

*For Concord Town Report 2022*

Greetings Concord voters!

Thank you for the honor of representing you in the Vermont State House.

At this writing, in mid-January, we are not even two weeks into the meat of the session. It's hard to know what will emerge as controversial issues by the time you read this. But here are some issues I'm sure the Legislature will be dealing with:

**Housing.** It was the top of almost everyone's list when I was out knocking on doors. A bill has been introduced that would lower regulatory barriers to building more housing. Some towns use zoning regs to restrict housing by requiring large lot sizes, for example. The bill would prohibit overly restrictive zoning. I expect some provisions will be hotly debated, such as a ban on single-family-only zoning. Nevertheless I signed on as a co-sponsor. I think the need for housing is so acute that it is worth having that debate.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance.** The Legislature has passed Paid Leave twice in recent years, and the Governor has vetoed it twice. He has now proposed an employer-based voluntary model, much like our medical insurance system. I think we can all agree that medical insurance is a mess - it's expensive, inefficient, and still saddles too many people with shocking levels of medical debt. Why would we start another vital insurance program using that model? In my view, a well designed Paid Leave insurance program would not only address a vital need of our often low-paid "essential workers," it would also attract new workers. I hope we can work out the details and come to agreement.

**Childcare.** Here's another critical ingredient to increasing the workforce and attracting more working families. Last session the Legislature commissioned a study to assess how to reduce the financial burden of childcare to no more than 10% of a family's income. Today it can run to as much or more than rent or a mortgage - 30% or more. A lot of work will be done on this.

**Climate Change.** The challenge that global warming presents to Vermont is not only environmental. It is also economic. Here in mid-January, half-way through winter, we've had one decent snow and lots of rain. Businesses dependent on skiers and snowmobilers are hurting. Households are also hurting. Heating fuel prices have drifted down a bit, but fuel oil is still over \$4/gallon and kerosene is nearly \$6/gal. Gasoline is still \$3.45. We have no choice but to face the reality of climate change and our vulnerability to volatile fossil fuel prices. Adaptation, resilience, and transitioning to more stable fuel sources - at this point, that means wood for heating and electricity for heating and vehicles - is the only viable long-term strategy. Much work to do here too, and I hope we can find ways to work together.

I will post Legislative Updates in Front Porch Forum as regularly as I can. I have also resumed monthly "office hour" breakfasts on the third Saturday at 8 AM: March 18, Kitchen Counter Cafe, St. Johnsbury; April 15, Mooselook Diner, Concord; May 20, Kitchen Counter Cafe; summer TBD. Please join me. Or contact me anytime: [scampbell@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:scampbell@leg.state.vt.us) or 802 595-5580.

-- Rep. Scott Campbell  
Concord, Kirby, St. Johnsbury