

# Primary Election

The Addison Independent

# VOTER GUIDE 2024



Your guide to the Primary candidates,  
the issues and local polling information

## Read what local candidates have to say

ADDISON COUNTY—Vermont's Primary Election is coming up on Tuesday, Aug. 13. Make sure you are registered, and then cast a ballot for the candidates you wish to advance to the Nov. 5 General Election.

You can vote in the Primary for one party only, so you will cast a ballot for Republicans, Democrats or Progressive.

All of Addison County's incumbent state senators and representatives (except for Rep. Joe Andriano of Orwell) are running for re-election. Challengers have stepped up to make sure there will be competition for the two state Senate seats representing Addison County, Huntington, Rochester and Buel's Gore as well as in the Addison-4 House district, which comprises Bristol, Lincoln, Starksboro and Monkton.

There will be three candidates for each major party in the state senate and Addison-4 primary ballots, so that means there will be four competitive local races here.

As part of our election coverage, the *Addison Independent* has published stories on most of the challengers and we give space in the regular paper for updates from incumbents during the Legislative session, as well as for regular Legislative stories.

For the four competitive local races, we asked each candidate the same five questions. See the list of questions, and then evaluate how each answered them.

On the ballot you will see the following candidates in competitive races:

**Republican** — State Senate:

Lesley Bienvenue, Landel Cochran, Steven Heffernan (vote for two)

Addison 4: Lynne Caulfield, Chanin Hill, Renee McGuinness (vote for two)

**Democratic** — State Senate: Christopher Bray, Caleb Elder, Ruth Hardy (vote for two)

Addison 4: Jeanne Albert, Mari Cordes, Herb Olson (vote for two)

Polls on Primary Election Day, Aug. 13, open at different times in each town, but they all close at 7 p.m.

To check on the status of your ballot, use Vermont's online ballot tracking service at [mvp.vermont.gov](http://mvp.vermont.gov) or contact your town clerk.



# Candidate Questions

The following five questions, along with a requested word limit, were asked of each local candidate in a competitive race for the Vermont House or Senate.

The questions are not repeated in the context of each candidate's response, but are recalled by subject at the beginning of each answer.

Primary Election Day is Aug. 13.

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** Tell us something about yourself. (Up to 100 words).

**2) THREE ISSUES:** What are the three most

pressing issues the Legislature will face during the next biennium? (Up to 300 words)

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** How would you solve the state's education financing problem? Please be specific and please don't cite "more local control," as taxpayers already have the power to approve or reject their school spending plans at the ballot box. (Up to 300 words)

**4) HOUSING:** Vermont is in a housing crisis and many young families can't afford the few homes that

come on the market. How would you promote the development of more affordable housing in the state? (Up to 300 words)

**5) CLIMATE:** Do you support the Vermont Climate Action Plan? If yes, what are its best features? If not, what are its shortcomings? (Up to 200 words)

*Note: Each candidate was asked to write their own perspectives and without ghostwriters. The electorate has a right to know how well they can articulate their thoughts and express them to the public.*



**LESLEY J. BIENVENUE**  
REPUBLICAN  
STATE SENATE

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** My current affiliations are RNC - Republican National Committee, ACRP - Addison County Republican Party, member and Secretary. Volunteer member of the Festival on the Green organization, AARP - American Association of Retired Persons, Member of the Public Library, NRA - National Rifle Association, Green Mountain Pass holder for the VT Parks and Recreation Department. (By the way - 100th anniversary of the Vermont Department of

Parks and Recreation 1924.

My Facebook page has an extensive list of my volunteerism over my lifetime currently 1700 hours in numerous different organizations recently forty hours at the Festival on the Green 2024. Additional hours will accrue at Fair and Field Days in August with the Republican Party booth. Stop by and chat.

Credentials are: MBA, MEd, and EMG Graduate.

Religion - Catholic

Non-smoker.

Preference for a glass of wine now and then.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** Affordability is the main concern amongst Addison County Residents which includes tax increases and employment opportunities with appropriate wages. Available quality housing that is affordable. Finances is the prime worry of our citizens. Negligent criminal practices. Maintain law and order. Justice must be upheld. Excellence in education, focusing on curriculum development.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** I believe our current property tax program is the best for funding education. The State

(See Bienvenue on Page 11)



**CHRISTOPHER BRAY**  
DEMOCRAT  
STATE SENATE

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** First, my Vermont roots reach back to 1846, and I have a deep love for our state; and, second, my parents raised me and my siblings to believe that we could become anything we wanted, and, along the way, we must help our community. As a result, I have taken on many forms of public service, from coaching and refereeing, to fire and rescue, to boards and commissions, and, for the last 16 years, the Vermont General Assembly. Serving as a senator has

been the greatest privilege of my life, and I love the work, the endless learning, and most of all, the people.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** There are many pressing issues for the next legislature to address; they include education (see Question 3 below); affordable housing (Question 4 below); economic development; an aging population; affordable health care; mental health care and substance abuse treatment; and climate change—this last one being a major focus of my work as Chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee for the last decade, so I will focus on that.

Climate Change. Vermonters in general want to live in harmony with our beautiful surroundings. We are natural stewards. At the same time, Vermont's median income is only 86% of the national average, so we are always mindful of costs, including the cost of change—even changes that will ultimately save us money.

Climate change is real, pressing, and already costing Vermonters millions and even billions of dollars each year (a single major flood here can cause over \$1 billion of damage). Climate change is driven by

(See Bray on Page 4)



**LANDEL COCHRAN**  
REPUBLICAN  
STATE SENATE

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I have been serving on the Huntington Selectboard since 2018 and I got into local government to help my town make smart decisions. I believe I can help guide state policymaking in the same way. Although I am not registered with either national party, I am running on the Republican ticket because I support Governor Scott. I'm 36, married, and we have a 2-year-old daughter. Nothing matters more to me than her future. Senator is a tough job but I will be

honored to take on the challenge if the voters of the district give me the opportunity.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** The big three issues for the next legislative session are affordability, economic growth, and climate resiliency. I have heard from quite a few lifelong Vermont Democrats that they are disappointed with the legislature's inability to control spending. On a quest to help the Vermonters most-in-need, our legislature has grown the scope of our government beyond what Vermonters can afford. You cannot solve equity problems in Vermont by creating equity problems.

Economic growth is a vital element to solving our fiscal problems. At this point Vermont is a top-ten state in education spending, property taxes, and electric bills. We could afford this if our state's median household income is also top-ten, so let's focus on making that happen. That means attracting new business to the State and carefully reviewing our existing policies that are discouraging companies from investing here.

As the climate continues to change in unpredictable ways it is essential we better defend ourselves. Our outdated, insuffi-

(See Cochran on Page 4)



**CALEB ELDER**  
DEMOCRAT  
STATE SENATE

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** My name is Caleb Elder and I am running for a Senate seat in the Addison District. I grew up in Bristol where I attended public schools prior to attending Middlebury College. For the past 6 years I have represented the Addison-4 District in the Vermont House. In that time I have served on the House Education, Ways and Means and Housing Committees. Prior to my time in Montpelier, I served on two local school boards for Starksboro and then

MAUSD. In 2020 I was appointed by House Speaker, Mitzi Johnson, to serve 6 years as the Vermont House's board member at the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** In the coming biennium I feel that our most pressing issues will be:

- Charting a path for the sustainable future of our public education system, while restructuring our property tax system. We need to have serious, non-partisan, conversations about cost-containment, since we cannot solve this problem by simply raising revenues. I believe the future of public education, and how we pay for it, will be the single biggest topic of the coming biennium and is one of the main reasons I feel compelled to run for the Vermont Senate in 2024.

