

VERMONT LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN

MARCH 2017

Senator Bernie Sanders says, “***Change never happens from the top down, only from the bottom up.***” His words inspired me to get involved in politics more than 20 years ago, and fuel my work to empower Vermonters. Over the last month hundreds have visited my office and our State House. Groups have included: high school students, international clubs, activist organizations, people interested in public service, trade representatives from Taiwan, Syrian refugees, and everyday Vermonters concerned with wages, clean water, and cannabis reform. I have shared with all of them the importance of making sure their voice, ideas, and experiences, like yours, are part of the conversation in Montpelier and helped them make connections throughout the state.

THE WEEK OF MARCH 6TH YOUR LEGISLATORS ARE ON
BREAK FROM MONTPELIER. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES
TO CONNECT WITH THEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Vermont is one of a handful of states with a true citizen legislature. The decisions made in Montpelier are strengthened by your participation.

Below are a few tools to help you engage and ensure your voice is heard.

The Vermont State Legislative website

(<http://legislature.vermont.gov/>) allows you to see the progress of every bill that has been introduced in Montpelier. You can search by keyword, bill number, or sponsor. Bills that begin with an “S” were introduced in the Senate and those beginning with an “H” started in the House. You can also enter your town to learn more about your Senator/s and Representative/s, including how to contact them.

Talk to your local legislators. Call, email, write to, or set an in-person meeting with those who represent you. The week of March 6th is Town Meeting break and many legislators are holding local meetings to share what is happening in Montpelier, answer questions, and hear from you. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Leave a voice mail message for your legislators using a new online system called New GrassRoots (<https://newgrassroots.com>). This non-partisan, easy-to-use website allows you to record a message

UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Friday 8:30-10:00AM

“Coffee with Constituents” in the Lt. Governor’s office at the State House, Montpelier

March 4 9:00AM-1:00PM

“Together We Cook” in the State House cafeteria. Preparing chicken pot pies for local non-profits to distribute to food insecure Vermonters

March 12

10:30 Guest Speaker at Universalist Unitarian Congregation of St. Johnsbury

12:00 Speaking at Upward Bound Scholars Bowl, Lyndon State College.

2:00 Open Coffee at Hardwick Town Hall.

4:30 attending Central Vermont Empty Bowls fundraiser at Red Hen, Middlesex.

March 15 12:00PM

Attending Early Childhood Legislative Luncheon Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

March 20 8:00AM

Speaking at Lake Champlain Regional Chamber breakfast. DoubleTree, S. Burlington

March 30 7:00PM

Teaching a class on American Citizenship for Bethel University. Bethel, VT

For a complete list of events please visit the calendar on our website:

LTGov.vermont.gov

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on your phone, tablet, or computer, send it to your legislators, and track their response. You will find more information about how to use this system at the end of the newsletter.

Visit your State House! You are always welcome in Montpelier. Come listen to debate in the House or Senate Chamber or visit a committee. Make an appointment to talk with your legislators while you are here. You are welcome Tuesday-Friday every week but I especially look forward to visits Friday mornings during my open “*Coffee with Constituents*” discussions in my office.

When I ran for this office I indicated I wanted to help you engage in our democracy. To that end, I am including some bills below that are topics of discussion in Montpelier. You may want to take action on one of these or search for an issue that is significant to you. The important thing is to get engaged and make sure your voice is part of the debate.

I look forward to welcoming you in Montpelier or as I travel the State.



HIGHLIGHTED BILLS

Raising the Minimum Wage: H.93 and S.40 explore raising the minimum wage in Vermont. Since the 1980's frontline workers' wages have not risen in the same way the stock market has. I believe we need to increase wages for lower income Vermonters. Rumor in the building is these bills are not gaining traction; your efforts can help.

Cannabis Reform and Regulation: H.489 and S.16 related to expanding patient access to the medical marijuana registry. H.170 relates to possession and cultivation by people 21 and older. H.490 relates to commercial cultivation and sale of marijuana. I support the work being done on cannabis reform and expect H.170 will be up for a vote in the House soon.

Gender Neutral Restrooms: H.333 would require identification of gender-free restrooms in public buildings and places of public accommodation where single occupancy restrooms are available.

Universal Primary Care: In this era of health care uncertainty, we in Vermont are looking to create a more cost effective option, which reflects Vermont values and will have a positive influence on health outcomes. H.248 and S.53 would establish a publicly funded primary care system.

Property Tax Reform: S.58 proposes to create an education property tax that is adjusted by income for all taxpayers. This revenue neutral bill would expand income adjustment to level the playing field. Currently wealthier Vermonters pay a significantly lower percentage of their income toward our schools. This bill would result in 5-10% property tax reduction for 70% of Vermonters.

NEW GRASSROOTS

Developer Ben Brown shared, “*I want every person to have an easy, accessible engagement tool. For me, the idea of being able to track my action was empowering and I wanted to share that.*” To make your voice heard using this tool, simply visit NewGrassRoots.com and create an account; you will see your legislators listed and can click their name to learn more about them. “Search Legislation” by the number (some are listed above) or by key word, click on the megaphone, and record your message. Tell your legislators why you support or oppose the bill and ask them to share your opinion with their colleagues. Once the message is delivered you will be notified and hopefully you will also receive a personal reply.