



# State to Main

*The Voice of Vermont Business*



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## In This Issue:

**Vermont Chamber Comments on Career and Technical Education Plan**

**PBS/VPR Poll Shows Economy Is the Top Issue**

**Moving Forward When Everything Is a Crisis**

**Program Provides \$7,500 in Worker Relocation Funds**

**Census Worker Shortage Raises Concerns**

**Employment Growth Program Faces Scrutiny in House**

**Let's Grow Kids Briefs House Committee with Childcare Solutions**

**Bill Could Result in Higher Electric Rates**

**In Case You Missed It**

### **[Vermont Chamber Comments on Career and Technical Education Plan](#)**

The Vermont Chamber commented on the Perkins V Draft State Plan, a federal formula grant program aimed at improving the state's career and technical education (CTE) systems. The Vermont Chamber is largely supportive of the Perkins V plan because it provides significant resources for workforce development in key sectors.

### **[PBS/VPR Poll Shows Economy Is the Top Issue](#)**

In the PBS/VPR Poll released this week, the number one issue, by a wide margin, was (again) the economy, jobs, and the increasing cost of living. Wages, paid leave, guns, and national politics ranked much lower, yet these issues receive prominent coverage by the State House press corps. And while most legislators say they support boosting the economy and reducing the cost of living while on the campaign trail, inside the Legislature, it's a different story.

### **[Moving Forward When Everything Is a Crisis](#)**

Vermont headlines are filled with claims of a crisis and the solutions offered lean toward more State funding. Each year, the plea for additional funding grows with little in the budget that can be cut without significant programmatic

shortfalls. How a state with a \$6.3 billion budget and only 625,000 people affords it all remains unanswered. It's time for an honest discussion about how much Vermonters can realistically afford, and how resources could be realigned to most appropriately expend our limited resources.

### **Program Provides \$7,500 in Worker Relocation Funds**

As of January 1, 2020, a program that provides grants of up to \$7,500 for relocation expenses is available for workers in select fields. This opportunity is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested employers are encouraged to take advantage of the program by advertising the incentive to potential employees while funds remain available.

### **Census Worker Shortage Raises Concerns**

As legislative leadership struggles to advance a bill to increase the minimum wage to \$12.55 by 2022, state and federal officials are scrambling to fill thousands of Vermont census worker positions that pay between \$20 and \$22 an hour. The Vermont Chamber has consistently steered the economic development conversations on the issue of worker shortages, rather than on wage increase mandates that will result in negative impacts that disproportionately harm rural and small businesses.

### **Employment Growth Program Faces Scrutiny in House**

The Vermont Employment Growth Incentive (VEGI) is a program that directs incentives to businesses to encourage economic activity that would not occur without the incentive. Numerous Vermont employers have successfully accessed the program, resulting in significant economic benefits for both local business communities and the state's overall economy. Unfortunately, members of the House Committee on Ways and Means continue to direct significant criticism toward the program.

### **Let's Grow Kids Briefs House Committee with Childcare Solutions**

Vermont business leaders joined Let's Grow Kids in the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee to convey the message that the early education workforce is critical to support Vermont's workforce goals. They recommended immediate investments, including additional funding for Vermont's T.E.A.C.H scholarship program that supports early educators, as well as new initiatives like a student loan repayment program and a temporary wage support program for early educator.

### **[Bill Could Result in Higher Electric Rates](#)**

The Senate Finance Committee reviewed S.267, a bill that will increase the cost of electricity, which will negatively impact large energy users like manufacturers and ski areas. While the Vermont Chamber supports the use of renewable energy in Vermont's energy portfolio, we are concerned about the increased costs this initiative places on business.

### **[In Case You Missed It](#)**

**Climate Policy:** [Walters: Phil Scott's climate offensive: strong action or hot air?](#)

**Climate Policy:** [Briglin: Vermont has highest GHG emissions in New England](#)

**Climate Policy:** [Vermont House approves climate bill](#)

**Over Regulation:** [Allen: In an outsider's critique of Vermont, 'the element of truth'](#)

**Child Care:** [Child care center saved from closure](#)

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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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