- Continuing our work on housing: bolstering the labor force, improving and streamlining regulation for housing developers and continuing to fund permanently affordable housing projects. We have made some strides in reducing regulatory barriers for new residential housing, but there's a lot more we can do. Building out

(See Elder on Page 5)



**RUTH HARDY**  
**DEMOCRAT**  
**STATE SENATE**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** As a senator, my top priorities are to work for, communicate with, and advocate for my constituents. I collaborate with Vermonters to develop sound legislation on issues including healthcare, education, and government accountability. I have lived in East Middlebury for 20+ years, where my husband and I have raised three kids. I ran the Open Door Clinic and Emerge Vermont, worked for Middlebury College and Planned Parenthood, and served many years on local school and childcare center boards. Each fall, I teach at the College or MUMS. I enjoy making pizza, hiking, and writing. Read more at [ruthforvermont.com](http://ruthforvermont.com).

**2) THREE ISSUES:** We must focus on: 1) a plan to finance and strengthen public schools; 2) reducing costs and increasing sustainability of our healthcare system; and 3) improving resiliency of public infrastructure and small towns in the face of climate change. This year, rising school budgets, due to factors such as pandemic recovery, student needs, and facility costs, created an unsustainable statewide property tax increase, straining Vermonters' wallets and patience — this must be addressed.

The school budget challenge was exacerbated by a significant increase in employee healthcare costs, in part because Vermont has one of the most expensive hospital systems in the country. We also have long wait-times to access medical care. This fall, the Green Mountain Care Board will release a report with recommendations on hospital sustainability that will guide next steps for hospitals, the Agency of Human Services, and the Legislature. I will advocate for this work next session and also focus on expanding access to comprehensive healthcare. We must make sure that all Vermonters can find a doctor and afford healthcare when they need it.

The floods have devastated communities across the state. Many small towns, mostly run by volunteers, do not have the infrastructure or personnel capacity to adequately deal with the complexities of flood recovery, federal and state programs, and extensive planning and reconstruction. I led efforts to improve the government response to flood recovery this session. We need to continue engaging with municipalities and residents to support their recovery efforts, build local capacity, and make towns across Vermont more financially, structurally, and administratively resilient in the face of ongoing

climate change.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** Vermont has one of the country's most equitable, and complex, school funding systems. We also have one of the most expensive K-12 systems per pupil, due to our small, rural schools and commitment to high-quality education. With declining enrollments, increasing student needs, and variations across school districts, our funding system isn't fully working to equitably balance costs. This session, we created a Commission on the Future of Public Education to recommend changes to our school funding formula and create a vision for the public school system to ensure equity, quality, and efficiency. This Commission should evaluate and recommend funding formula changes, better integrate pre-K education into public schools, and revisit alternative funding sources for PK-12 schools so fewer costs fall on property taxes.

More work also is needed to reduce administrative costs, efficiently upgrade and use school facilities, and potentially further streamline school governance. Vermont's school buildings are some of the oldest and poorly maintained in the country. It may save money and improve education to combine or repurpose some schools, rather than invest in renovating under-enrolled, facility-challenged school buildings. Some school districts could likely be restructured or potentially combined to reduce administrative costs and improve equity.

We should reduce the types of expenses that are funded through the Education Fund. Vermont's school voucher program increasingly subsidizes private and religious schools with public tax dollars — this needs to stop. Schools are also increasingly asked to pay for social and health services for kids. While these services should continue to be delivered through schools because that's where kids are, they should not be funded through property taxes.

**4) HOUSING:** We have invested *significant* funding in housing in recent years, supporting a multi-faceted approach to housing access and development. We allocated funding and flexible financing for statewide affordable housing construction. We revised Act 250 to make it easier to build housing in town centers and designated areas, permitted accessory dwelling units and duplexes everywhere, and encouraged denser housing for more efficient land use. We increased housing development tax credits to spur construction and fund energy-efficient, affordable manufactured homes. All of this work takes time, but new housing units are starting to come online as a result. However, flooding over the past year has delayed some development and created an even more urgent need because people lost their homes to flood damage.

Tax reform is also an effective tool. We must reduce property taxes for many Vermonters to ensure affordability. We modified the property transfer tax to exempt the first \$200,000 in value to ease the cost of buying a primary residence, created a 3% surcharge on short-term rentals, and imposed a 3.4% tax on the sale of second

(See Hardy on Page 11)



**STEVEN HEFFERNAN**  
**REPUBLICAN**  
**STATE SENATE**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** Born and raised in Vermont, grew up on a family farm in Bristol, learned the value of family, honesty, hard work and learn to live with in your means. Married my high school sweetheart and had 3 children. They have blessed us with 5 grandkids to date.

I'm serving our country and state as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal tech for more than 30 years, in the Vermont Air National Guard. I own and operate three businesses with my partners.

I love this state and am concerned about where it's headed and the future it holds for my grandchildren.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** Without a doubt the biggest two issues will be education and s5 fuel tax. I believe most Vermonters are concerned about this because it will have an instant impact on their finances. Thirdly, transportation, our roads and bridges need many improvements around our state.

These are what I believe are Vermonters' top 3 issues. I haven't gone into detail because most people just want answers not a long-drawn-out explanation. As your Senator I will do my best to keep issues and laws to their simplest form when possible.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** Solving the state's education finance problem will not be an easy task. Schools are decreasing in attendance, special needs amplifying costs and building maintenance are a few reasons our taxes go up. I will start looking for answers by talking with other states that have good working school systems. Find out how they do it and if it could work here in Vermont. I would also consult our local school leadership, superintendents, teachers, janitors and others on ways to help reduce costs and save taxpayers money.

There will be some hard choices to be made in the future and we need leaders that will make the right choices that will work for all Vermonters.

One thing is crystal clear, Vermonters are not going to be able to handle more tax increases. We as a state have to find ways to give our children great education and not break our tax payers finances.

**4) HOUSING:** As someone who does construction, I can say one of the costliest parts is what it takes to get through the permit process. From a landowner getting through wastewater permitting, to the builder wading through ACT-250. This state at this point is NOT a build friendly state. I would like to see our state agencies


(See Heffernan on Page 4)

Re-elect

Mari Cordes

Elect

Jeanne Albert



**WORKING FOR YOU IN ADDISON-4**

**BRISTOL, LINCOLN, MONKTON, STARKSBORO**

Return your early ballot by Primary Day, August 13<sup>th</sup>, or vote in person!

Paid for by:

Mari Cordes for Vermont House  
 21 Main, Bristol, VT  
[MariCordes.org](http://MariCordes.org)

Jeanne Albert for Vermont House  
 PO Box 415, Bristol, VT  
[jeanneforvermont.org](http://jeanneforvermont.org)

## Bray

(Continued from Page 2)

the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of our fossil fuel powered economy. Vermonters use costly polluting fossil fuels in two major ways—for heating and transportation. These days, there are proven ways to reduce both costs and emissions.

For example, if you replace a fossil fuel powered car with an electric one, you can save, over the average 12-year lifespan of a vehicle in Vermont, tens of thousands of dollars (approximately 47%), AND you reduce GHG emissions by nearly 98%.

In a similar way, you can heat using cold climate heat pumps that run on clean electricity, not fossil fuels. This change too requires an investment, and it too delivers savings; the five-year average heating cost for a heat pump saves 15% over heating oil, and 34% over propane.

If re-elected, I will continue to work on programs make the transition to these cleaner, money-saving technologies affordable for all Vermonters.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** At the outset, it's worth reminding ourselves that school districts (and local voters)—not the legislature—determine the overall spending in Vermont on education. Legislators do not control local school budgets.

It's also important to remember that in order to make taxes fairer (that is, based more upon ability to pay), education property taxes for 70% of Vermonters are income-sensitized; that is, these Vermonters do not pay the full education property tax; instead they pay based on their income. For 2024, the amount paid is capped at 2.54% of a

household's income for household income up to approximately \$90,000/year, with tapering supports extending to approximately \$130,000 of annual household income.

