

1 S.30
2 Introduced by Senators Hardy, Chittenden, Clarkson, Gulick, Lyons, Perchlik,
3 Ram Hinsdale, Watson and Weeks
4 Referred to Committee on Econ. Dev., Housing and General Affairs
5 Date: January 24, 2023
6 Subject: Commerce and trade
7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a Sister
8 State Program within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

9 An act relating to creating a Sister State Program

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

11 ~~Sec. 1, 3 V.S.A., § 2488 is added to read:~~

12 § 2488. VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM

13 (a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Sister State Program is created
14 within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

15 (b) Oversight.

16 (1) A Vermont Sister State Committee composed of the following
17 members shall oversee the Program:

18 (A) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or
19 designee,

1 ~~(B) the Chair of the Board of Directors of Vermont Humanities or~~
2 ~~designee;~~

3 ~~(C) a member appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees~~
4 ~~with experience in international relations;~~

5 ~~(D) a member appointed by the Speaker of the House with~~
6 ~~experience in international education and cultural exchange; and~~

7 ~~(E) a member appointed by the Governor with expertise in~~
8 ~~international arts or recreation.~~

9 ~~(2) The members appointed pursuant to subdivision (1)(C)–(E) of this~~
10 ~~subsection shall serve for terms of five years or until the member’s earlier~~
11 ~~resignation or removal for cause by the Governor.~~

12 ~~(3) If a member resigns or is removed, the appointing authority shall~~
13 ~~appoint a new member for the remainder of the member’s term.~~

14 ~~(4) The members of the Committee shall select a chair by a majority~~
15 ~~vote.~~

16 ~~(c) Administration. Subject to the approval of the Vermont Sister State~~
17 ~~Committee:~~

18 ~~(1) the Agency may contract for administration of part or all of the~~
19 ~~Program with a nonprofit organization that has expertise in international~~
20 ~~affairs,~~

1 ~~(2) the Agency, or its contracted administrator, shall create an~~
2 application form and process for evaluating Sister State relationships; and

3 ~~(3) the Agency may adopt rules and policies for the Program.~~

4 (d) Program requirements.

5 (1) The Vermont Sister State Committee may approve not more than
6 five Sister State relationships at one time with countries or provinces in
7 varying regions of the world upon finding that a relationship meets the
8 following goals:

9 (A) The relationship fosters understanding and collaboration between
10 residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in Vermont
11 and residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in the
12 Sister State.

13 (B) The relationship creates opportunities for cultural exchanges and
14 joint programs for educational, recreational, artistic, humanitarian, and
15 economic purposes that benefit both Vermont and the Sister State.

16 (C) The relationship promotes peace, human rights, and
17 environmental sustainability.

18 (D) The relationship involves a diverse range of individuals, sectors,
19 organizations, and communities in Vermont and the Sister State.

1 ~~(2) A Sister State agreement shall not initially exceed eight years and~~
2 ~~may be renewed for five-year increments upon approval of the Committee if it~~
3 ~~determines the relationship has met the goals of the Sister State Program.~~

4 (3) The Committee shall report to the relevant legislative committees
5 and the Governor biannually on or before February 1 concerning the status of
6 the Sister State Program, its programs, agreements, and progress meeting the
7 Program goals.

8 (4) In the event of an emergency, such as a public health emergency;
9 war or armed conflict; or serious human rights, environmental, or economic
10 violations, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker may agree to
11 immediately terminate a Sister State agreement or individual program.

12 Sec. 2. IMPLEMENTATION

13 The authorities authorized to make appointments to the Vermont Sister
14 State Committee pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2488(b)(1)(C)–(E) shall appoint
15 members to initial terms of three, four, and five years, respectively.

16 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.~~

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 2488 is added to read:

§ 2488. VERMONT SISTER STATE PROGRAM

(a) Creation; administration. The Vermont Sister State Program is created within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

(b) Oversight.

(1) A Vermont Sister State Committee composed of the following members shall oversee the Program:

(A) the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development or designee;

(B) the Chair of the Board of Directors of Vermont Humanities or designee;

(C) two members appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees with experience in international relations;

(D) two members appointed by the Speaker of the House with experience in international education and cultural exchange; and

(E) two members appointed by the Governor with experience in international arts, recreation, or governance.

(2) The members appointed pursuant to subdivision (1)(C)–(E) of this subsection shall serve for terms of five years or until the member’s earlier resignation or removal for cause by the Governor.

(3) If a member resigns or is removed, the appointing authority shall appoint a new member for the remainder of the member’s term.

(4) The members of the Committee shall select a chair by a majority vote.

(c) Administration. Subject to the approval of the Vermont Sister State Committee:

(1) the Agency may contract for administration of part or all of the Program with a nonprofit organization that has expertise in international affairs;

(2) the Agency, or its contracted administrator, shall create an application form and process for evaluating Sister State relationships; and

(3) the Agency may adopt rules and policies for the Program.

(d) Program requirements.

(1) The Vermont Sister State Committee may approve not more than five Sister State relationships at one time with countries or provinces in varying regions of the world upon finding that a relationship meets the following goals:

(A) The relationship fosters understanding and collaboration between residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in Vermont and residents, governments, businesses, and community organizations in the Sister State.

(B) The relationship creates opportunities for cultural exchanges and joint programs for educational, recreational, artistic, humanitarian, and economic purposes that benefit both Vermont and the Sister State.

(C) The relationship promotes peace, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

(D) The relationship involves a diverse range of individuals, sectors, organizations, and communities in Vermont and the Sister State.

(2) A Sister State agreement shall not initially exceed eight years and may be renewed for five-year increments upon approval of the Committee if it determines the relationship has met the goals of the Sister State Program.

(3) The Committee shall report to the relevant legislative committees and the Governor biannually on or before February 1 concerning the status of the Sister State Program, its programs, agreements, and progress meeting the Program goals.

(4) In the event of an emergency, such as a public health emergency; war or armed conflict; or serious human rights, environmental, or economic violations, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker may agree to immediately terminate a Sister State agreement or individual program.

(e) Compensation.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23.

(2) Other members of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

(3) Payments to members of the Committee authorized under this subsection shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development or other specific appropriation made for that purpose.

Sec. 2. IMPLEMENTATION

The authorities authorized to make appointments to the Vermont Sister State Committee pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2488(b)(1)(C)–(E) shall appoint members to initial terms of three, four, and five years, respectively.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.