



The Vermont General Assembly will convene on January 4, 2017 for the first year of the two-year biennium:

The Vermont General Assembly will convene on January 4, 2017 for the first year of the two-year biennium, and as usual will start with a slow first week as the General Assembly waits for the new Speaker; projected to be Mitzi Johnson (D)-South Hero, to announce committee assignments. The Senate President; Tim Ashe (D)-Chittenden County will also need to work with the "Committee on Committees" on committee assignments. Both chambers are expected to have new Majority Leaders, and the Scott Administration will be announcing more than 65 newly appointed agency/department heads over the next 45 days. Each appointee will need to be confirmed by the Senate.

The Vermont Senate, with a total of 30 seats, will consist of two new Democrats this year, bringing the total to 23. Franklin & Rutland County retained Republican seats, while Washington County lost one Republican seat; Bill Doyle, Senator since 1969, and Democrats picked up one seat in Chittenden County. There are now 7 Republicans remaining in the Vermont Senate.

The Vermont House, with a total of 150 seats, did not see much change. With one recount, unresolved in the Windsor-Orange 1 District, Republicans lost one of their 54 seats, while the counts for Democrats, Progressives, and Independents remained the same at 84, 6, and 7 respectively.

Steam will pick up quickly as the Fiscal Committee warned the new Administration and legislators to anticipate a \$50-\$80 million shortfall for the FY17 budget and at least a \$16 million deficit in FY18. In addition to the continued budget woes, VRGA anticipates that several retail and food related issues will surface in 2017, including; predictive scheduling, mandated paid family leave, legalization of marijuana, Tobacco & E-cigarette taxes, fee increases for licenses and permits, expansion of Medicaid coverage to young adults up to the age of 26, and increased taxes to fund the Clean Water Act, to name a few.

To view the full list of bills we are following during the 2017 Legislative Session visit:
vtrga.org/government-affairs-resources

While the legislature is in session, January to May we send out a weekly legislative update email and host bi-weekly calls. If you are not currently receiving these communications email info@vtrga.org to be added to our list.