This year, as I member of the Senate Finance Committee I was able to help craft a 30% reduction in the education property tax from the state's initial 20 cent increase, to 13.8% (many Addison County districts are well below this). This 30% decrease saved \$70M in education taxes.

Even so, next year, we must do better. Therefore, I also proposed a study group, now underway, to address both education costs and delivery.

I'm also proposing two further actions:

First, we deliver a wide array of important social services at schools, including free food for all children, counseling, and health care. These services make our communities stronger and healthier, and, therefore I propose that we treat them as a "community expense," that is, as an obligation of the state's general fund, which has broader and more varied revenue streams supporting it. As a result, the education fund obligation, and thus the education property tax, will both be reduced.

Second, as Auditor Doug Hoffer has pointed out, the state of Vermont could, with no loss of quality, standardize its payment schedule for medical services and procedures, including for teachers, saving tens of millions of dollars each year. Every \$11 million saved equals a penny off the education property tax.

**4) HOUSING:** The Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee took on affordable housing directly this past session by defining Smart Growth districts that will be Act 250-free for the development

create their budgets, have voters in their district approve the budget, and then send the bill to the State. The State then calculates the total amount needed to fund all of the school districts, and then adjusts that tax burden up for wealthier districts, or down for less-wealthy districts. That's where everything went wrong. The ups and the downs changed substantially in 2022 so that the actions of one school district have significant financial impacts on the taxpayers in other school districts. These policies resulted in property tax increase of 8% across the state last year and 13.8% this year.

The long-term solution will take time. However, there are some immediate changes we can make. I suggest changing the order of the funding process so the property tax funding pool is calculated and apportioned before school budgets are made. All additional amounts needed would come directly from taxpayers in their own district. No more blank checks. The size of the funding pool should be a reasonable increase upon the size of the previous year's pool. Reasonable increases are proportional to increases in Vermont household income.

**4) HOUSING:** We need to work aggres-

Vermont is a beautiful state, and we all want it to stay that way, but if we don't make permitting easier for projects that will be good for Vermont we will not grow. Young people and couples will most likely go somewhere else because they can not afford to live here. I personally want my

children and their families to stay here.

Our committee's work last year made feasible the new Middlebury Seminary Street development being moved forward by the college and a private developer. Similar opportunities now exist in 16 Addison County towns and villages, and more will become eligible when they define smart growth areas.

At the same time, the committee mindfully preserved the critical role that Act 250 has played over the last 54 years to preserve and protect the green landscape in many forms, ranging from working farms and forests, to conserved and undeveloped fields, woods, mountains, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.

In short, we created an opportunity for the development of quality housing, including affordable housing, while also keeping Act 250 robust and healthy.

Senate Natural also passed legislation that makes housing more affordable through energy efficiency. All affordable housing must be built to the state's higher energy efficiency code, which adds a modest cost to the initial construction, but creates a lifetime of energy savings that pay for that additional investment many times over.

In addition, the committee moved forward training programs to teach science-based, engineered methods for constructing durable energy-efficient housing. This quality housing in turn helps consumers to reliably build wealth and security by protecting them from purchasing a home constructed using substandard, energy-

sively against the affordable housing crisis from three different angles. First, the recent updates to Act 250 and the efficient building standards that just went into effect July 1 make building your own house a lot more difficult and expensive. I support easing land use and building restrictions only for owner-occupied housing and only in specific areas designated by each city and town. Our housing shortage is serious enough that we need to worry about the supply of homes more than making sure those homes are perfect.

Second, affordable housing also includes everyone who is barely getting by to stay in the homes they already have. We have to stop this onslaught of property taxes. We cannot do 13.8% again next year.

Third, we need to continue supporting affordable housing development in our population centers. The legislature has started working on this front and it needs to be continued. It is imperative that we do not lose sight of what affordable means as well. To most of us, \$400,000+ is not an affordable home.

**5) CLIMATE:** Vermonters are by and large very concerned with our changing

climate and we want to do something about

it. We are also smart enough to know that making home heating oil and electricity more expensive is not going to make our climate go back to normal. Climate change is a global issue with global players. Most Vermont residents already strive to reduce our collective carbon footprint and we do happen to live in the middle of a gigantic carbon sink. Furthermore, the Global Warming Solutions Act allows outside parties to sue Vermont over certain carbon metrics. Let us change this law before the State, and in turn the taxpayer, is tied up in court. I am in favor of plans that support a greener future without heavily penalizing Vermont present.

wasting methods. These laws also create a fair and level playing field for contractors, so that those who build in compliance with the energy code can be distinguished from builders who do not.

**5) CLIMATE:** In 2020, the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee (SNRE) helped write the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), which defines a pathway for Vermont to meet its energy needs while reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are the primary drivers of climate change.

Because the legislature is a part-time organization (meeting for 4+ months each year), the GWSA created a year-round 23-member working group, the Vermont Climate Council (VCC). The VCC studies means of reducing GHG emissions and improving Vermont's resilience in the face of climate change, which is creating hotter, more violent weather (including floods and droughts), poorer air quality, and other consequences. The VCC produced its first Climate Action Plan (CAP, 2021), and is now working on a 2025 revision.

The CAP provides SNRE with helpful research that assists the committee when writing new laws, such as the Affordable Heat Act in 2023 and this year's revised Renewable Energy Standard (RES 2.0). Next session, SNRE will use other research and recommendations from the CAP to put Vermont on the most cost-effective, money-saving pathway to a clean energy future with reduced consumption of fossil fuels. Following an initial investment phase through 2030, the non-partisan Joint Fiscal Office estimates that implementing the CAP will produce \$6.4 billion in net savings to Vermonters.

With the substantial floods of this and last summer, we are facing the reality of a changing climate. We need to bolster our flood-prone communities and protect our homes and infrastructure from the very-real threat of another flood. We want our tax dollars spent on solutions that protect us from an unpredictably changing climate, not on costly attempts to chip away at a global problem.

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to do something that won't have any real change. There are states affecting climate change more than Vermont and are doing less about it. Vermont is a small and mighty state and should continue to do what it can to help with climate change, but we should set it as goals and not mandate.

## Cochran

(Continued from Page 2)

cient, and underfunded public infrastructure needs to be updated and protected before we sustain more damage. Fixing our deficiencies before they are literally washed out costs much less than replacing them after they fail.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** The education funding mess is a direct result of two things. First, the supermajority in the State House has expanded spending dramatically in the past few years which results in less money available for education from Vermont's General Fund. The remaining amount needed for education funding comes from property taxes. The "hole to fill" has been much larger in recent years because Vermont's revenue is going elsewhere. Programs and services started during the COVID era on federal dollars are now siphoning from the General Fund.

The second cause is the 2022 update the legislature did to property tax equity distribution amongst school districts across Vermont. In our broken system, school districts

## Heffernan

(Continued from Page 3)

help rather than deter. In doing so it would help lower costs and make building more affordable.

## Elder

(Continued from Page 2)

our downtowns and villages will require a sustained 10-year effort, so we should expect to keep engaged on this work for the foreseeable future.

- Supporting cities and towns affected by the 2023 and 2024 floods, and helping them to prepare for future flooding events. We don't yet know whether Vermont will receive a federal emergency declaration for the 2024 floods, but I know we are all hoping for that as soon as possible. The FEMA support will be critical, but of course it only goes so far. After back-to-back years of catastrophic flooding, some Vermont communities are facing an existential threat. We put over \$30M into flood recovery addressing the '23 floods and I anticipate there is just as much need in responding to the floods from earlier this month.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** Since the pandemic, we have seen an increase in social and emotional health needs in our schools. With the retreat of federal monies, these costs are now directly impacting school budgets. Some estimate that this "shift" is around \$25M in FY '25. Efforts, such as the community school pilot in Vergennes, show us that wrap-around services in schools are a huge support to students and their families. However, these costs can't be borne by the school budgets alone. We need to redesign the Agency of Human Services budgets so that some supports for kids and families are literally located in the schools. We have the space but we need

more help, all under one roof.

