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**State of Vermont**

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For Immediate Release  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Secretary of State Jim Condos Thanks the VT Legislature for a Productive Legislative Year.**

For the Secretary of State's office, 2015 was a very productive legislative year for improvements to voting rights and election laws, transparency in government, making it easier to do business in Vermont, and public protection through professional regulation.

Secretary Jim Condos stated, "I would like to thank Speaker Shap Smith and Senate President Pro Tem John Campbell for their leadership in bringing these important bills to passage. Some have already been signed by the Governor, and others await his signature."

Here is a summary of accomplishments:

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**H.490 – Budget (also called the "Big Bill")**

This is our appropriation to operate –our budget was supported by the Administration and the Legislature as an important and necessary piece of government operations. The SoS office operates without any General Funds.

**ELECTIONS**

**S.29 – Election Day Voter Registration**

Speaker Shap Smith singled this bill out on "Vermont Edition" as one of the most important bills passed this session with the potential to have a huge impact on voter turnout and participation in our democracy. Truly a Voter's Rights issue.

**S.93 – Lobbying Disclosure**

More frequent disclosure requirements during the session and added a mass media advertising disclosure as well. Vermont will now have one of the strongest lobbyist disclosure laws in the country - shining a light on money on politics.

**H.477 – Elections Cleanup**

Administrative housekeeping cleanup for the efficient operation of local government and elections supported by Town Clerks.

**CORPORATIONS**

**H.310 – Limited Liability Company Rewrite**

Already signed into law. This includes a major rewrite of the LLC law, including some of the filing requirements affecting our Corporations Division.

## **VT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION**

### **H.492 – Capital Construction**

This bill has an appropriation to complete work at VSARA to reduce the records center and BGS Print/Postal space conflicts and improve security. It will also improve productivity and efficiency by bringing all of VSARA staff together.

### **H.17 -- Identification & Notification of Public Records Act Exemptions in Administrative Rules**

Requires that rules with expansions or newly added public records exemptions within them must indicate as much in the APA filing process.

### **H.18 – Public Records Act Exemptions**

This contains several modifications to the public records act, most of which are outside T.3 and are very specific to certain agencies or records.

### **S.138 – Economic Development Bill**

Contains a section requiring the Secretary of State and Administration to study and report on “Blockchain technology” as a potentially viable way to create virtual corporations and authentication systems.

## **OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION**

### **H.282 – OPR Bill**

Multiple changes to the profession in OPR, transfer of speech language pathology and audiology from the Agency of Education, and added the newly regulated profession of applied behavior analysts. And as OPR has grown to now 49 professions with 60,000+ licensees, we also received authorization for two new positions for OPR: a research and statistical analyst and an enforcement position.

### **H.489 – Executive Branch Fees**

Fees will be lowered for four professions (~\$90-100K in reduced fees) and one new education course review fee for real estate.

### **Coming in 2016**

#### **H.355 – Foresters**

Has passed the House and will be taken up by the Senate next year. This was a very difficult bill with passionate voices on all sides for the issue. This bill and discussion about when regulation is necessary reinforced OPR’s reputation as an objective, thoughtful agency interested in public protection.

#### **S.20 – Dental Therapists**

This bill has passed the Senate and was sent to the House Human Services committee late in the year. It will most likely be taken up next year.

#### **H.206 – Notaries**

This Bill is in House Government Operations; and after some initial testimony this year, it was decided it will be taken up next year. Vermont’s notary laws were written in the late 1700s and 1800s. It is important to update our ancient notary laws and to make sure the notary commissioning process is efficient and works well.

Most of these bills will allow the Secretary of State’s office to continue to improve our productivity and efficiency while protecting the public. Again, thank you to the Vermont Legislature for their action on these important issues.