

END OF SESSION REPORT

Reps Jill Krowinski and Curt McCormack



Message from Jill & Curt

The 2021–2022 biennium has adjourned! We began our work remotely, legislating via Zoom at the height of the pandemic, and returned to the statehouse in January of this year. Through it all, every committee meeting and floor debate has been available to the public — livestreamed and posted on the General Assembly website. I'm proud to serve as the Speaker of the House and to help us navigate through this difficult time. After careful consideration, Curt has decided not to run again and we wish him all the best! He's done incredible work and cares so much about our community. We're both here if you have any questions or need help with services. You can contact us at jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us or cmccormack@leg.state.vt.us or call 802-828-2245.

Supporting Working Families

One of our priority bills was H.510, a bill that creates a new Vermont Child Tax Credit, giving \$1,000 per year to parents and guardians for every qualifying child five years of age or younger. The bill also increases the Child and Dependent Care Credit (CDCC) from 50% to 72% of federal CDCC, and increases our Vermont Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to 38% of federal EITC — making us the highest state EITC in the country. This bill is a big win for Vermont families and we're sending a clear and significant message that Vermont is a place that supports families and workers.

In 2021, we passed a budget that created the Child Care Retention Program. The program was designed to help retain our amazing early childhood providers and create opportunities for continued career growth. The initial \$2.6 million investment created a scholarship program, student loan program, and pre-apprenticeship program. The program was such a success that this year we allocated an additional \$7 million to help those on the ground as they educate and nurture children across the state. It's a really wonderful opportunity for those that serve an incredible role in the fabric of our state.

COVID-19 Related Paid Leave Grant program - A program that I am really excited about is the new COVID-19 Related Paid Leave Grant Program. We allocated \$15.18 million for employers to reimburse employees for the cost of paid leave for employees who are unable to get to work due to COVID-19 exposure, illness, care of ill family members, and school and place of care closures. Throughout the session, we heard from employees and employers who said they needed more resources to support employees while they dealt with COVID related disruptions and we are proud that we were able to create this program.



Protecting Reproductive Rights

In Vermont, we believe healthcare decisions should be made by an individual and a healthcare provider. That's why we took action and passed PR 5, a change to our constitution which would guarantee reproductive justice for all Vermonters. We must protect access to abortion care. The timing is critical, across the country, we are seeing attacks on reproductive liberty and the erosion of available services for reproductive health. Please join us in voting for PR 5 in November!

Gun Violence Prevention

This country, and our state, continue to see the dramatic and tragic rise in gun related deaths. This year, we passed legislation to expand the waiting period for background checks, ban firearms in hospitals, and allow health care providers to alert law enforcement and to seek an emergency risk protection order for a person that poses a threat to themselves or others. We will continue to work over the summer and fall on other ways we can keep our schools and communities safe.

INVESTING IN VERMONTERS

We made historic investments in the FY2023 state budget (H.740) totaling \$8.3 billion, a 5 percent increase over the current fiscal year. The budget honors the commitment the legislature made at the beginning of the pandemic: to support Vermonters, their families, and their communities across all 14 counties, and to leave no one behind in a strong statewide recovery.

That commitment includes investing \$453.7 million in federal COVID relief in five broad areas: Economy, Workforce, and Communities; Housing; Broadband Connectivity; Climate Action; and Clean Water. Those investments, along with FY2022 investments, means that Vermont has received \$1.2 billion through the federal American Rescue Plan Act. These investments will have an incredible impact on the future of our wonderful state!

The budget includes a long-overdue reimbursement rate increase of 8 percent to community mental health providers, designated agencies, specialized service agencies, and home health care providers. It provides millions to support substance abuse disorder prevention and recovery. It includes increased funds for Adult Day programs, Vermont Legal Aid and the Vermont Health Care Advocate - critical programs that support Vermonters from all walks of life.

We're investing \$96 million in broadband projects and \$137.8 million in community, workforce and economic development. The University of Vermont base budget is increased by \$10 million, the first increase in 14 years. The Vermont State College System also has a base increase of \$10 million, plus \$14.9 million to serve as a "bridge" in their ongoing transition to fiscal and operational stability. Child care coverage is expanded by \$4.9 million for working families within the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

This year's investments in housing programs, including the "missing middle" and manufactured housing, tally \$90 million. Transformational climate and water initiatives include \$80 million for weatherization and \$45 million for municipal energy resilience grants. There is also \$8 million for smart grid infrastructure and over \$60 million for additional electrification initiatives. As always, it is a balanced budget.

Combating Climate Change

The FY2023 budget of \$8.3 billion includes \$566.7 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Of that amount, \$129.8 million is allocated for weatherization and other climate change mitigation investments. These allocations are informed by the knowledge that, in Vermont, transportation and thermal (building heating) are the sectors that pose the greatest challenges in reducing greenhouse emissions.

- \$45 million to the Home Weatherization Assistance Program to aid lower-income households
- \$35 million to the Electric Efficiency Fund for weatherization incentives to Vermonters of moderate income
- \$2 million to support continued build-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure along highway networks
- \$20 million to provide low- and moderate-income households with financial and technical assistance to upgrade home electrical systems to enable installation of energy saving technologies, plus \$5 million to install, at low or no cost, heat-pump water heaters
- \$2 million to help low- and moderate-income households to purchase electric equipment for heating, cooling and vehicle charging, plus support for municipal back-up electricity storage installations
- \$1.2 million for state wide fair free transportation
- \$1 million for the Urban and Community Forestry Program to plant up to 5,000 trees to improve air quality and reduce heat island effects

"Ever since I did my study of the carbon footprint of our district and learned how low it was (i.e. 32% car-free households) compared to the rest of the State, I have been extra proud to represent the ONE and Downtown." I'm excited Ryan Addario is running with Jill, they both have my full support." -Curt