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John Benson

Vermont

State Senator, SD-ORA (R)

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2025 VT Legislative Scorecard

✓ Pro-Freedom ✗ Anti-Freedom — Did not Vote **Vote**

1. Would repeal the Affordable Heat Act in its entirety, including eliminating of the Clean Heat Standard. —

Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · S0068 · Rejected 13–17 · 02/25/2025

2. Creates the Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code Act, which imposes extensive regulations on "covered businesses," mandating highest-level default privacy settings for minors, as well as restrictions on data collection, processing, sharing, and retention of minors' personal data. —

Pro-Freedom: **No** · S0069 · Passed 25–5 · 03/12/2025

3. Declares Vermont's support for the "Transgender and non-binary community" and commitment to the LGBTQ+ movement. —

Pro-Freedom: **No** · JRS015 · Passed 30–0 · 03/14/2025

4. Proposes to amend Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution, establishing a constitutional right for employees to organize or join a labor organization. —

Pro-Freedom: **No** · PR 3 · 03/20/2025

5. The "Big Bill - Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Act" makes appropriations to support state government operations in fiscal year 2026. —

Pro-Freedom: **No** · H0493 · Passed 20–10 · 05/01/2025

6. Establishes the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program. —

Pro-Freedom: **No** · H0091 · Passed 17–13 · 05/22/2025

Scorecard Votes: %

Why do these votes matter?

1. Affordable Heat Act Repeal

S0068 would repeal the Affordable Heat Act in its entirety, including eliminating of the Clean Heat Standard. It would also abolish certain positions at the Public Utility Commission and Department of Public Service that were created to support the program.

We have assigned pluses to the yeas because this bill repeals big-government overreach. Despite its misleading title, the Affordable Heat Act imposed costly mandates on heating-fuel providers, raised energy costs for Vermonters, and created unnecessary bureaucracy under the guise of environmental regulation. Repealing it would eliminate burdensome compliance requirements, abolish taxpayer-funded bureaucrat positions, and allow the free market to determine energy choices.

2. Age-Appropriate Design Code Act

S0069 creates the Vermont Age-Appropriate Design Code Act, which imposes extensive regulations on "covered businesses," mandating highest-level default privacy settings for minors, as well as restrictions on data collection, processing, sharing, and retention of minors' personal data. Additionally, it prohibits design practices that could lead to compulsive use or emotional distress, and grants the Attorney general broad rule-making authority to define prohibited practices and standards.

We have assigned pluses to the nays because this legislation imposes government overreach that burdens businesses with vague, costly compliance mandates, and substitutes state bureaucrats and the attorney general for parental responsibility in guiding children's online activity. True protection of children comes from responsible parents exercising authority over their family. Expansive state regulations that impose one-size-fits-all schemes on private companies encourages further erosion of online freedoms under the guise of "safety."

3. Transgender-support Resolution

JRS015 declares Vermont's support for the "Transgender and non-binary community" and commitment to the LGBTQ+ movement.

We have assigned pluses to the nays because this resolution promotes "woke" LGBTQ+ identity-based recognition, which fosters division and sanctions grossly illicit acts of sexual perversion. Homosexual behavior is contrary to the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," undermining self-government and the family. It attacks the very foundations of a free society. Nothing in the U.S. Constitution can be used to support homosexuality. No amount of "LGBTQ+" legislation can make normal, let alone constitutional, that which truth has told us since time immemorial to be abominable and shameful.

4. Collective-bargaining Constitutional Amendment

Proposal 3 proposes to amend Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution, establishing a constitutional right for employees to organize or join a labor organization. It provides that no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates, or diminishes this right, or prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization that requires membership as a condition of employment.

We have assigned minuses to the yeas because collective bargaining interferes with individual liberties, and compelling individuals to negotiate collectively infringes upon their right to freely associate or negotiate on an individual basis.

5. Omnibus Spending Bill

H0493, the "Big Bill – Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Act" makes appropriations to support state government operations in fiscal year 2026. Key provisions include establishing an Office of Health Equity; funding the Office of Racial Equity within the Department of Health; expanding emergency housing assistance; creating and funding a Substance Misuse Prevention Special Fund; increasing grants and spending across departments including Children and Families, Corrections, Education, and Health; allocating funds for HIV/AIDS services; health-equity grants, and various social programs.

We have assigned pluses to the nays because this legislation expands unchecked government spending for the welfare state at the expense of taxpayers. It diverts taxpayer funds into new bureaucracies focused on equity and racial programs; funnels cannabis tax dollars into substance misuse prevention; increases government intervention in housing, health, and social services; and rewards collective dependency over individual and fiscal responsibility. Economic prosperity and safety comes from limited government and free markets, along with personal responsibility.

6. Homeless Community Programs

H0091 establishes the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program, which expands and replaces existing emergency-housing programs with a new state-run framework starting in FY2027. It creates a \$10 million one-time General Fund appropriation for a shelter and supportive housing for homeless individuals, increases community-based shelter capacity, reduces reliance on hotels and motels, and provides interim shelter and services for households at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

We have assigned pluses to the nays because this legislation expands government dependency and the welfare state at taxpayer expense. It creates a new state bureaucracy and housing program that spends millions in taxpayer funds on big-government services, shelters, and housing initiatives. Effective pathways out of homelessness come from economic freedom, job creation, and limited government. State appropriations, mandates, and programs reward dependency, erode individual responsibility, and prevent free-market solutions.