FY '25 school budgets saw a one-year increase of \$50M in teacher healthcare statewide, bringing the new total to \$300M per year. This benefit is negotiated at the state level and cannot be changed by local school boards. This annual increase is equivalent to adding a new child tax credit program every year. We need greater transparency for how this money is spent, since the same procedure can be priced very differently around the state. We owe it to taxpayers to make sure we're getting predictable, transparent pricing for this \$300M.

Finally, I know that we need tax relief. Property tax payers are struggling to keep up with the meteoric rise of school budgets and they require action. One approach I would favor is actually removing education funding from residential property tax bills altogether. This was a recommendation of the Tax Structure Commission from a few years ago. Our current system is already "income based" but is inordinately complex. Additionally, progressivity of this system is capped at about \$140,000 in household income. If elected, I would push for this concept since I believe it has merit and could bring real relief to fixed-income homeowners.

**4) HOUSING:** For years, Vermont has had relatively little new housing creation. Now that there is more demand on the housing economy, this lack of supply is driving up prices and new housing simply isn't coming on line fast enough. In order to counteract this trend, we need to focus on workforce development, affordable housing initiatives and streamlined regu-

lations for home builders. We have an opportunity to build greater connections between our high school vocational centers and the building trades. For example, the VSAC Advancement Grant program provides students with skills they can immediately turn into job opportunities, as they add to their skills and knowledge.

If we want to attract more young people into the building trades, as employees or as business owners, then we need to support them with ongoing training and support. This should include education around starting and running a small business, along with the actual skills of the trade. Housing is an exciting sector of our economy, promising great demand for the coming decade. Building science is also becoming increasingly complex, and requires greater education as well as hands-on learning opportunities. If we have students showing interest and aptitude for building trades, we need to have education programs ready for them. And further, we should give them support in forming a business plan and developing their dream.

From a regulatory level, I think we need to make sure we are getting out of the way of our own ambitions. If we want more residential housing, then we need to think strategically about removing barriers to investment in this market. While publicly funded housing is a piece of the puzzle, it is a small piece. We need the private sector involved in our buildout of new housing and in order to do that we need a predictable and scalable regulatory environment. This could mean exemptions to Act 250 for certain types of residential housing devel-

opment. We could even permit residential housing as a "public good" and remove it from Act 250 altogether. We take a similar approach with renewables, and it has been effective.

**5) CLIMATE:** Yes, I fully support the VCAP because it attempts to wrap our arms around the grave threat of climate change and to clearly lay out what steps we must take to reduce carbon emissions. Of course, it's a massive document that is evolving and it necessarily has strong points and weak points. But the very endeavor of putting this problem, our collective task, into one document is powerful and important. In terms of the plan's best features, I look to the promise of the workforce development section. This part of the plan aligns with my own vision for how we build out the necessary housing workforce. We need public-private partnerships with industry leaders, ongoing training and certification, and new investment in trade apprenticeship programs. Achieving the goals of the VCAP - whether through renewable energy generation, electrifying home heating or electrifying transportation - will require skilled tradespeople at every turn. Without that workforce, our ability to achieve the goals laid out in the VCAP will be deeply undermined. Additionally, by focusing on the workforce that will help Vermont accomplish this transition, we center the young people coming of age in this challenging time. I believe we can create opportunities for young Vermonters amidst this climate crisis, as we help them build and utilize the skills our state, country and planet require in this moment.

# We All Stand with Ruth!

Ruth's colleagues in the State House from across the Addison District endorse her re-election for Senate

**Rep Joe Andriano, Orwell** – "An independent voice who fights for her constituents"

**Rep Peter Conlon, Cornwall** – "Leadership has defined Ruth's service for years"

**Rep Mari Cordes, Bristol** – "A sister with a fire in her belly – that is Ruth"

**Former Rep Mike Fisher, Lincoln** – "A consistent & strong voice for fairness"

**Rep Diane Lanpher, Vergennes** – "A remarkable woman who does all the hard work"

**Rep Jubilee McGill, Bridport** – "Unwavering commitment ... an exceptional Senator"

**Rep Robin Scheu, Middlebury** – "Nobody works harder than Ruth in the Senate"

**Rep Amy Sheldon, East Middlebury** – "Ruth has integrity & she knows the issues"

**Rep Kirk White, Bethel** – "Creative, positive, and driven to support Vermonters"

**Rep Theresa Wood, Waterbury** – "Ruth cares about Vermonters"

**Vote for Senator Ruth Hardy on August 13**



Paid for by Ruth for VT Senate | PO Box 343 | East Middlebury, VT 05740



ruthforvermont.com



**JEANNE ALBERT**  
**DEMOCRAT**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I've called Vermont home for nearly 40 years, the last seven in beautiful Lincoln. I'm currently Chair of the Lincoln School District Board, and recently served on the tri-partisan Legislative Apportionment Board, which redrew Vermont's House and Senate districts, following the 2020 Census. I've been teaching college math for over 30 years, after earning my PhD from Dartmouth.

I want to make a positive difference for my community and I enjoy collaborating with people who bring a diverse set of perspectives to the conversation. I'm ready to bring my strengths to Montpelier to tackle our state's tough challenges.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** (1) The future of public education in Vermont, with particular focus on finance, governance, and infrastructure.

Following an unprecedented increase in statewide education spending, and the failure at Town Meeting of one-third of district budgets, the Legislature established the *Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont*. The Commission's charge is exceptionally broad, and includes examining nearly every element of our system of public education. Its final report is due Dec. 1, 2025, with a preliminary report-- including short-term cost-containment options-- required by December 15, 2024.

(2) Support for working families, through a range of interconnected programs and initiatives.

We must sustain thriving communities where all Vermonters can afford to live and work. This essential goal incorporates many interconnected issues, including affordable housing; workforce development; accessible, quality childcare; paid family and medical leave; saving for retirement; and health services.

While we've made notable progress in several areas-- such as availability of high-quality, affordable childcare; the Vermont Saves retirement plan; increasing support for community mental health and substance use services; and positive steps toward addressing the statewide housing crisis-- we must build and expand on this progress.

(3) Setting a course for the transition to clean renewable energy and transportation systems for all, while strengthening climate resilience.

(See Albert on Page 8)



**LYNNE CAULFIELD**  
**REPUBLICAN**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I grew up in Southern Vermont. After graduating from Brattleboro Union High in 1972 and the University of Vermont in 1976, I taught physical education at Brattleboro Union High School. I also coached field hockey, skiing, and tennis. My husband and I were married in 1977 and we spent two years as missionaries to England. We founded CHEV, Christian Home Educators of Vermont. My five children were home educated through high school which afforded them many rich and wonderful opportunities for their many skills and talents. My husband died 18 years ago after a three-and-a-half-year battle with pancreatic cancer during which I was his primary caregiver. I became a registered nurse after he died. As a home ecologist, my children and I have had many opportunities to care for fellow

citizens and the environment including singing at local nursing homes, serving as ushers at the Marlboro Music Festival, volunteering for the Red Cross, Green Mountain Club, Green Up Day, Connecticut River Clean Up, Special Olympics, Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, and many others. I am running because I believe our freedoms must be protected.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** Debt, education, and affordable housing

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** The education issue is not about money, it is about quality. Throwing more money at education will not necessarily produce healthy and mature adults who can think critically and act wisely. Parents should be involved in curricula choices for their children. There should be vast opportunities for school choice. Our curricula should start with the basics like reading, writing, and, arithmetic. Budgets should start with the basics and be carefully crafted to stay within the allocated amount. Students should be taught how to think critically not what to think. Removing the social change engineering aspect from schools will save time, money, and heartache.

