



**VIEW**  
Vermont Information Exchange for Women  
**Newsletter**

**Legislative Update Edition: 2019-2020**



**October 8, 2020**

**Legislative Update Edition: 2019-2020**

The 2019-2020 Session of the Vermont General Assembly adjourned on September 25th, 2020. VCW intern Emily Pocock has compiled this roundup and summary of legislation of interest to or particularly impacting women.

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**BILLS THAT PASSED:**

**Relating to Ethnic/Social Equity Standards for Public Schools (H.3)**

This act creates an Ethnic and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group to make recommendations to State Board of Education to increase cultural competency and attention to historical contributions made by nondominant racial and ethnic groups in the United States, including people who are Abenaki, people

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from other indigenous groups, people of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicanx, Latinx, or Middle Eastern descent and social groups including women and girls, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, or nonbinary. It also requires reporting data on student performance and on hazing, harassment, and bullying related to racial groups, ethnic groups, religious groups, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, and English language learner status.

**Effective:** March 29, 2019

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on March 29, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.3>

## **Amendment to the Constitution of Vermont Regarding the Right to Personal Reproductive Liberties (PR.5)**

This amendment ensures every Vermonter is afforded personal reproductive liberty and ensures that the government does not create or perpetuate the legal, social, or economic inferiority of any class of people. The amendment reads, "That an individual's right to personal reproductive autonomy is central to the liberty and dignity to determine one's own life course and shall not be denied or infringed unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means." If ratified, this amendment to the state constitution will ensure full reproductive autonomy for Vermonters, including the right to health care including hysterectomies, vasectomies, contraceptives, and abortion.

Though this amendment has been passed in both the House and the Senate, it must be passed a second time in the House and Senate in the next biennium, and then be passed by state referendum to become ratified. The earliest it could appear on Vermont's ballot would be 2022.

**Status:** Adopted by House and Senate May 19, 2019

**Read the Proposed Amendment:**

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<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/PR.5>

## **Second Degree Aggravated Domestic Assault Prior Convictions (H.7)**

This bill permits an out-of-state domestic assault conviction to qualify as a prior conviction for purposes of a second degree aggravated domestic assault prosecution in Vermont.

**Effective:** April 23, 2019

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on April 23, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.7>

## **Sexual Exploitation of a Person in Law Enforcement Custody (H.19)**

This law prohibits Law Enforcement Agents from engaging in sexual acts with a person detained, arrested, or otherwise held in custody and makes those acts punishable by five years in prison, up to a \$10,000 penalty, or both.

**Effective:** April 23, 2019

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on April 23, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.19>

## **Increasing the Minimum Wage (S.23)**

This act increases the Vermont minimum wage from \$10.96 to \$11.75 on January 1, 2021, then to \$12.55 on January 1, 2022. The minimum wage will then increase at the same rate as the Consumer Price Index, a method of measuring the general cost of staple goods to consumers, on each following January 1. The Office of Legislative Council will be required to prepare a report on the tipped minimum wage, the subminimum wage for secondary-school students, and a report regarding

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the state and federal wage hour laws that apply to Vermont's agricultural workers.

According to data collected by Change the Story VT, women are a disproportionate share of Vermonters who make less than \$11 an hour. The median age of women earning under \$11 an hour is 38 years old and 28% have earned college credits or have a college degree.

**Effective:** July 1, 2020

**Status:** Governor's Veto Overridden, Delivered to Secretary of State Feb. 28, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.23>

## **Racial Equity and Bias in the Department of Corrections (S.24)**

This bill amends the charge of the Commissioner of Corrections to include the development of a strategy and long-term plan for addressing systemic racism and biases while expanding diversity and inclusion in the Department of Corrections staff. This plan will include an evaluation of department hiring policies, training, professional development, and competency standards to create the basis of performance evaluation and promotion of employees.

**Effective:** Upon passage

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 7, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.24>

## **Preserving the Right to Abortion (H.57)**

This act establishes the fundamental right to choose or refuse contraception or sterilization, and the right to carry a pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to have an abortion, and prohibits any governmental entity from interfering with this fundamental right, and creates a private right of action to address violations of the law.

