

## 2026 Town Meeting Day Update

The question on Vermonters' minds from all around the State this Town Meeting Day is what is being done about Education Transformation (Act 73) that was enacted into law in 2025? So far, not much. The House and Senate Education Committees each have one model map and remain far apart on where they want to see the governance structure and funding formula end up, so that leads me to believe that any decisions affecting local school districts will go down to the wire at the end of this session, much like last year, with no agreement between the two chambers, and having to go to a Committee of Conference again to iron out the details of putting transformation into action going forward. For local districts, that may mean a delayed timeline to see any changes implemented. The only difference this year is that the Governor has indicated publicly that he will not sign any education, budget, or finance bill until a bill detailing education governance and funding is passed by both chambers, meaning we can't adjourn until we are well on a path towards transformation. That's a big ask of this Legislature, which is majority-ruled by individuals whose feet are dug into the sand on issues such as school choice and size of districts and well-supported by lobbyists, including the NEA.

Elsewhere around the Statehouse, there are several housing-related bills in play, some dealing with landlord-tenant issues, and some with the unintended consequences of Act 181(2024) that impede development. Currently, there is a statewide land use mapping process occurring that will determine if development is subject to Act 250 review, and by all accounts, everything except 2.4% of land designated as Tier 1 will trigger some kind of environmental review that could be costly and time-consuming at best and disastrous to local landowners at worst. The Rural Caucus has a bill (H.730) that would put the brakes on the implementation of rules until statewide mapping is complete and requiring notification to landowners, but thus far, the House Committee on Environment has refused to take it up, and we are waiting to see how far the Senate Committee on Natural Resources goes with it.

There are other committees in the building doing important work. The Health Care committees have a heavy lift with healthcare reform, the Judiciary committees are trying to implement practical public safety measures, the Commerce and technology committees are tackling AI challenges, Human Services is looking at changing the State's approach to homelessness and substance misuse, but all of those bills have a long way to go as they make their rounds of both House and Senate committees and the various money committees they have to make stops in.

Crossover (March 13) is the date that all policy bills must move out of their committees of jurisdiction if they are going to survive on their own. Any bill that has funding or tax

implications attached to it will have an additional week (March 20) to pass. The caveat to that is the language from any bill that didn't pass to the other chamber on time can be resurrected and inserted into another bill that did pass, as long as it is germane (related to the subject of the bill it's being attached to). This is why at the end of the session, bills can get very long with seemingly unrelated parts (making a « Christmas tree » out of them).

As a reminder to the public, all bills can be found by typing the letter and number of the bill into the bill tracker on the General Assembly website at [www.legislature.vermont.gov](http://www.legislature.vermont.gov). That website also has all general House and Senate information, as well as committee pages where you can find information on committee activity (witnesses, testimony, and drafts), names and email addresses of members, and YouTube recordings of every committee meeting. The main website has links to all House and Senate floor sessions, a calendar of the day's bills up for votes, and journals for each day of the legislative session.

It is an honor to serve the communities of Highgate, Franklin, Berkshire, and Richford. You can read my past updates and learn more about me and my work on your behalf at [www.HangoforHouse.com](http://www.HangoforHouse.com)

Your town officials work hard to keep your towns running smoothly and are in communication with your Representatives and Senators while we are in Montpelier, so please share your concerns with them or myself at [LHango@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:LHango@leg.state.vt.us), an address that I monitor year-round. Thank you for the opportunity to represent you.

There is also the opportunity to meet with your legislators in person on the following dates:

March 16 at 8am at Fairfax Town Office

April 20 at 8am at Enosburg American Legion

May 2 at 8am at Swanton Village Office

Stay well,

Rep Lisa Hango, Berkshire (Franklin-5)