**4) HOUSING:** One way to help with the affordable housing crunch is make living in Vermont affordable so there will be a workforce to build/renovate housing. Act 250 needs to be rehabilitated so builders and landowners aren't hamstrung by all the legal obstacles that currently exist. Lumber and materials that

(See Caulfield on Page 9)



**MARI CORDES**  
**DEMOCRAT**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I am a strong, independent woman. I have been a mason tender, vegetable farmer, union president, and Vermont RN for 36 years. Having created successful healthcare policy even before becoming a legislator, my experience as a working nurse has been invaluable to legislative healthcare policy-making. Community, organizing to make things better for all to enjoy life in Vermont are priorities. A constituent and her wife once said that when they see my lawn sign in someone's yard, they know they would be safe there. I love traveling with my family, riding my bicycle, kayaking, fishing, hunting, and exploring the wilderness.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** (1) Cost of living, (+ property taxes, housing), and (2) ever increasing healthcare costs (that drive up property taxes) are challeng-

ing for a small state with a small taxbase to address — we can, and have. (3) We must strengthen, not dismantle, our public education system.

We know that property tax rates are a big problem. Legislature is required by law to raise revenue necessary to pay for all school budgets voted in across the state. Contrary to the administration's irresponsible and angst-provoking communications, after hundreds of testimony and hours with stakeholders and experts, the legislature's yield bill reduced property tax rates from the average projection of 20% to about 13-14%. Being a state-wide average (skewed by a small number of districts) rates in our district were much lower than 13-14%. The costs of living and healthcare are not going to decrease; we will continue to work on lowering the tax burden next year.

Despite a progressive tax system, our state government is not raising enough revenue to provide basic services, which consequently increases the cost of living for low and middle-income taxpayers who can least afford it. This pressure leaves most of us "fighting under the table for scraps". We can, and intend to change this. The top 1% of Vermont income-earners are paying a smaller portion of their income in state taxes than middle income Vermonters. Corporate profits are also protected and paying less than their fair share.

Good democratic governance is responsive and accountable to the people.

(See Cordes on Page 10)



**CHANIN HILL**  
**REPUBLICAN**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I'm Chanin Hill and I'm running for one of Addison-4 house seats. I'm a lifelong resident of Addison County with most of those years spent in Bristol. I currently live and work on the family farm, Four Hills Farm here in Bristol. I'm married to my husband Brian Hill 31 years, have three children and three grandchildren. I'm running because I'm increasingly concerned about how unaffordable our state is becoming and I know that much of that is being driven by policies at the state level.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** Affordability is a big concern for all. From housing cost, taxes of all kinds, fees and inflation it is becoming too costly or the average citizen and small business owner to live and thrive here in Vermont.

Education is big player in not only

the affordability but also about quality. We pay as much if not more than many private schools would cost per pupil and our results are average. We need to focus more on the basics of education and remove politics from the classroom.

I am also concerned about safety. There was a time when I never considered locking my house or car, much less installing cameras to protect my home and business but that's where we're at. With homelessness, drug addiction and a lack of accountability for many crimes we've taken empathy and turned it into enabling with some of the legislation that's been passed recently. Allowing people to continue to harm themselves or others without providing guidance and accountability will simply allow the problem to progress.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** From when the state implemented their plan for how we should fund schools till now many bills with requirements that are costly have been passed and affected the base costs of education. I think we may have to go to the beginning and look at each piece of legislation that has had an impact on costs and figure out which were necessary and effective for our students and their educational outcome. Although some costs cannot be avoided many can be controlled or even eliminated. With enrollment down across most districts, the number of faculty, staff and administration do not appear to be reflective of this.

(See Hill on Page 9)



**RENEE MCGUINNESS**  
**REPUBLICAN**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** I am running for Addison-4 House to restore affordability, safety, and liberty to Vermont. Defending and supporting the family structure, as well as preserving the means for Vermonters to support their families, are top priorities. My work as Vermont Family Alliance (VFA) Policy Analyst for the past two years, researching and testifying on bills that undermine parent's and legal guardian's role in the lives of their children, has provided me with experiential understanding of the legislative process and the U.S. and Vermont Constitutions, which I hope to utilize as a state representative to further serve Vermonters.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** I agree with Gov- Phil Scott's top three priorities in the upcoming biennium: affordability, public safety, and housing, and will collaborate with the governor and my colleagues in the legislature on these issues.

The state needs to reduce spending rather than continue to raise taxes and fees, which are currently straining families and businesses.

I will work on legislation that increases penalties for drug dealers, imposes higher bail, stops the "catch and release" of both violent and non-violent offenders, introduce the repeal of the "safe" injection site legislation, which will draw more drug dealers and addicts to Vermont, and introduce legislation for addiction recovery services, which I consider the more humane, compassionate response to addiction over enabling the continued use of life-destroying drugs.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** Every time the legislature passes education legislation, it gets more complicated and expensive. I will work to reverse this burdensome trend. H.887 (Act 183) not only passed education tax funding for 2025, but also created a 13-member Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, which will determine, "what roles, functions, or decisions should be a function of" local or State control, (p.6) directed by a steering group and paid consultants. H.887 also has a provision to create a new position within the Agency of Education for the purposes of providing "a wider range of data" to guide future legislation. Compensation for these newly created positions will come from the Education Fund, further increasing taxes.

The State mandate for the provision of free meals for all students regardless of family income costs \$29 million. We

need to return to the free and reduced lunch program to provide food for children who are truly in need.

Act 60 has demonstrated that equity in per-pupil spending does not result in improved or equal academic outcomes for all students. The solution is to repeal Acts 187, 60, and 127 (S.287, 2022), which causes education funds to flow from less affluent towns to sanctuary cities, because English Language students are weighted 2.5 times more than students of families at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, and weighted more than 5 times the standard categories by grade level.

School Choice legislation, introduced in 2024 but not taken up, would instill accountability and create a competitive environment, leading to improved academic outcomes.

I would also address the cost of health insurance in order to reduce the cost of this benefit for public school teachers and employees, as the Affordable Care Act has caused insurance premiums to almost double over the past decade.

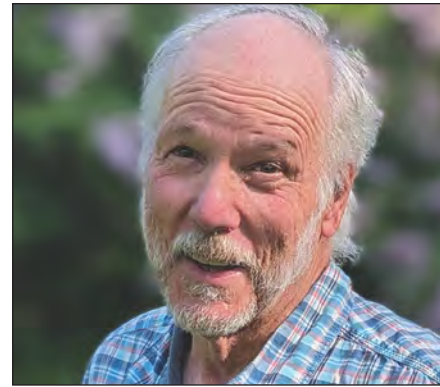
**4) HOUSING:** According to landlords and builders I have heard from, we can promote affordable home ownership by reducing state-mandated regulations that dramatically increase the cost of building, and therefore purchasing, a home, which I will pursue. H.687 (Act 181), "an act relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection through land use," at 171 pages, fails to streamline the Act 250 process. It adds another level of bureaucracy, complexity, and expense by creating a six-member Land Use Review Board Nominating Committee, "created for the purpose of assessing the qualifications of applicants for appointment to the Land Use Review Board in accordance with section 6021 of this title," along with adding several other boards and positions, compensated at taxpayer expense. I will work toward truly streamlining the Act 250 process.

We also cannot move forward with conserving 50% of Vermont's land, which will cause the cost of land for homebuilding to skyrocket. I will work with the towns that I represent to offer legislation to my colleagues in the legislature.

