

Legislative Session Accomplishments

Education

- **Pre-K.** Allocated \$400,000 to help cover start-up costs of publicly financed preschool.
- **Flexible Pathways.** Increased individual students' educational options while fostering a connection between school and careers, including implementing Personalized Learning Plans for every student, internships, career and technical education, work-based and virtual learning. Expanded, sustainable access to dual enrollment, as well as expanded early college programs, in partnership with Vermont postsecondary institutions for all interested Vermont high school students.
- **Dual Enrollment Support.** An additional \$800,000 to double the support for dual enrollment students who want to start college, even as they finish high school.
- **Free School Lunch.** Invested \$322,250 to make sure all qualifying students can get a free and nutritious lunch at school.
- **Math Requirements.** Rigorous math education through at least geometry and algebra for all high school students to ensure they are prepared for the high-tech, skilled jobs of the 21st century, up for State Board approval in June.
- **High Education Funding.** A \$2.5 million increase to UVM, the Vermont State Colleges and VSAC to be used entirely for financial aid to Vermont students to help make higher education affordable, the first increase in the state's appropriation to those institutions in 5 years.
- **Property Tax Controls.** Lowered excess spending thresholds to aid school boards as they work to control per pupil spending in their districts.

Health Care

- **Cost Shift.** Lessened the Medicaid cost shift via a 3% rate increase in reimbursement rates, or \$21.6 million.
- **Reducing Costs in Exchange.** Provide premium subsidies (\$6.6M gross;

\$2.9M General Fund) and cost-sharing assistance (\$1.5M General Fund only) for low-income Vermonters who enter the Exchange.

- **Hands-on Assistance.** Provided \$960,000 gross (\$643,937 General Fund) to provide hands-on assistance for Vermont families signing up for affordable health care through the Exchange, via Health Care Navigators and In-Person Assistors.

Human Services

- **Heating Assistance.** Provided \$6 million for the first-ever base state budget contribution to LIHEAP to keep low-income Vermonters warm in the winter, made necessary by year after year of inadequate federal funding for the program.
- **ReachUp.** Vermont is now no longer the only state in the nation to allow individuals to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits indefinitely without any time restrictions. The legislature passed a five-year consecutive limit for individuals to stabilize finances and receive job training, with appropriate exemptions so vulnerable Vermonters will not fall through the cracks.
- **Mosquito Control.** Used \$400,000 to help in the prevention of West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) through mosquito control.

Transportation

- **Construction Funding.** A total of \$131 million for bridges, funding major construction on 67 bridges and culverts, and preventive maintenance work on dozens more structures.
- **Paving and Maintenance Funding.** A total of \$109 million in paving, including approximately 120 miles of interstate and 215 miles of state highway through traditional resurfacing, district leveling and preventive maintenance.
- **Town Highway Aid.** Invested \$26 million for local roads.
- **Western Rail Corridor.** Put \$11 million towards accelerating the return of passenger rail between Rutland and Burlington.

- **Transit.** Allocated funds to improve and expand the intercity bus network, car and vanpooling, and infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians.

Other Accomplishments

- **Working Lands.** Invested \$1.425 million to improve programs that are fueling Vermont's agriculture renaissance, such as Farm-to-Plate.
- **Capital Construction.** A budget of \$173.2 million, including funding for the Vermont State Hospital Replacement Plan and the rehabilitation of the Waterbury State Office Complex.
- **Decriminalization.** Changed the penalties for the possession of up to one ounce of marijuana (or up to five grams of hashish) so they are civil, rather than criminal.
- **End of Life Choices:** Allowed Vermonters facing terminal illness and unbearable pain – with the guidance of physician and loved ones – to make end of life choices. Includes safeguards to ensure that the options offered under the law are only used as intended.
- **Pension Forfeiture.** Changed pension system to allow judges to order that any public employee must give up some or all of their pension if convicted of certain financial crimes related to their employment. The law applies to felonies like embezzlement, theft, bribery and other crimes that involve an abuse of public office for financial gain.
- **Equal Pay.** Strengthened the right of women to receive equal pay for equal work.
- **Supporting the Arts.** Increased funding for the Vermont Arts Council, the first sizable expansion in over 20 years, acknowledging the importance of the arts to Vermont's economy. Funding for the Vermont Symphony and the Humanities Council also received significant increases.
- **Home Care Workers.** Allowed workers who provide personal home care to Vermonters to vote to join a union.
- **Public Records.** Expanded access to public records related to criminal investigations.

- **Opiates.** Cracked down on opiate abuse, including setting standards for doctors to consult the state's prescription drug database to ensure patients are not doctor-shopping, created a pilot program for wider distribution of Naloxone (Narcan) to address opioid overdoses, and a statewide program for disposal of unused prescription meds.