

Update - Laura Sibilio

News Release Date

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News & Updates for the Windham - Bennington Vermont House District

Dover | Readsboro | Searsburg | Somerset | Stamford | Wardsboro | Whitingham

October 21st 2021

Bookmark for updates:

Vermont Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Current Status in Vermont Webpage for updates.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus Disease page

World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease 2019

Good morning,

Wardsboro folks and others in our district, please join me tonight at 6 at the Wardsboro library for my monthly office hours in your town. And this Saturday a scaled down version of the Gilfeather Turnip Festival Returns at the Wardsboro Library 10-1 – soup, turnips, cafe and children’s games. Hope to see you there!

This weeks modeling on Covid-19 shows continued community spread. The good news is vaccines are coming from school age kids. As soon as child vaccines are available I will send out that information.

Three public hearings are included in this email. These are public hearings for those who live in rural communities, military veterans and their families, and those who are impacted by the Vermont education Finance Formula and student weighting. Participation by impacted individuals is important and easy and can be done from your home. Please let me know if I can help you sign up to testify

This week the first proposed House maps for the Vermont Legislative Apportionment Board (LAB) have been released. These are the first drafts of maps which show how communities will be represented in the legislature.

These maps are redrawn every ten years after the census. The purpose is to ensure every Vermonter has equal representation in the legislature. So when the census comes out, the LAB will look at the total population, and then divide it by 150 House Representatives to see how many Vermonters each legislator should represent in the House. If an existing district has too many or too few people in it, then recommendations will be made to either add or subtract communities. The law explains how those decisions should be made.

Statutory Criteria From 17 V.S.A. § 1903

§ 1903. Periodic reapportionment; standards

(a) The House of Representatives and the Senate shall be reapportioned and redistricted on the basis of population during the biennial session after the taking of each decennial census of the United States or after a census taken for the purpose of such reapportionment under the authority of this State.

(b) The standard for creating districts for the election of Representatives to the General Assembly shall be to form representative districts with minimum percentages of deviation from the apportionment standard for the House of Representatives. The standard for creating districts for the election of Senators on a county basis to the General Assembly shall be to form senatorial districts with minimum percentages of deviation from the apportionment standard for the Senate. The representative and senate districts shall be formed consistent with the following policies insofar as practicable:

- (1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines;
- (2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests;
- (3) use of compact and contiguous territory

With the 2020 census, the Windham-Bennington district ended up having very close to the exact number of people in an ideal district. This is due to a significant increase in Dover's population. All three of the legislative districts in the Southern Vermont Route 100 corridor were either at the right number or have too many people. And most of the districts on the 91 corridor and the Route 7 corridor have lost population.

View the work of the board and previous map versions they considered.

The first proposal for the Windham-Bennington District which we live and vote in would move Stamford into a district with Pownal and Woodford and Glastonbury into the Windham-Bennington District. This would create a legislative district with three supervisory unions in two counties, put Glastonbury in a separate district from the district it currently receives voting, trash and fire services from and would require Glastonbury residents to drive through other legislative districts to meet with Wardsboro, Dover, Woodford, Searsburg, Somerset and Readsboro voters in their district. This changing of districts would require Stamford to drive through MA to most quickly get to their fellow district community in Pownal.

The next steps include the Board of Civil Authority in each town can meet send a letter to the LAB and support or request changes to the proposal. The LAB will make a final recommendation to the legislature and then the House and Senate Government Operations Committees will make recommendations to the whole legislature to vote on. The final redistricted maps will not be known until the end of the session in May 2022.

Title 24 : Municipal And County Government

Chapter 033 : Municipal Officers Generally

Subchapter 001 : Board Of Civil Authority

§ 801. Composition; meetings The town clerk, selectboard members and justices residing in a town shall constitute the board of civil authority of such town. Meetings of the board shall be called by the town clerk, or by one of the selectboard members, on application, by giving written notice to each member, and by posting a notice in two or more public places in the town at least five days previous to the meeting. The board shall choose a chair, and the town clerk shall be its clerk. The act of a majority of the board present at the meeting shall be treated as the act of the board, except that when the board is dealing with election issues, 17 V.S.A. § 2103(5) shall control. (Amended 1979, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), § 118.)

This process is important as it culminates with Vermonters and communities that are (hopefully) naturally connected by roads or school districts or supervisory unions or other common interests. I have begun reaching out to the Board of Civil Authority in each town in our district to hear what they think of this proposal. I am curious about the rationale for splitting up the existing district which is at an ideal population size, the decision to disconnect Stamford from the single road connection it has to the rest of the state of Vermont which goes through Readsboro, or for requiring Glastonbury voters to be split from the community that provides them services. But, if those recommendations make sense to the voters in those towns, then I will work extremely hard to ensure those changes are made in the legislature.

Many items in bold below are hyperlinks!

2020 BEN-WDM-1 District Population: 3,865 Deviation from Ideal: -422

2012 District: WDH-BEN District Population: 3,772 Deviation from Ideal: -400

Public Hearing: Task Force on the Implementation of the Pupil Weighting Factors Report
Friday Oct 29th from 11AM-1PM, State House, Rm 11 – see agenda to register for the Public Hearing and for livestream link

Fuel Assistance for Vermonters

The Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program for 2021 (VCAAP II) provides financial support to consumers who may face disconnection of utility service because of unpaid past-due balances. Vermonters financially impacted by COVID-19 (either directly or indirectly) with 30+ days overdue charges can get help now to pay their arrearages for residential (both homeowners and tenants) and non-residential accounts.