**5) CLIMATE:** I do not support punitive, economically sacrificial environmental policy that does nothing to improve Vermont's environmental health. The Global Warming Solutions Act contains a provision allowing anyone to sue the state at taxpayer expense if Vermont fails to meet CO2 emissions reductions mandates. The Conservation Law Foundation is already considering a lawsuit, as Vermont will fail to meet the 2025 mandate. How will taxpayer money to pay for damages from a lawsuit improve the global climate?

Also, fuel dealers are unable to calculate a pre-buy bulk or budget price for their customers for this coming winter because under Act 18, the Public Utilities Commission does not submit their recommendations on how to calculate the cost of carbon credits until January 15,

(See McGuinness on Page 9)



**HERB OLSON**  
**DEMOCRAT**  
**ADDISON-4**

**1) PERSONAL BACKGROUND:** When we moved to the community 50 years ago, we were told we would be fine — as long as we pitched in. Community service creates our moral center, binding the individual and the community with each other. My community service resume includes: Mt. Abe High School Board, Starksboro Planning Commission, mediating between state regulators and the village water system, and advocating to save our school. My work skills and experience: Assistant Attorney General with human services agencies, Legislative Counsel for 16 years, and General Counsel-corporate regulator. I want to continue to serve our community in Montpelier.

**2) THREE ISSUES:** 1. Montpelier needs to fix the education property tax mess. Our children's education is the

highest priority of a decent and hopeful society, but we are in danger of losing public support for education because of recent extraordinary education property tax increases.

2. Vermont should be a place where our daughters and sons can afford to live and build a home. Montpelier has spent a lot of time, effort and public funding on increasing housing opportunities in cities and larger population centers. Rural Vermont communities need housing too.

3. Get a grip on health care inflation. The health care sector is spending more and more of the resources of individuals, businesses, government, and schools. Universal primary care can help by emphasizing lower cost, effective care by primary care practitioners, rather than relying on more expensive hospital care.

I have the skills, experience, and temperament to lend a hand in addressing these challenges. I was an Assistant Attorney General representing a variety of human services agencies. I was Legislative Counsel to the Vermont General Assembly, providing policy and legislative drafting advice. I was a General Counsel regulating health insurers, hospitals, banks, and securities firms. Through these experiences, I developed the temperament to get things done in Montpelier: (1) Respect everyone, regardless of policy differences. (2) Collaboration, good will and good relationships make for good solutions to our problems.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** First, (See Olson on Page 9)

# ELDER *for* SENATE

ADDISON COUNTY SENATE



**CALEB ELDER**  
**IS READY**  
**TO WORK ON:**  
 EDUCATION,  
 THE ENVIRONMENT  
 AND OUR ECONOMY.

"I am happy to endorse Caleb Elder for the Vermont Senate. His values of social equality and fiscal discipline will serve Addison County well, now and in the coming years."

*Former Vermont State Treasurer, Beth Pearce*

**PRIMARY ELECTION ON AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup>**  
 PAID FOR BY ELDER FOR SENATE, ELIZABETH READY - TREASURER  
 580 RUBY BRACE RD., STARKSBORO, VT 05487

# Get to know the Primary STATEWIDE CANDIDATES

The following candidates' names will appear on the Primary ballot for the parties indicated.

The incumbent is indicated by (inc). A contested race features a \*

## DEMOCRATIC BALLOT

Governor \* ..... Esther Charlestin of Middlebury

Governor \* ..... Peter K. Duval of Underhill

Lieutenant Governor \* ..... David Zuckerman (inc) of Hinesburg

Lieutenant Governor \* ..... Thomas Renner of Winooski

Attorney General..... Charity R. Clark (inc) of Williston

Auditor Of Accounts ..... Doug Hoffer (inc) of Burlington

State Treasurer ..... Mike Pieciak (inc) of Winooski

Secretary Of State ..... Sarah Copeland Hanzas (inc) of Bradford

U.S. Senator ..... Bernie Sanders of Burlington

U.S. Representative..... Becca Balint (inc) of Brattleboro

## PROGRESSIVE BALLOT

Governor ..... Marielle Blais of Brandon

Lieutenant Governor ..... Zoraya Hightower of Burlington

Attorney General..... Elijah Bergman of Danby

Auditor Of Accounts ..... Linda Gravell of Waterbury

State Treasurer ..... Tim Maciel of Brattleboro

## REPUBLICAN BALLOT

Governor ..... Phil Scott (inc) of Berlin

Lieutenant Governor \* ..... Gregory M. Thayer of Rutland City

Lieutenant Governor \* ..... John S. Rodgers of Glover

Attorney General..... H. Brooke Paige of Washington

Auditor Of Accounts ..... H. Brooke Paige of Washington

State Treasurer ..... Joshua Bechhoefer of Cornwall

Secretary Of State ..... H. Brooke Paige of Washington

U.S. Representative..... Mark Coester of Westminster

U.S. Senator ..... Gerald Malloy of Weathersfield

## Albert

(Continued from Page 6)

As many families in our district and across the state tragically experienced, Vermont's shifting climate means we now regularly experience what used to be "extreme" events, that destroy homes and businesses, devastate farms, and critically disturb natural ecosystems.

Along with ensuring that we meet our emissions reduction goals, during the next legislative session there will be significant focus on expanding improvements we've made in flood recovery and resilience. We also must continue our transition to clean renewable energy and transportation systems in a manner that is affordable and equitable for all.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** The foundation of democratic society is universally accessible, high-quality public education. Vermont's system for funding education is commendable for its commitment to equity.

However, the extreme complexity of education financing is undermining faith in the system overall. In particular, the connection between voted budgets and education tax rates is so obscured that a sense of local control has been eroded, generating mistrust.

Meanwhile, extreme pressures from the Covid pandemic continue to affect district budgets: federal support has ended, but the needs of students and staff have not. The pandemic also drove up property values, which led to spikes in education taxes, and the pause in state funding for facilities has taken a toll on both school buildings and budgets. This "milestone" structure is important, so that we can understand if we are on track to meet our goals, or if we are falling short and must take corrective action.

Reforming this complex system will be an enormous and challenging task. Legislation passed this Spring establishing the *Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont* indicates as much. Here are some ideas I hope will be examined.

- Using income as the basis for education taxes— instead of property plus income-based credits— would be more equitable, transparent, simpler to implement, and potentially save money overall.

- Moving expenditures that aren't directly related to education out of the Education Fund— especially rapidly increasing costs that school districts don't control, such as mental health services and employee health benefits— would make district budgeting more predictable at the local level and more manageable at the state level.

- Expanding implementation of the community-schools model, which creates a coordinated hub of support for families, would increase community connectedness and ultimately reduce the costs of social services.

Working together, we can design public education governance structures that prioritize thriving community schools, within a sustainable, financial funding model that is affordable for taxpayers and preserves local decision making.

**4) HOUSING:** All Vermonters should have a safe and affordable place to live. A dire shortage in affordable housing causes instability and hardship for families and communities, and exacerbates labor challenges for Vermont businesses.

Lack of affordable housing connects to other critical challenges, as well. For example, increasing housing in Vermont's downtowns and rural communities means increased opportunities for young families to live close to an elementary school. These schools are the heart and soul of our communities and provide the best foundation for young learners. Increasing affordable housing strengthens our public schools, which then strengthens the vitality of our communities and encourages more families to stay in—or come to—Vermont.

Housing connects to climate and the environment, too, as catastrophic flooding has become more and more common in Vermont. Having a stable and safe place to live is also a critical element of health and well-being— for children, especially— and is closely linked to social and emotional health.

I am encouraged by recent reforms to Act 250 that will help increase the availability of affordable housing in downtowns and village centers. Another promising initiative comes from the office of the Vermont Treasurer, through its Local Investment Initiative. This program prioritizes increasing housing supply and affordability as well as removing barriers to equal opportunity.

Balancing the protection of Vermont's natural beauty and landscapes with the need for more affordable housing requires thoughtful planning and listening to a range of views. We need to ensure that we strike the right balance and that all communities have the opportunity to thrive.