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**Effective:** June 10, 2019

**Status:** Signed by the Governor on June 10, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.57>

## **Prohibiting Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (H.83)**

This act prohibits female genital mutilation or cutting of person under 18 years of age, and prohibits transporting someone out of state for this purpose. Exceptions are made if mutilation/cutting is necessary to the health of a person but does not make exceptions for cultural or religious reasoning. Such acts are punishable by 2-10 years in prison and \$500-\$20,000 in penalties.

**Effective:** Upon passage

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott Feb 27, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.83>

## **Election Corrections (S.107)**

This act substitutes the term "voters" for "freeman" and "freewomen" to be gender neutral.

**Effective:** June 17, 2019

**Status:** Signed by the Governor on June 17, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.107>

## **Statewide Standard for Law Enforcement Officer Use of Force Policy (S.119)**

This bill creates standards for use of force by law enforcement officers, requiring that law enforcement officers only use the force objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional. It defines prohibited restraints as, "any maneuver on a person

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that applies pressure to the neck, throat, windpipe, or carotid artery that may prevent or hinder breathing, reduce intake of air, or impede the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain,” and creates a duty to intervene if an officer witnesses another officer using a prohibited restraint. It also directs the Department of Public Safety and the Executive Director of Racial Equity to report to policymakers regarding the development of a uniform statewide policy on the use of force for all law enforcement agencies and officers.

**Effective:** January 1, 2021

**Status:** Allowed to become law without signature of Governor on October 7, 2020.

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.119>

## **Government Structures Protecting Public Health, Safety, and Welfare (S.124)**

This bill significantly expands the membership of and provides per diem compensation for the Criminal Justice Council, charged with training and professionally regulating law enforcement officers, adding the Commissioner of Mental Health; the Executive Director of Racial Equity; the Executive Director for the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs; a member of the Chiefs of Police Association of Vermont; a law enforcement officer; an employee of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns; a member of the Vermont Sheriffs’ Association; an individual appointed by the Executive Director of the Center for Crime Victim Services; an individual appointed by the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission; an individual appointed by the Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; and seven non-law enforcement public members, two of whom shall be nominated by the Vermont chapters of the NAACP; at least one of whom shall be a mental health crisis worker; and at least one of whom shall have lived experience of a mental health condition or psychiatric disability.

This bill prohibits the use of facial recognition technologies by law enforcement until

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it recommends a statewide policy regarding the use, which must include a plan to mitigate any implicit bias that results from the technology if the Council recommends its use. It requires the Council to review law enforcement training; offer training to law enforcement officers; make a state-wide policy for responding to the public's request for body cam footage records; and to create a policy on the acquisition of military equipment by law enforcement officers after an opportunity for community involvement and feedback.

The bill also requires law enforcement agencies to disclose analyses of officer performance and requires the Office of the Attorney General to recommend models of civilian oversight over law enforcement officers and to create a central point for reporting allegations of officer misconduct.

The bill requires the Government Accountability Committee to consult with relevant entities to develop population-level indicators that demonstrate the quality of life for Vermonters who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, intended to reflect the well-being of all Vermonters, including and especially those who are members of marginalized groups.

**Effective:** January 1, 2021

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 7, 2020.

**Read the bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.124>

## **Housing Protections for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence (H.132/S.92)**

This act ensures that a tenant may terminate a rental agreement without penalty or liability if they reasonably believe it is necessary to vacate a dwelling unit based on fear of imminent harm to the tenant or to their child/dependent due to abuse, sexual assault or stalking, or if the tenant or their child/dependent was a victim of sexual assault that occurred on the premises. The act also grants tenants the right to request that their landlord change the locks of their dwelling notice on the same

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grounds, and to change the locks themselves if the landlord declines.

