

Vermont Legislative Report

to St. Johnsbury Residents

2019 Session



REPRESENTATIVE
Scott Campbell

It is a privilege and an honor to serve as one of your two State Representatives in Montpelier. Thank you for the opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott'.

Here in the most economically challenged part of Vermont, sustainable economic development has got to be our top priority.

Farming and manufacturing are still important and must be supported. But other sectors are rising. Healthcare-related services dominate job growth in the immediate future, and other trends are clear.

The key trend is demographics. We have an aging and steady or declining population. We must attract and retain working-age families.

We have a great start: beautiful landscape, climate, community and quality-of-life. But we also need the services and amenities vital to millennials and succeeding generations.

High-speed internet, reliable cellphone service, advanced transportation services, housing, education, arts and culture, recreation — we cannot shortchange investments in these areas.

Of course we must balance our spending carefully. But we must recognize our affordability problem is primarily one of tax base and income, not expense. We cannot budget-cut our way to prosperity.

We must make smart, strategic investments to meet the demographic challenge, as well as the challenges of a changing economy and climate. Otherwise the future will be much less affordable than today.

Making Progress

So, what have I and the 2019 legislature done to advance this agenda?

My committee, Energy & Technology, crafted a broadband bill, Act 79 (H.513), to assist local communities to bring **high-speed internet** to all residents. It provides planning grants and start-up financing for phase one build-out, and funds a state tech support position to assist local groups.

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Making Progress *(continued from 1st page)*

House Commerce & Economic Development wrote a workforce bill, Act 80 (H.533), that increases **support for training** in childcare, healthcare, and weatherization. Re-training and education to meet employer demand is vital in a rapidly changing market. The bill also recognizes the needs of new Americans immigrating to VT.

The budget bill includes long-needed increases in **childcare** subsidies and safety-net programs such as **mental health, nursing home and residential care, and working lands.**

Act 62 (H.63) increases **weatherization** funding for both low-income and moderate-income households. I directed weatherization programs for 20+ years. This work saves more than it costs, but most important it improves people's lives. St. Johnsbury is one of Efficiency Vermont's targeted communities for 2019.

The transportation bill uses VW fraud settlement funds for incentives for new and used **Electric, Hybrid, and (used) high-MPG gas vehicles,** especially for lower-income folks. The T-bill adds funds for the EV charging network, and St. Johnsbury is a prime location. Support for public transit and park-and-rides is also included. St. Johnsbury's park-and-ride is being rebuilt now.

The legislature and administration have struggled for years to find **ongoing funding to clean up our waters,** as required by the US EPA. This session, Act 76 (S.96) finally solves the problem. In July, EPA issued its approval.

Work in Process

Some important bills could not be completed in one session. The devil's in the details. Work resumes in January.

Minimum Wage. Raising payroll costs poses a challenge for small businesses and personal care agencies. But with wages stagnant for 40 years and no union to speak for the low-wage employee, how else can we address the income side of affordability? As one business owner, who opposed it at first, put it, "People gotta live."

Paid Leave. Workers should not have to choose: either work sick, miss caring for an ailing parent or bonding with a new baby, or else lose a day's pay — or even their job. H.107 provides insurance targeted especially to those who need it most.

Act 250. House Natural Resources is working on comprehensive reform to Act 250. Regulations have become too onerous and permitting takes too long. Development must be environmentally sustainable, but we must not discourage creative people from building our economy.

What I'm Working on Now

Besides serving on the boards of **Rural Edge** and **Catamount Arts**, and as Coordinator of the **Town Energy Committee**, I am involved in two important efforts:

- **Legislative Working Group on Building Energy Efficiency.** I am convener of a series of meetings with interested parties on how best to increase efficiency, comfort, and resilience of our homes and businesses.
- **Communications Union District (CUD).** I am working with Lyndon, St. Johnsbury and surrounding towns to form a CUD to bring high-speed internet to everyone who wants it.

I WORK FOR YOU.

I WELCOME THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU. PLEASE CONTACT ME!

Scott Campbell

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