**5) CLIMATE:** I support Vermont's Climate Action Plan. We must make the transition to clean renewable energy, and cutting greenhouse gas emissions according to regular milestones is a necessary first step.

Under the plan, by 2050 we are committed to reducing emissions by at least 80% below 1990 levels, and must be at least halfway to that goal by 2030. Also, by 2025, emissions must be 26% below 2005 levels. This milestone structure is important, so that we'll understand if we are on track to meet our goals, or if we are falling short and must take corrective action.

I also strongly support other elements of the plan, such as the commitment to a just transition: one where all regions of Vermont see benefits, especially our most vulnerable communities and individuals. In addition, the Plan envisions critically important investments in climate resiliency across the state.

In order to fulfill the promise of the Plan, we must accurately measure emissions and track trends. I am concerned that there are insufficient safeguards to ensure that emissions data used are reliable. Another improvement: I would like to see evidence of how we plan to hold ourselves to the commitment to a just transition.

## Olson

(Continued from Page 7)

don't change the core fairness principle that the quality of a student's education should not depend on the wealth of the town where the student lives. (Brigham)

Second, Stop pushing false solutions. Closing a rural elementary school doesn't save as much as some imagine, and should not be undertaken before making administrative reforms that do not directly impact student learning. Meanwhile, closing a school loses important educational benefits for students, especially for lower income students.

Third, Fixing the education property tax mess has a tax component, and a spending component. Tax revenue allocated to the Education Fund has shifted away from corporate and individual income taxes. We should be looking to reduce reliance on property taxes to fund education. On the spending side, we need to conduct a deep financial audit of whether all spending from the Education Fund is necessary, and whether, even if necessary, spending levels are reason-

able and cost-effective. Let's start with some obvious candidates for examination. (1) Many local districts complain about costly mandates from Montpelier. Mandated spending should be identified, and accepted, rejected, or revised as appropriate. (2) Health benefits constituted 16% of recent increased education spending. Ask the Green Mountain Care Board to focus on cost containment as their highest priority. (3) Student behavioral health needs and costs have exploded. Behavioral health services are covered under both public and private health insurance plans. Are insurers paying their fair share? (4) Administrative spending in some districts exceeds national norms. Identify administrative and operational cost saving reforms.

**4) HOUSING:** The cost of housing is one of the main reasons why our daughters and sons have difficulty affording to live and raise a family in Vermont. I was working with a young family several years ago in a school advocacy effort, and they could not find a home for any price in our community, much less at a price they could afford.

We need a sense of urgency about the

housing crisis in Vermont. It's not enough to say "I support affordable housing BUT . . ." (But, I want the homes around me to look like mine. But, manufactured home parks should be located somewhere else. But, I want to limit the land available for housing in rural communities in order to permanently preserve certain land I like.)

Montpelier has devoted considerable time, effort and public funding to support housing in cities and larger population centers. Rural Vermont communities need more housing also.

- Design housing programs that fit the scale of a rural Vermont community. Rural Vermont generally builds homes one unit at a time, or as a small, 5–10-unit project. Recently legislated programs incentivizing 75-unit projects are not relevant to rural Vermont.

- Rural Vermont communities usually do not have public infrastructure, such as municipal sewer and water. We should explore initiatives to help with community water and septic systems for smaller scale, rural housing projects, or with assistance with the upfront infrastructure costs for owner-built homes.

- We should look into expanding the concept of graduated permit fee amounts based on the size of the housing project. We should also look into whether some permits for smaller projects can be self-certified by licensed professionals.

- Land costs in Vermont have skyrocketed. If the supply of buildable land is limited, the cost of land will increase,

whether that is because of land purchased for second homes, zoning restrictions, or the permanent conservation of buildable land. Housing in rural Vermont communities will benefit from policies that do not restrict the availability of buildable land for housing.

**5) CLIMATE:** I support the Climate Action Plan. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting clean energy and transportation is good for our environment, and can be good for society.

We are already experiencing the very real and costly effects of climate change. When Hurricane Beryl swept through my town, Starksboro, a few weeks ago a wall of water came down from the Lewis Creek headwaters, trashing bridges, flinging vehicles, damaging homes, and upending lives. Skiing and snowboarding are suffering from milder winters that don't deliver enough snow. Agriculture is experiencing torrential rains, or conversely severe droughts. Climate change is also bringing all manner of exotic tick borne diseases.

It is essential that there be a just and sensible financial transition to clean energy and transportation that will ensure low and moderate income Vermonters get the assistance they need, and that local small businesses are not harmed. Otherwise, we will face backlash that will leave us divided and worse off. We should work to build consensus to address this urgent issue together.

## Caulfield

(Continued from Page 6)

can be produced in Vermont will provide jobs and sustainable forestry practices to protect our beautiful landscape.

**5) CLIMATE:** The biggest threat to all the issues discussed thus far is our climate and effected ecosystem we live in. The action plan needed is to expose and halt geoengineering and subsequent weather manipulation. The ongoing atmospheric aerosol spraying and microwave/radio frequency transmissions are

wreaking havoc on our farm land, our air, and our water. (geoengineeringwatch.org) Aluminum and barium are primary elements named in climate engineering patents. High levels of heavy metals have been found in whales, human and cow milk, with links to autism risks. Vermont agriculture and infrastructure cannot withstand the increasing risk of extreme weather and flooding. Our green mountains, hills, and valleys need all of us to preserve the beauty we all love.

## Hill

(Continued from Page 6)

**4) HOUSING:** Act 250 needs to be reformed along with many other pieces of legislation that put up barriers for potential home builders, buyers, new businesses and existing businesses to make the necessary investments to either stay or do business here in Vermont. I would not support any additional legislation that would inhibit growth around the state.

**5) CLIMATE:** I do not support the Vermont Climate Action Plan. Many don't know but Vermont is already the lowest emitter of Co2 in the United States with less than 0.1% total emissions and

methane emissions at about 0.2% we are already one of the cleanest states in the US. I would say that Vermonters both individually and businesses are already doing a very good job. I'm all for having goals but the way this piece of legislation is written, if we fail to meet our goals it allows for anyone or any organization to sue the State of Vermont (i.e. taxpayers). We will not meet the lofty goals set by this and we need to remove the portion of this that allows for this and re-examine with current science and current data if we should not simply repeal the entire thing.

## McGuinness

(Continued from Page 7)

2025. This negatively impacts customers who need the financial security of locking in a price.

The solutions would be to repeal the Global Warming Solutions Act, the Affordable Heat Act, and the Clean Heat Standard and prioritize financial resour-

es toward expansion and upgrades of our water and sewer treatment plants to eliminate the dumping of millions of gallons of sewage into our waterways every year: this would directly improve the quality of our environment.



I'm Herb Olson, a candidate for the VT House of Representatives for Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton and Starksboro. I raised my family here and have served our community for 50 years. I know state government, having been an Assistant Attorney General, Legislative Counsel, and General Counsel-corporate regulator.

### Montpelier needs to do a better job of listening to rural Vermont communities.

- ✓ **Fix the education property tax mess.** We are in danger of losing public support for our children's education.
- ✓ **Rural Vermont needs housing too.** Vermont should be a place where our daughters and sons can afford to live and build a home.
- ✓ **Get a grip on healthcare inflation.** Universal primary care can help.
- ✓ **Early education.** Our kids' development and education depend on it.

I invite voters to meet me on August 7th at 7:00 pm at Howden Hall in Bristol to hear your questions and concerns.

Please vote for me in the Democratic primary on August 13th.

**HERB OLSON**

for VT HOUSE

Paid for by Herb Olson for VT House. 4577 Ireland Rd., Starksboro, VT 05487

herb.olson123@gmail.com



Herb Olson for VT House



401-829-1678



# Cordes

(Continued from Page 6)

Our collective strength and compassion are the most important qualities that will allow us to meet the significant challenges we face. Sen Wellstone: “We all do better when we all do better”. Good governance is key to that. I honor these values and will continue to work to uphold them.