Additionally, both residential account holders and businesses can get assistance for accounts 30+ days in arrears, that were billed after April 1, 2020 and were closed while the COVID-19 pandemic emergency was in effect: between April 1, 2020 and June 15, 2021.

This program is for homeowners, renters, and businesses. Homeowners may only apply for a grant for their primary residence.

Covered utilities under VCAAP II include

Electricity

Landline telephone

Natural gas

Water

Sewer/wastewater

For more information about this program and to apply, please visit VCAAP II.

Please direct your constituents to call 1-833-488-3727 for help with VERAP.

Please direct your constituents to call 1-833-295-8988 for help with VCAAP II.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

And this year's flu vaccinations are widely available as well!

Visit www.healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine to make an appointment. You can also call 855-722-7878. Vaccine shots are also available at certain pharmacies and health care providers. All Vermonters are encouraged to get fully vaccinated.

In Vermont, you are now eligible to get a booster shot of Pfizer vaccine if you received your second dose of the Pfizer vaccine six months ago or more, and

are age 65 or older; or

are age 18 or older with certain medical conditions that put you at high risk of getting severely ill with COVID-19; or

are age 18 or older and are more likely to be exposed to or spread COVID because of where you work; or

are age 18 or older and are Black, Indigenous or a person of color (BIPOC), or are age 18 or older and live with someone who is BIPOC.

Last year the Department of Public Service (PSD) made funding available through the Vermont Temporary Broadband Subsidy Program that provides eligible Vermont households with up to a \$40 monthly credit. This program has continued to be funded to allow consumers to apply credits to their bills from March 2021 through December 2021 to assist with Internet service subscriptions. Applications can be found at TBS. The program URL is

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vermont-temporary-broadband-s...>

Applicants must have an active broadband account and self-attest to one of the following COVID-19 economic hardships:

Laid off from employment

Salary or hourly reduction of 20%

In need of assistance with childcare duties or home care due to closures of childcare facility or assisted facility or infirmity of household or family member

Closure of schools

COVID-19 health related impacts to self, a member of the household, or family member requiring quarantine, hospital assistance, or hospice care by the utility service account holder

Applications will be accepted until December 7th, 2021 or sooner if funding is depleted.

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging seeks Advisory Council members

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging is recruiting additional members to join its Advisory

Council, which plays an integral role in providing feedback and guidance to the agency on key issues and trends impacting older Vermonters in Bennington and Rutland counties.

SVCOA, which operates in part under direction and funding through the Older American's Act, is charged with establishing and maintaining an advisory council. SVCOA aims to add new members to bring varying viewpoints, experiences and input to the agency's service planning efforts.

If you would like to learn more about joining SVCOA's Advisory Council, please contact Chris Adams, Development & Communications Director, via email [atcadams \[at\] svcoa.net](mailto:atcadams@svcoa.net) or by phone at 802-772-7824.

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging exists to be a community force in creating and sustaining opportunities for elders and caregivers in our region to help assure that elders are able to maintain maximum independence and quality of life. With offices in Rutland and Bennington, SVCOA offers a wide range of supports, services and programs for older Vermonters, caregivers and volunteers across Rutland and Bennington counties.

For more information about SVCOA, visit www.svcoa.org.

From Efficiency Vermont:

Do you feel a slight chill in the air? Us too! That means it is time to start buttoning our homes in preparation for the colder months. This free engaging presentation just for Bennington and Rutland county residents, will give you a primer on weatherization and where to start. All attendees will be entered to win a \$50 Home Depot gift card!

Special attention given to the open Question and Answer section which will feature program managers and weatherization experts.

Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9876543210?pwd=ZWpScUo0dDZkdjRlTGpFQWVldz09>

And here's a link to the updated Button Up website: [Button Up Vermont | Save Money. Stay Cozy.](#)

VCRD's Climate Catalysts Leadership Program brings together Vermonters from all walks of life and all corners of the state to build peer connections, strengthen leadership skills, and receive support in developing a local climate economy project or initiative. Participants are asked to outline a potential or ongoing project or initiative that will be a focus of their participation. A new class of Climate Catalysts will run from November of 2021 through October of 2021. The core of the program is monthly 90-minute (primarily) online gatherings. Sessions will be split into those working on specific aspects of leadership and project development and those featuring guest speakers.

Most sessions will include breakout groups to build stronger connections within the cohort. Participants will also have the option of regular one-on-one check-ins with program staff. [Click Here To Apply For The New Class – Deadline October 29](#) You can learn more about the Climate Catalysts Program and read profiles of the first two classes [here](#). The program is free of charge and intended to be accessible to as many Vermonters as possible. If you have questions,

please feel free to reach out directly to Program Director Jon Copans at jon [at] vtural.org or (802) 272-0162 with any questions

Many thanks to the Wardsboro and Dover Public Libraries who have agreed to allow me to host monthly in person public office hours at the Wardsboro library on the 3rd Thursdays from 6-7 pm next on October 21st and at the Dover Free library on the 3rd Tuesdays from 6-7 pm and next on November 16th I also host monthly online office hours on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 11-noon next happening on November 20th – you can join this online meeting here or by calling +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 734 376 857 Passcode: 003089.

As always, if you have suggestions, concerns or critiques please be in touch so we can schedule time to discuss.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, or if you need assistance navigating government services at (802) 384-0233 or [lsibilia \[at\] leg.state.vt.us](mailto:lsibilia@leg.state.vt.us). Follow my regular posts online at <http://www.laurasibiliavt.com>

Kind regards,

Rep. Laura Sibilia

Dover, Readsboro, Searsburg, Somerset, Stamford, Wardsboro, Whitingham