



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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[Governor's State of the State Highlights Population Crisis as State's Greatest Challenge](#)

In his *State of the State* speech, the Governor called for increased collaboration and cohesion among political leaders. The Governor told a packed House Chamber his most urgent concern is Vermont's demographic crisis. The Vermont Chamber has been a key supporter of programs launched or proposed to address the demographic challenge.

[Revised Leave Bill Will Cost Workers \\$29 Million](#)

The Senate's new paid leave bill would provide additional parental leave benefits, but removes default medical leave for personal injury. The latest bill does not include a mandatory employer contribution to fund the proposed leave program. The bill, which will cost \$29.7 million, moves to a conference committee of Senators and House members.

Study Details Causes of Taxpayer Out-Migration

The House Ways and Means Committee reviewed a recent taxpayer migration study, which demonstrated that Vermont has experienced a net out-migration predominately comprised of middle- and lower-income taxpayers. Vermont has gained more high-income taxpayers than 31 states, with a net of 126 taxpayers with incomes above \$200,000.

Minimum Wage Proposal Would Cost State (and Businesses) Millions

The latest minimum wage proposal would raise the minimum wage to \$12.40 or \$12.55 over two years and increase by CPI or 5% (whichever is less) after that. If adjusted for compression, in 2022, the paths would cost the state \$3.8 million for the \$12.40 proposal, or \$4.1 million for the \$12.55 proposal, to properly fund Medicaid subsidized wages.

Solutions for Lower Health Care Premiums

The Senate Finance Committee reviewed changes to health care laws that could offer relief from rising premiums for small businesses. Options discussed include separating the small business group from the individual market, and partially unmerging these two groups. The Committee also reviewed a captive insurance option formed by BCBSVT, which self-funded with stop-loss protection.

Senate Judiciary Recommends Override of Governor's Veto on Chemical Regulation Bill

Following a U.S. District Court's decision that medical monitoring for industry chemicals is allowed as a legal remedy without a physical injury, the Senate Judiciary Committee reviewed the impacts on S.37, a bill vetoed by the Governor last year that seeks to create a new private right of action for medical monitoring damages. The Committee voted 3-2 to keep S.37 as is and proceed with an attempt to override the veto.

Investing in Vermont Tourism

The Vermont Chamber is advocating for a \$500,000 increase in Vermont's destination marketing funds and is urging the tourism industry to sign the petition, contact their legislators, and attend Tourism Day in support the increased investment in destination marketing. Tourism Day at the State House is Wednesday, January 15 where industry leaders will testify before the House

Committee on Commerce and Economic Development The day begins with Governor Scott's Coffee Hour in room 11 at 8:00 am.

[Legislators Propose Adding a \\$2 Per Night Occupancy Tax](#)

Rep. David Yacovone (D-Morristown) will be introducing a bill to add a \$2 per room night occupancy tax. The revenue generated from this new tax would fund affordable housing efforts and tourism promotion, a new element of this perennial proposal. Rather than a tax or fee we propose a \$500,000 increase in tourism funding.

[Global Warming Solutions Act Reviewed in the House](#)

An updated version of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) of 2020 was briefed in the House Energy Committee. The new bill mandates a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, establishes a Climate Council, and provide cause of [legal] action for private citizens or organizations outside of Vermont to sue the state if the above environmental standards are not met.

[Bill Provides Addresses Employee Student Debt](#)

Members of House's tax committee heard testimony on H290, a bill that would provide a deduction for taxable income for the first \$5,000 in employee student loan payments made by an employer on behalf of their employee.

[In Case You Missed It](#)

Legislature: [Pollina Proposes Vt. Green New Deal](#)

Legislature: [Vermont Legislative Leaders Look Ahead At Issues They Want To Tackle In 2020](#)

Legislature: [Lawmakers Seek to Limit Non-Compete Clauses](#)

Politics: [Zuckerman to Announce Run for Governor](#)

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In business since 1912, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit business organization with 1,500 members employing 45,000 people and representing all sectors of the state's economy. Our mission is to create an economic climate conducive to business growth and the preservation of the Vermont quality of life. Copyright ©2018 The Vermont Chamber of Commerce. All Rights Reserved.

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