

# LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 9, 2018

As a regular recipient of my newsletter you already know I feel citizen participation is critical to a healthy democracy. Over the next three months major decisions will be made in your State House. Now is the time your participation can really make a change.

One opportunity to have your voice heard by your elected officials is public hearings. You can participate in person or in writing - visit the 'Announcements' section of the Legislative Website (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/>) for details. Next week there will be public hearings on the most important bill of the session: the budget. Please consider attending a hearing near you. You can find times and locations on the back. It is important your voice is included in the budget process.

**In January, over 1,500 Vermonters made their voices heard at a variety of public hearings in Montpelier. Issues have included raising the minimum wage, healthcare reform, and firearms regulation.**

One of our office interns, Teddy, shared what it was like to testify in support of raising the minimum wage. You can find his thoughts, as well as a link to all the testimony from that public hearing, on the back. You will also find an update from Senator Dick McCormack, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, on what they have been learning about the Governor's proposed budget.

When the Governor presented his budget he indicated it should not grow faster than wages. That sounds responsible but neglects to include the growth in unearned income that has been astronomical while wages for working people have barely kept up with inflation. While I agree we should not continue to burden working Vermonters, it is important to recognize the "no new taxes" mantra of the last 40 years has saved wealthy Vermonters hundreds of millions of dollars. If the Governor (and the President) support a more affordable society, all they need to do is look back to the 1940's and '50's, when our tax system treated working people more fairly and supported the middle class with home-ownership and higher education assistance among other things.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Every Friday 8:30-10:00AM**

#### **'Coffee with Constituents.'**

Lt. Governor's Office, State House, Montpelier

### **February 12**

7:30AM – CVU Legislative Breakfast. CVU, 369 CVU Road, Hinesburg

5:30PM – Public Hearing on FY19 Budget. Locations around the state, see reverse for details.

### **February 13**

11:00AM – *A Healthier State House* Press Conference.

State House, Cedar Creek Room, Montpelier

6:00PM – Public Hearing on FY19 Budget. State House, Montpelier

### **February 14**

12:00PM – 'Lunchtime Town Hall' Focus: Recovery

Live on Facebook @VTLtGov

***This live event takes place every Wednesday at noon!***

### **February 15**

4:30PM – VT Board Certified Teachers Recognition.

Steakhouse, Route 302, Barre

### **February 22**

5:30PM – Lt. Gov. Movie 'Made in Dagenham.' State House, Cafeteria, Montpelier

### **February 25**

6:00PM – Champlain College Leadership Dinner.

Champlain College, Burlington

**For a complete list of events please visit our website:  
[www.LTGov.vermont.gov](http://www.LTGov.vermont.gov)**

## PUBLIC HEARINGS ON GOVERNOR'S FY2019 BUDGET

The House and Senate Committees on Appropriations have scheduled public hearings on the Governor's Recommended FY2019 State Budget.

### Hearings on February 12<sup>th</sup>

**Johnson** – Johnson State College, Performance Space, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in Stearns. 6:00-7:00PM

**Rutland City** – Rutland Public Schools, Longfellow School Building, Board Room. 6:00-7:00PM

**Springfield** - Town Hall, 96 Main St., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. 5:30-6:30PM

**St. Johnsbury** – St. Johnsbury House, Main Dining Room, 1207 Main Street. 6:00-7:00PM

**St. Albans City** – St. Albans City School, Library, 29 Bellows Street. 6:00-7:00PM

**Winooski** – Community College of Vermont, Room 401, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. 6:00-7:00PM

**Hearing on February 13<sup>th</sup>**, 6:00-7:00PM at the **State House in Montpelier.**

## TEDDY'S TESTIMONY

As an hourly worker in Vermont, I was very interested to speak at the Public Hearing on Minimum Wage. It was my first time testifying, so I was a bit nervous, but the crowd was supportive, and the legislators were encouraging! I have to say, it was a lot easier and more accessible than I thought it would be. The panel was happy to listen to anyone testify, regardless of their opinion, for their allowed time. Public hearings are an easy, accessible and supportive forum to make your thoughts known to YOUR representatives! ORCA Media recorded all the testimony, you can hear me at the 50:15 mark: <https://www.orcamedia.net/show/public-hearing-raising-minimum-wage-12518>. ~Teddy Waszazak

## APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

*By Senator Dick McCormack*

Developing the state budget is a dry, no nonsense matter of math; of making the columns balance. But where we put the money, or not, is a statement of our values. We are trustees of Vermonters' money and work hard to keep spending down while meeting the needs of Vermonters and our state.

The appropriations process is made especially difficult when the Governor insists on "no new taxes or fees" in one breath, and then proposes expensive projects with no suggestion of how to pay for them. For example, expanded tuition benefits for the National Guard is a great idea and the dedicated men and women who serve deserve more than just abstract gratitude. The Guard needs the recruiting tool to be competitive, so the Governor's suggestion is justified, but his proposal doesn't suggest what we should cut to achieve this.

Similarly, who wouldn't want to exempt older Vermonters' social security payments from state income tax? The Governor urges this but makes no provision for funding it.

Our committee has heard compelling testimony about the need for additional resources to address opioid addiction, clean up of our waters, the long-range damage of family dysfunction, to name just a few. A policy of "just cut spending" forces a collection of 'Sophie's Choices' on Vermonters.

I encourage you to attend one of the public hearings listed above and share your priorities for State spending, creative ideas to find savings, or suggestions to raise revenue. We welcome your voice in this process.

**Vermont Lt. Governor David Zuckerman**

**802-828-2226**

**[www.LtGov.vermont.gov](http://www.LtGov.vermont.gov)**