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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Mike, please see my email and make sure I edited that part correctly. It's clear that a Senate bill became law, at least for purposes of numbering.—J



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Reflections on the 2026 legislative session

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 We accomplished a great deal that will help move
3 Vermont forward

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Hello, Equal Rights Amendment. Bye-Bye, Paraquat.

6 Hello to CESAs. So long to forced school consolidations.

7 These are just a few headlines from the just-concluded
8 2026 legislative session, one that at times felt like trying to drive a
9 vehicle with one hand while with the other trying to ward off the

10 current president as he tries to grab the wheel and drive us into
11 the ditch.

12 The effects of the president's policies are hurting
13 Vermont, especially with respect to affordability. Unless you're a
14 billionaire or large corporation, Donald Trump's policies only
15 amplify the reality of a national economy of have-nots and have-
16 yachts.

17 Now, this senseless war on Iran has made it worse, with
18 the cost of gas and heating oil soaring along with food and
19 transportation costs. Housing and health care are also huge
20 concerns for which we've had little to no help from Washington.
21 More than 3,000 Vermonters lost health insurance because of
22 federal cuts. And, with the tariffs costing the average U.S.
23 household \$1,300 a year, these policies are only making it harder
24 on working and middle-class families.

25 With those clouds hanging over our heads, the
26 Legislature set about our work to help move Vermont forward.

27 * * *

28 ON HEALTHCARE, we've set in place steps to control costs,
29 especially on pharmaceuticals and by initiating referenced-based
30 pricing to make costs more uniform across the state.

31 • Thanks to the efforts of State Treasurer Mike Pieciak,
32 Vermonters can also save money with the state's participation in
33 the ArrayRx plan, a partnership with other states that can lower
34 drug costs for Vermonters.

35 • We also started the process of planning on a move
36 toward universal primary care, which would require a federal
37 waiver to help cover the 60% of Vermonters on Medicaid or
38 Medicare. We have no hope of getting that waiver from the
39 current president, but we are preparing for a leadership change in
40 2028 so we can be ready.

41 • Another step we took to help Vermonter's health is
42 banning the agrichemical Paraquat. This herbicide has been
43 linked to Parkinson's disease and can be lethal if misused.

44 * * *

45 ON HOUSING, we continue to make investments with
46 state funding as well as lessen regulatory red tape.

47 • Regarding land use and Act 181, we listened to the
48 concerns raised by Vermonters and repealed the Tier 3 regulations
49 and the Road Rule that would've inhibited landowners from fully
50 using their property without undue regulations.

51 • Each December, the Department of Taxes sets an
52 estimate for the coming year's property tax rate, with an initial
53 estimate of 12%. However, just about every year, the actual rate
54 comes in lower than the December estimate.

55 This year, we've changed the formulas that have allowed
56 second-home owners to pay lower rates of property tax than year-
57 round residents. When all was said and done, the state average
58 increase should be around 3.5%.

59 • On education governance and funding reform, our
60 guiding principles were put kids first, control costs, and listen to
61 local voices. We heard loud and clear across the state that the
62 governor's plan — to squeeze our 119 school districts into five
63 new mega-districts — would not be the way to go. Fiscal models
64 also showed there really weren't savings in that plan.

65 • As it turns out, here in southern Vermont, we already
66 have a way to balance educational quality and keeping costs
67 affordable: Cooperative Education Service Areas (CESAs), which
68 share administrative costs and services, including special
69 education. We're doing it here, and this will be a model
70 statewide.

71 Voluntary mergers are also part of this plan as well as,
72 eventually, moving to a Foundation Funding Formula. For details
73 on these reform efforts, visit
74 legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.955.

75 * * *

76 REGARDING ELECTIONS: Concerns have arisen that that this
77 president will do anything to prevent any losses in the midterms,
78 including cutting federal funds that have been used to ensure
79 election safety and accuracy.

80 • In Vermont, our secretary of state and our attorney
81 general are ready to thwart those efforts and support local town
82 clerks and volunteers who keep Vermont elections safe and fair.

83 To help that effort, we now have the Voter Protections
84 Act, which says that no one can intentionally or recklessly
85 intimidate, threaten, coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or
86 coerce others for the reason of obstructing their right to cast a
87 vote or their right to choose who to vote for. It imposes possible
88 criminal penalties for such interference.

89 • And voters in November will have the final say on a
90 Vermont Equal Rights Amendment by amending the state
91 constitution. [Proposal 4](#) would guarantee equal treatment under
92 the law for, race, sex, disability, gender identity, sexual
93 orientation, age, religion, and national origin.

94 The next step is up to you: approval on the November
95 ballot.

96 * * *

97 WHILE WE DIDN'T get everything we wanted done, by the
98 end of the session we accomplished a great deal that will help
99 move Vermont forward.

100 There is much more to say. For my comprehensive report,
101 visit windham4.org. To see all the workings of the Legislature,
102 including the status and text of each bill and the activities of each
103 committee, visit legislature.vermont.gov.

104 As always, it is an honor to serve you and to do so with
105 the other legislators who make up our county delegation. We
106 work hard and work together to represent you in our citizen
107 Legislature.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

108 **MICHAEL MROWICKI** represents the Windham-4 district
109 (Putney, Dummerston, and Westminster) in the state Legislature

110 and is a longtime Putney resident. He can be reached at
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####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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