**Effective:** July 1, 2020

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on June 10, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.132>

### **Acknowledgment or Denial of Parentage (H.278)**

This act makes small changes to the Vermont Parentage Act, changing the time allowance for a person to rescind an acknowledgment or denial of parentage to within 60 days after the acknowledgment has been made, or 60 days after the first court hearing involving an issue relating to the child, including child support, whichever is earlier.

**Effective:** May 16, 2019

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott May 16, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.278>

### **Repealing Statute of Limitations for Civil Action Based on Childhood Sex Abuse (H. 330)**

This act eliminates the previous six-year statute of limitations for civil actions based on childhood sexual trauma and applies retroactively to cases before the bill was enacted.

**Effective:** July 1, 2019

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott May 28, 2019

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.330>

### **Justice Reinvestment (S.338)**

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This act restores the opportunity for inmates to earn reductions in their sentencing for good behavior; allows for people with serious medical conditions to be considered for parole before reaching their minimum sentencing; consolidates furlough to three types of statuses: temporary, treatment, and reintegration furlough; and requires the Justice Reinvestment II Working Group together with a representative of the Vermont Parole Board to give recommendations regarding racial and geographic disparities in sentences. Inmates may earn up to seven days off their minimum and maximum sentencing each month they meet requirements set by the Department of Corrections.

**Effective:** July 13, 2020

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on July 13, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.338>

## **Maternal Mortality Review Panel (H. 572)**

This bill amends the panel's charge to include consideration of health disparities and social determinants of health including race and ethnicity on maternal death reviews. The Maternal Mortality Review Panel conducts comprehensive reviews of maternal mortality in Vermont and enforces related public health standards and criminal law. Maternal mortality is described as a death that occurs during pregnancy or within a year postpartum from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiological effects of pregnancy. The U.S. has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality among high-income nations. According to the Center for Disease Control, the average national rate is 18 deaths for every 100,000 births, and for Black women, it is 40 deaths for every 100,000 births. In Europe, the average maternal mortality rate is 8 deaths for every 100,000 births, with some nations averaging as low as 3 deaths for every 100,000 births.

**Effective:** July 1, 2020

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on July 13, 2020

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**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.572>

## **Expanding Access to Contraceptives (H.663)**

Clarifies that existing law requiring insurance coverage for a twelve-month supply of oral contraceptives does apply to hormonal contraceptive administered at home, requires school districts to make condoms available to all high school students, free of charge, and directs the Department of Health to communicate to adolescents and other individuals of reproductive age about contraceptive access and insurance coverage. Finally, the new law requires the Agency of Education and the Department of Health to report to policymakers regarding their continued efforts to provide comprehensive health education to Vermont students, including sexual health and safety.

**Effective:** Multiple effective dates beginning November 1, 2020.

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 5, 2020.

**Read the bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.663>

## **Sexual Exploitation of Children (H.936)**

This act amends the definition of sexual conduct and sexual performance involving children under 16 years of age to include conduct “by, with, or on” a child and changes the term “child pornography” to “child sexual abuse materials.” The promotion of sexual abuse materials is updated to include distribution through file-sharing and peer-to-peer networks. Attempting to access such materials with the intent to view them is now prohibited under this statute.

**Effective:** July 1, 2020

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on July 1, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.936>

## **Renter Rebate Reform (H.934)**

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This bill proposes to amend the renter rebate program by creating a credit structure separate from the income sensitivity property tax credit. The new renter credit is based on federal housing data and income limits adjusted for the number of family members in each claim. Credit is available to more than one eligible claimant per household up to a maximum credit of \$2,500. The amount of the credit accounts for unrelated adults living in the household, business use of the dwelling and rental subsidies received. The poverty rate for male single households without children is 3.5%; for women, the rate is nearly four times that at 11.4%. When you add minor children to the household, families led by single men have a poverty rate of 16.0%; families led by single women are more than twice as likely to live in poverty at 36.7%. The poverty rates for women of color are higher than the rate for White women (12.3%); the poverty rate for Hispanic/Latinx women is 17.6%; for Asian women, 14.3%, and for Black women, 26.9%. Additionally, 20.1% of women with a disability live in poverty, more than twice the poverty rate for women without a disability (8.4%). ([Change The Story VT](#))

**Effective:** January 1, 2021

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 5, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.934>

## **Abenaki Place Names on State Park Signs (H.880)**

This bill requires the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to consult with the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs to determine if there is an Abenaki name for any site within the state park before installing new signs or replacing old ones.

