

VBA Legislative Update – Week 14 April 19, 2025

→ **Adjournment – When Will it End?**

This is the time of year when lawmakers and lobbyists are all wondering – when will this end? The legislature generally budgets for an 18-week session, which this year would take us to May 16th. Unfortunately, between education transformation efforts and the chaos in Washington, D.C., an on-schedule adjournment seems unlikely. We are betting on ending before May 31 this year.

This week the Senate received and began reviewing the education transformation bill passed by the House. Senate leaders believe they have much work ahead to reconcile the differences between the House and direction the Senate wants to take – which is likely to be a bit more aligned with what the Governor wants.

At the same time, the Senate Appropriations Committee is close to finalizing their version of the FY26 budget – which will then need to be reconciled with the House passed budget before going to the Governor. All budget conversations are cloudy by the daily news of new and more drastic plans to cut Federal spending – cuts that are certain to hurt Vermonters. It's unclear when we will know for sure the answers to the Federal spending rumors.

A veto session is already scheduled for June 16th and 17th.

→ **Introductory Hearing to be Held on Bill to Dramatically Increase Alcohol Taxes**

On Tuesday, April 22, [House Government Operations Committee](#) will hold an introductory hearing on [H. 376 - An act relating to the creation of the Treatment and Recovery Fund and the labeling and taxation of alcoholic beverages](#). As previously reported, H.376 proposes to increase the gallonage tax on malt beverages – from \$.265 per gallon to \$1.36 per gallon regardless of ABV – a 500% increase!!

The purpose of bill, [H.376](#), is to raise money to “offset the continuing costs of support services” for “mental health treatment and recovery” related to alcohol consumption. The bill would also require all alcohol beverages sold in Vermont to include a label that states the alcohol content of the beverage in U.S. Standard Drinks as well as a warning label that states: “WARNING: Drinking alcoholic beverages may increase cancer risk and, if consumed during pregnancy, can cause birth defects.”

Committee Chair, [Rep. Matt Birong](#) (D-Vergennes) assures us that the introductory hearing is just that – an introduction - and a courtesy to committee member and lead sponsor of the bill, [Rep. Kate Nugent](#) (D-South Burlington). Chair Birong does not intend to take further action on the bill this year. And, even if the bill were to gain traction, it is highly unlikely that the Governor would support this kind of tax increase. That said, an introductory hearing offers an opportunity

to engage with the bill’s sponsors and other lawmakers to communicate craft brewers’ concerns with such a dramatic tax increase proposal. **Please consider contacting [members of the committee](#) or [your local representative](#) to relay your concerns with this proposal.** Please keep Emma and me in the loop regarding any communications with lawmakers. This isn’t an emergency call to action, but it is an opportunity to engage.

→ **Local Headlines of Note**

- [Plan would overhaul Vermont’s response to homelessness, dissolving statewide motel program](#)
- [Education Secretary to Feds: Vermont Will Continue 'DEI' Practices](#)
- [Sweeping Education Reform Bill Advances in Vermont House](#)
- [Scott says lawmakers' push to undermine federal deportation policy could hurt detainees](#)
- [Amid federal and state funding questions, more Vermont municipalities are turning to local option taxes](#)
- [Final Reading: Vermont Senate looks to bolster protections for kids whose parents face immigration enforcement](#)

→ **VBA Bill Report**

VBA BILL REPORT – WEEK 14 April 19, 2025			
Bill	Sponsors	Description	Status
H 24	Rep. Anne Donahue	An Act Relating to Requiring Retail Businesses to Accept Cash This bill proposes to prohibit a retail business from refusing to accept cash payment.	Committees: House Commerce and Economic Development Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development (01/09/25)
H 45	Rep. Mary-Katherine Stone; Rep. Tiffany Bluemle; Rep. Abbey Duke; Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Bram Kleppner; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Robert Hooper; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Possession of Firearms on Premises Where Alcohol Is Licensed To Be Served This bill proposes to prohibit possession of firearms on premises where alcohol is licensed to be served and to require that notice of the prohibition be posted at each premises.	Committees: House Judiciary Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary (01/21/25)

