

1 H.521

2 Introduced by Representative Stevens of Waterbury

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Legislature; Joint Fiscal Office; livable wage

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create an
7 advisory committee to update the methodology used to calculate the Vermont
8 livable wage and to recommend changes to the statute governing the
9 calculation of the Vermont basic needs budget.

10 An act relating to the Vermont basic needs budget

11 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

12 Sec. 1. BASIC NEEDS BUDGET TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE;

13 REPORT

14 (a) Creation. There is created the Basic Needs Budget Technical Advisory
15 Committee to update the methodology utilized in calculating the basic needs
16 budget pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 526.

17 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
18 members:

19 (1) two current members of the House of Representatives, not all from
20 the same political party, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

1 (2) two current members of the Senate, not all from the same political
2 party, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

3 (3) the Director of the Vermont Department of Labor Division of
4 Economic and Labor Market Information or designee;

5 (4) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

6 (5) one member, appointed by the Vermont Small Business
7 Development Center;

8 (6) one member, appointed by the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund;

9 (7) one member, appointed by the Society for Human Resources
10 Management, Vermont State Council;

11 (8) one member, appointed by Capstone Community Action;

12 (9) one member, appointed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation
13 Board; and

14 (10) one member, appointed by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

15 (c) Duties.

16 (1) The Committee shall study the methodology utilized in calculating
17 the basic needs budget pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 526, including the following
18 issues:

19 (A) the current methodology for calculating the basic needs budget
20 and determining livable wage;

1 (B) potential changes to the methodology for calculating the basic
2 needs budget and determining livable wage; and

3 (C) potential changes to 2 V.S.A. § 526 to account for public policy
4 changes, data availability, or any other factors that have had an impact on any
5 aspects of the basic needs budget calculation or the cost to Vermonters of basic
6 needs as that term is defined in 2 V.S.A. § 526(a)(1).

7 (2) The Committee shall:

8 (A) with the assistance of the Joint Fiscal Office, engage a panel of
9 independent experts to assist with data analysis and methodological
10 considerations; and

11 (B) take testimony from a variety of stakeholders, including
12 employers and employees.

13 (d) Assistance. The Committee shall have the administrative and technical
14 assistance of the Joint Fiscal Office and the legal assistance of the Office of
15 Legislative Counsel.

16 (e) Report and recommendation.

17 (1) On or before January 15, 2023, the Committee shall submit a written
18 report to the Joint Fiscal Committee, the House Committee on General,
19 Housing, and Military Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Economic
20 Development, Housing and General Affairs with its findings, any

1 recommendations for legislative action, and a summary of the methodological
2 changes recommended pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection.

3 (2) On or before November 1, 2022, the Committee shall submit to the
4 Joint Fiscal Committee written recommendations for revisions to the
5 methodology for determining the basic needs budget pursuant to 2 V.S.A.
6 § 526.

7 (f) Meetings.

8 (1) The Joint Fiscal Office shall call the first meeting of the Committee
9 to occur on or before August 15, 2022.

10 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
11 first meeting.

12 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

13 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 30, 2023.

14 (g) Compensation and reimbursement.

15 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
16 Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem
17 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for
18 not more than five meetings.

19 (2) Other members of the Committee who are not State employees shall
20 be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as
21 permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than five meetings.

1 (h) Appropriations.

2 (1) The sum of \$7,000.00 is appropriated to the General Assembly from
3 the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 for per diem compensation and
4 reimbursement of expenses for members of the Committee.

5 (2) The sum of \$10,000.00 is appropriated to the Joint Fiscal Office
6 from the General Fund in fiscal year 2023 for costs related to retaining experts
7 pursuant to subdivision (c)(2)(A) of this section and other services provided to
8 the Committee by the Joint Fiscal Office.

9 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

10 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.