**Effective:** January 1, 2021

**Status:** Passed by House and Senate, delivered to the Governor on October 2, 2020.

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.880>

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## **Duration of Temporary Relief from Abuse Order (H.962)**

Relief from abuse orders are granted by a court to protect plaintiffs and their family members from abuse committed by another family or household member based on prior instances of abuse. This bill ensures that ex parte temporary orders (orders made without a hearing) will remain in effect until either dismissed by the court or until the petition is denied at the final hearing, closing an existing gap in protections for victims.

**Effective:** On passage.

**Status:** Passed by the House and Senate, delivered to the Governor on October 5, 2020.

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.962>

## **FY21 State Budget - Child Care Financial Assistance Program (H.969)**

Provided a \$1.3 million increase for CCFAP to increase pre-school and school age reimbursement rates to align with the 2015 Market Rate Survey, and \$250,000 to fund ongoing maintenance of the IT system and \$800,000 to increase the number of child care slots available for infants and toddlers.

**Effective:** On passage.

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 2, 2020.

**Read the bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.969>

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## **COVID-19 RELIEF BILLS, PASSED:**

In the wake of the COVID-19 health crisis, many people found themselves unemployed or working from home with no options for child care. For those deemed “essential workers,” demand at work increased with new sanitation requirements, while many of them were never provided with additional pay, and child care for most was off the table due to health and safety concerns. Women make up 91% of nurses, 82% of healthcare workers, 82% of personal care workers, and 81% of tipped workers, and were asked to continue working at the risk of exposure. As women are more likely to stay home or reduce hours at work to care for children, and more likely to do a disproportionate share of housework, quarantine disproportionately negatively affected women. Black women and women of color are more likely to be essential workers, make up a disproportionate share of those affected by and dying from COVID-19, and are more likely to have been battling poverty both before and after the lockdown was implemented.

### **Health Care and Human Services (H.965)**

This bill provided funding to cover necessary healthcare and human services-related expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Grants will be awarded to public safety, public health, health care, and human services employers and to provide employees engaged in responding to this COVID-19 health emergency with hazard pay. Grants will also be awarded to vulnerable populations, including those living below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, elderly Vermonters, and those with disabilities. The act dispersed grants equally to AALV, Inc. and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants’ Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program and additional grants were allocated to child care centers, including after school programs and summer camps.

**Effective:** July 2, 2020

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**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on July 2, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.965>

## **Housing and Economic Relief (H.966)**

This bill provides funding to cover broadband connectivity, utilities, information technology and housing expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided grants for businesses and for local governments to reimburse eligible COVID-19 expenses, with a set aside for businesses at least 51% women or minority-owned. It also allocated money for housing grants and assistance to Vermonters affected by COVID-19.

**Effective:** July 2, 2020

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on July 2, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.966>

## **Home Child Care Centers (H.967)**

This bill expands the hours a family child care home may care for school-aged children from 4 hours each day to full-time when the school-aged children's schools have scheduled students for remote instruction.

**Effective:** Upon passage

**Status:** Signed by Governor Scott on October 5, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.967>

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## **PROPOSED BILLS:**

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## **Amendment to Vermont Constitution to Guarantee Equality of Rights (PR.4)**

This amendment would ensure that every Vermonter enjoys equal treatment and respect under the law and that the government does not create or perpetuate the legal, social, or economic inferiority of any class of people. This amendment will serve as a foundation for protecting the rights and dignity of historically marginalized populations and addressing existing inequalities. This means that any law which discriminates based on race, sex, age, religion, creed, color, familial status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin would be presumed unconstitutional. Furthermore, the State would have the burden to prove such laws constitutional.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Judiciary