H 51	Rep. Lucy Boyden; Rep. Matthew Birong	<p>An Act Relating to Miscellaneous Amendments to The Statutes Governing Alcoholic Beverages</p> <p>This bill proposes to: (1) authorize the holder of a fourth-class license to sell its products to not more than eight additional manufacturers or rectifiers; and (2) authorize manufacturers of malt beverages to acquire a retail shipping license and ship malt beverages to first- and second-class licensees.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/21/25)</p>
H 110	Rep. Lucy Boyden	<p>An Act Relating to A Reciprocity Requirement for Out-of-state Consumer Shipping Licenses</p> <p>This bill proposes to limit the issuance of out-of-state malt beverage consumer shipping licenses to breweries that are located in states that allow Vermont brewers to acquire consumer shipping licenses.</p>	<p>Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (01/28/25)</p>
H 119	Rep. Carolyn Branagan	<p>An Act Relating to The Beverage Container Redemption System</p> <p>This bill proposes to expand the scope of the beverage container redemption system to include cider, hard kombucha, noncarbonated water, and noncarbonated soft drinks. The bill also would increase the deposit for a container from five cents to 10 cents.</p>	<p>Committees: House Environment</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Environment (01/29/25)</p>
H 144	Rep. Brian Minier; Bridget Burkhardt; Rep. Emilie Krasnow; Rep. Kate Logan; Rep. Laura Sibilia; Rep. Leonora Dodge; Rep. Lisa Hango; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun	<p>An Act Relating to Enhancing Food Allergen Awareness in Food Service Establishments</p> <p>This bill proposes to require owners and operators of food service establishments to designate employees to complete a food allergen training program. It further proposes to require food service establishments to post signage regarding food allergens.</p>	<p>Committees: House Human Services</p> <p>Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/05/25)</p>

H 260	Rep. Esme Cole; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Ela Chapin; Herb Olson; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Kate McCann; Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Mary Howard; Robert "Rob" North; VL Coffin	An Act Relating to Prohibiting Certain Substances in Food Manufactured, Sold, Or Distributed in Vermont This bill proposes to prohibit the manufacture, sale, delivery, or distribution in commerce of food containing brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, or red dye no. 3.	Committees: House Human Services Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services (02/19/25)
H 339	House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs	An Act Relating to Removing the Repeal Of 7 VSA § 230 This bill proposes to remove the repeal of 7 V.S.A. § 230 (sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption).	Committees: Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee Status: As Passed the House
H 376	Rep. Kate Nugent; Rep. Brian Cina; Rep. Carol Ode; Rep. Jubilee McGill; Rep. Mari Cordes; Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun; Rep. Monique Priestley; Rep. Phil Pouech; Rep. Troy Headrick	An Act Relating to The Creation Of The Treatment And Recovery Fund And The Labeling And Taxation of Alcoholic Beverages This bill proposes to (1) require all alcoholic beverages sold in the State to bear a label containing a statement of the alcohol content in U.S. Standard Drinks; (2) increase the gallonage taxes on malt beverages and vinous beverages; (3) increase the excise tax on spirits; (4) create the Treatment and Recovery Fund, dedicate the proceeds of the gallonage tax to the Fund, and establish the purposes for which monies from the Fund may be disbursed; and (5) require the Division of Liquor Control t...	Committees: House Government Operations and Military Affairs Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs (02/26/25) Introductory hearing scheduled for 4/22.
H 377	Rep. Barbara Rachelson; Rep. Chea Waters Evans	An Act Relating to The Local Media Advertising Tax Credit This bill proposes to create an income tax credit for small businesses that purchase advertising in local media outlets.	Committees: House Ways and Means Status: Read first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (02/26/25)
S 88	Sen. Wendy Harrison; Sen. Alison Clarkson; Sen. Anne Watson; Joseph "Joe" Major; Sen. Randolph Brock; Sen. Rebecca White; Robert "Rob" Plunkett	An Act Relating to Creating an Enhanced Growth Incentive For Employee-owned Businesses This bill proposes to create a new enhanced incentive for locally owned and controlled employee-owned businesses within	Committees: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Status: Read 1st time & referred to Committee on Economic

		the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive Program (VEGI).	Development, Housing and General Affairs (02/25/25)
S.131	Sen. Phil Baruth	<p>An act relating to approval of an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington relating to the possession of firearms</p> <p>This bill proposes to approve an amendment to the charter of the City of Burlington to prohibit the possession of firearms in any building or on any real property or parking area under the ownership or control of an establishment licensed to serve alcohol for on- premises consumption.</p>	<p>Committee: Government Operations</p> <p>Status: Senate Action Calendar</p> <p>As Recommended by Senate Government Operations</p>