides funds and six positions to the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) related to the expansion of AHEAD and other health care reform initiatives including reference-based pricing (per S.126)
- Adds \$15.4 million Global Commitment for statutory nursing home rate increase and nursing home beds
- Provides \$5.7 million General Fund for the Vermont Veterans' Home budget

Other

- Provides a 3% increase to the University of Vermont (UVM), Vermont State Colleges (VSC), and the
- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)
- Establishes two new positions at the Human Rights Commission
- Adds \$450,000 for community-based services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence

One-Time General Fund Appropriations Include:

Housing

- \$30.5 million for Emergency Housing
- \$2.0 million in DCF's Office of Economic Opportunity for shelter bed expansion
- \$5.0 million for VHCB housing initiatives
- \$4.3 million for Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 (VHIP) funding and position
- \$13.5 million for the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Middle-Income Homeownership Development Program and VHFA Rental Revolving Loan Fund
- \$1.0 million for the VHFA First Generation Homebuyer Program
- \$9.1 million for the Vermont Bond Bank Infrastructure Sustainability Fund
- \$235,000 to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for expansion of the HomeShare Program

Health Care and Human Services

- \$4.4 million to AHS for Support and Services at Home (SASH) and Blueprint for Health programs
- \$2.25 million to AHS for feasibility analysis and transformation plan development with hospitals, designated agencies, primary care organizations, and other community-based providers
- \$840,000 to the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) for Comprehensive Payment Reform
- \$3.1 million to DVHA for the OneCare Primary Care Transition
- \$40,000 to the Department of Health (VDH) for Empty Arms Vermont
- \$800,000 to VDH for Recovery Residences utilizing Substance Misuse Prevention funding
- \$200,000 to VDH for youth mentoring services utilizing Substance Misuse Prevention funding

Higher Education

- \$5.0 million to VSC for transformation bridge funding
- \$1.5 million to VSAC for Freedom and Unity grants
- \$750,000 to UVM for the Vermont Gallium Nitride Tech Hub

Other

- Transfers \$77.2 million General Fund to the Education Fund be used for property tax relief
- \$1.0 million base appropriation for four years to the Agency of Education (AOE) for education transformation and capacity building
- \$450,000 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) for a grant to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont for the Crop Cash and Crop Cash Plus programs
- \$500,000 to AAFM for a grant to Vermont Foodbank for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters Program
- \$1.1 million for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- \$148,000 to the Treasurer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)
- \$500,000 to Public Safety for Urban Search and Rescue

Next Steps. The Budget Conference Committee will begin meeting next week to sort out the differences between the House and Senate passed budgets.

→ Local Headlines of Note

- [Feds threaten states' transportation funding over noncompliance with immigration enforcement](#)
- [Lt. Gov. John Rodgers discusses his first four months in office](#)
- [The Learning Lobby: As Legislators Seek to Transform Education in Vermont, Lobbyists Make the Cases for Schools Public and Private](#)
- [Vermont's Civil Union Law Was Passed 25 Years Ago, Sparking the Nationwide March to Marriage Equality](#)
- [Vermont Senate approves 2026 budget proposal, but legislators expect to cut spending further amid Gov. Phil Scott's criticism](#)
- [Judge orders state to give motel voucher recipients more notice before evicting them](#)
- [Trump takes Vermont's climate superfund law to court](#)
- [Capitol Recap: As Congress eyes deep cuts to federal spending, Vermont lawmakers ponder their options](#)

→ VBA Bill Report

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 16 May 3, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)

<u>H 45</u>	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.</p>	<p>Committees: House Judiciary</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)</p>
<u>H 51</u>	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
<u>H 110</u>	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
<u>H 119</u>	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>

H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>
H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	<p>An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont</p> <p>This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)</p>
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	<p>An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230</p> <p>This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).</p>	<p>Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee</p> <p>Status: As Passed the House</p> <p>Hearing scheduled for 5/5</p>
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	<p>An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25)</p> <p>No action scheduled.</p>

H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.	Committee: House Judiciary Status: Passed the Senate