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/PR.4>

## **Shared Parental Rights and Responsibilities (S.34)**

This bill proposes to create a rebuttable presumption that shared parental rights and responsibilities are in the best interests of the child. A court would be permitted to order sole rights and responsibilities to one parent but would not be required to do so in cases where the parents could not agree.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Judiciary

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.34>

## **Extreme Risk Protection Order (S.72)**

This bill proposes to require the Court Administrator and Agency of Human Services to report annual data on the use of extreme risk protection orders, and to permit a

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health care provider to notify a law enforcement officer when the health care provider reasonably believes that a patient poses an extreme risk of causing harm to themselves or another person by purchasing, possessing or receiving a dangerous weapon, or by having a dangerous weapon within their custody or control.

*Status:* Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Judiciary

*Read the Bill:* <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.72>

### **Equal Pay (S.82)**

This bill proposes to require employers to keep records of the name, address, gender, and occupation of each employee and the wages they were paid for no less than 5 years. It would require the Commissioner of Labor to measure the presence of gender and systematic bias in state-supported training programs and address any instances of bias.

*Status:* Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and, General Affairs

*Read the Bill:* <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.82>

### **Prohibiting Agreements Made After Discrimination Settlement (S.83)**

This bill proposes to prohibit agreements to settle employment discriminations claims from including provisions that would prevent the employee for working for the employer or an affiliate of the employer. This would protect employees who allege they have been discriminated against, by ensuring accepting a settlement offer does not bar them from reapplying to the same company in the future, or to an affiliate. This is protection would be especially impactful for employees of large companies and those who work in industries dominated by one corporate entity.

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**Status:** Passed in Senate, read 1st time in the House and referred to House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.83>

## **Incentives for Early Learning Professionals and Improving Access to Childcare (S.90)**

This bill proposes to expand the population served by the Child Care Assistance Program, enhance subsidy size, and increase the rate upon which reimbursements to early learning professionals are based. It also proposes to implement a student loan repayment program for early learning professionals and expand existing college scholarships in early childhood education or early childhood special education. This bill establishes a refundable tax credit for early learning professionals and employers investing in child care, and establishes the Early Care and Learning Fund which consolidates funds designated for child care and early learning, workforce development, quality improvements, and technical assistance. It also ensures equitable funding for programs that support the care and early education of children.

**Status:** Favorable report with recommendation of amendment by Senate Committee on Judiciary

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.90>

## **Spousal Support and Maintenance Reform (S.99)**

This bill proposed changes to Vermont's spousal maintenance statute. It would: make permanent the spousal maintenance guidelines previously passed but scheduled to sunset; clarify that courts should consider the reasonable needs of both parties when determining spousal maintenance orders; replace the word "permanent" with "long-term"; and would explicitly permit courts to consider the

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remarriage of either party as a factor in showing whether there has been a real, substantial, unanticipated change in circumstances to warrant the modification of an existing spousal maintenance order. Under this law, spousal support would be terminated at the time of the payor's retirement.

**Status:** Passed by the Senate, Referred to House Committee on Judiciary

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.99>

## **Paid Family & Medical Leave (H.107)**

The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program would have provided guaranteed paid time off for employees who are pregnant, parents to newborn children, or are caring for a family member who is seriously ill.

**Status:** Vetoed by Governor February 6, 2020

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.107>

## **Human Trafficking and Prostitution (S.217)**

This bill proposes to allow a court to deviate from sentencing rules when the person being sentenced was under 18 years of age when they committed the crime and the person whom the offense was committed against trafficked the person who committed the offense. It also proposes to provide limited immunity from criminal prosecution to a person if they are the victim of or witness to a crime that arose from their involvement in prostitution or human trafficking; to create a Sex Work Study Committee to examine and modernize the state's prostitution laws; to provide a process for victims of domestic or sexual assault to petition the court to vacate a conviction on their record if it was obtained as a result of being a victim of domestic or sexual assault.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Judiciary

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**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.217>

### **Free Public School Breakfast and Lunch (S.223)**

This bill proposes to require all public schools in Vermont to make breakfast and lunch available to all students at no charge. The cost of school meals that are not reimbursed through federal funds or other services will be the responsibility of school districts, and therefore ultimately the responsibility of the Education Fund.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Education

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.223>

### **Gender Balance on the UVM Board of Trustees (S.248)**

This bill proposes to require that the University of Vermont Board of Trustees achieve gender balance by 2025 and maintain it thereafter. With 25 total members of the Board, gender balance is defined as 12 or 13 members who are women, people who identify as women, or non-binary individuals.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Education

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.248>

### **Professional Regulation of Massage Therapy (S.270)**

This bill proposes to require individuals and establishments offering massage therapy to be licensed and professionally regulated by the Secretary of State Office of Professional Regulation. Massage therapists would be required to disclose their professional qualifications and experience, infection control and public health practices, actions that constitute unprofessional conduct, and methods for filing a complaint or consumer inquiry to each new client. Massage therapists would also be required to have completed training through a professional massage therapy

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education program or apprenticeship and complete an examination by the state to acquire licensure. In instances where people have made allegations against massage therapists, there has not been a uniform standard regarding what constitutes unprofessional touching by a masseuse. This law seeks to regulate the massage trade and create a consistent standard and method of reporting abuse.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Government Operations

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.270>

## **Exempting Menstrual Hygiene Products from Vermont Sales and Use Tax (S.276)**

This bill aims to limit the cost of goods that are necessary for the health and welfare of the people of Vermont by exempting tampons, panty liners, menstrual cups, sanitary napkins and similar products from a sales and use tax.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Finance

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.276>

## **State House Artwork and Portrait Project Committee (S.285)**

This bill proposes the creation of a committee dedicated to expanding the art exhibits in the State House with special consideration for representing a diverse group of individuals who have made significant contributions to Vermont history. The goal of this committee would be to acquire or commission art to exhibit in the State House that focuses on women and members of marginalized racial or ethnic groups.

**Status:** Recommitted to Committee on Institutions

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.285>

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## **Menstrual Hygiene Products in Schools (S.323)**

This act proposes to require all public schools to provide tampons and sanitary napkins in all gender-neutral bathrooms and bathrooms designated for females. Schools must bear the cost of providing the menstrual products and may partner with a non-profit or community organization to do so.

**Status:** Read 1st time and referred to Committee on Education

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.323>

## **Universal Access to Afterschool Programs (S.335)**

This bill proposes to create the Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access to consider and make recommendations on the framework for, the cost of, and related long-term funding sources for access to universal afterschool programs. Preference is placed on solutions that do not draw upon the State Education Fund.

**Status:** Passed in Senate, read 1st time by House and referred to Committee on Education

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/S.335>

## **Firearms and Domestic Violence (H.610)**

This bill proposed to improve the safety of victims of domestic violence by: closing loopholes regarding federal background checks for firearm sales and transfers; requiring Relief From Abuse orders (RFA) include provisions requiring defendants to relinquish firearms; requiring the court to ask plaintiffs requesting RFA about any firearms the defendant may own, possess, or control; permitting the Court to issue a warrant for the seizure of firearms in the defendant's possession; making it a state crime to possess a firearm if they are subject to a relief from abuse order,

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requiring law enforcement to report on the number of RFAs served and firearms collected; permitting family and household members to petition for Emergency Risk Protection Orders; and allow health care providers to inform a law enforcement officer when they reasonably believe a patient poses an extreme risk of causing harm by purchasing, possessing, having, or receiving a dangerous weapon.

**Status:** Read 1<sup>st</sup> time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary

**Read the bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.610>

## Permitting Candidate Expenditures for Child Care Costs (H.619)

This bill proposes to allow candidates to use campaign funds for child care and the care of dependent family members.

**Status:** Passed by the House, referred to Senate Committee on Government Operations

**Read the Bill:** <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2020/H.619>

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