**3) PAYING FOR SCHOOLS:** I had experiences as a kid where adults showing up for me changed the trajectory of my life. And public education is where most of that support happened. I want to make sure that our education system is there for our kids when they need it, and that education staff have the tools they need.

I introduced legislation to fund education using a more progressive income-based method, completely separate from property taxes, shown to be more stable and fair. I supported the 2024 Commission on the Future of Public Education to ensure “all students are afforded quality educational opportunities and an efficient, sustainable and equitable system...”.

Vermont’s current funding system is complex, and measures passed to date have not been successful in addressing root causes, especially related to increases in cost of living and cost of healthcare. So we must continue to work to lower

property tax burdens immediately, at the same time, with the Commission, we’re creating major structural change to protect Vermonters and our education system from the pressures of economic root causes being felt across the country. It is not wise to make such major structural change in a hurry as the governor suggests; instead we must allow for constituent voices to be heard in the process of significant focus with education and education finance experts.

The Commission will provide the following reports: (1) a formal work plan, with maximal public engagement, by 9/15/24; (2) preliminary findings and recommendations by 1/15/24; and (3) final findings and recommendations by 12/1/25.

While protecting the integrity and strength of local districts, we may need to look at state-wide management and re-sourcing of certain school-based services in order to contain costs, such as mental health services, healthcare/insurance, school construction and maintenance, and more.

**4) HOUSING:** The success of Act 76, the Child Care bill, is apparent. More spots are available for kids, more parents are able to afford childcare and get back/stay in the workforce, and more early childhood educators/centers are able to contribute to Vermont’s economy. We need to continue to make Vermont enticing for young families by making sure that they have an affordable place to live,

as well as keep elders safely in their own homes.

There is a proven place for short term rentals (STRs) in a tourism economy like Vermont’s. Families, retired people and people with limited income can add income diversity. Also, we must protect Vermont residents, renters and homeowners/buyers from the “Airbnb effect”. Unregulated STRs have been shown to have a negative impact on long term renters and homeowners by adding to increases in housing values/costs, out-ricing a place to live for the long term residents of the area, and limiting their ability to raise children and contribute to the local economy. The influx of wealthy 2nd home owners during the pandemic has added to the problem.

Next steps:

Continue to reduce regulatory burdens to all aspects of affordable home building, while continuing to provide state financial support and access to federal funding for affordable housing projects, including application and infrastructure support for local and municipal governments.

Provide state (e.g. licensing, rental registry) and local power (e.g. zoning) to not only regulate short and long-term rentals, but provide entities with adequate financial and human resource support to design -together - equitable community rental housing plans with voices of short and long term landlords, renters, those impacted by racial, ethnic

and economic disparity, and town/city/rural planners at the table.

Continue to invest in trades’ workforce development, starting at age appropriate student levels.

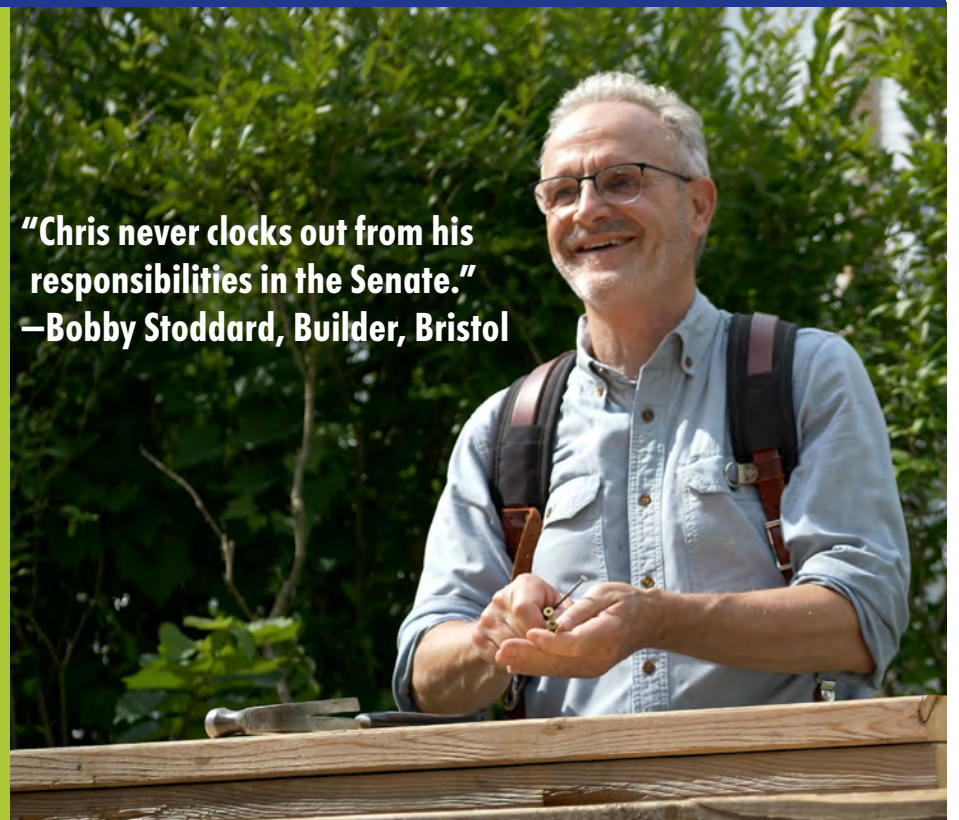
**5) CLIMATE:** Yes, as long as the plan continues to be a living document updated at least every 4 years, any strategies from the plan continue to be subject to approval of the legislature with significant public and stakeholder input (e.g., as has occurred with the latest Renewable Energy Standard bill and Network Geothermal bill of which I introduced the original version), and the voices of youth and marginalized people are truly supported and empowered in the process.

The devastating impacts of the climate emergency are painfully evident. We have created strong policy with a focus on protecting those who can least afford the impacts of climate change, as well as the tools and strategies we need to survive. Because of the unprecedented investment by the Biden administration and bipartisanship at the federal level, we have significant financial support to make a just transition for those that want to participate. Those that don’t want to participate will still be afforded these protections, including economic, while they can maintain the status quo for their heating and transportation choices (at least while fossil fuels are available and viable).

## RE-ELECT SENATOR CHRIS BRAY

Senator Chris Bray knows work, and he has been growing the economy with new jobs and businesses —

- 6,290 new jobs in food and agriculture
- 314 new businesses in food and agriculture
- \$100+ million in economic activity
- 18,800 jobs in clean energy



“Chris never clocks out from his responsibilities in the Senate.”  
—Bobby Stoddard, Builder, Bristol

PRIMARY ELECTION ON AUGUST 13 — EARLY VOTING NOW UNDERWAY

PAID FOR BY BRAY FOR VERMONT, KATE SELBY, TREASURER, 1896 QUAKER VILLAGE RD, WEYBRIDGE VT 05753 | MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.BRAYFORVERMONT.US](http://WWW.BRAYFORVERMONT.US)

# Hardy

(Continued from Page 3)

homes. Last year we passed legislation to improve the property appraisal process and collect better data about properties throughout the state, which could lead to more equitable, targeted tax policy.

We must focus attention and funding on diverse supportive housing and long-term care residences. Such housing, as well as a harm-reduction approach to opioid use and adequate mental health care, are crucial to addressing the homelessness crisis. Similarly, we streamlined the state's emergency housing program, which provides short-term housing through motels and community shelters. The state must better monitor and improve operation of this program for the long run.

**5) CLIMATE:** I do support the Vermont Climate Action Plan. The Plan was the result of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), which I voted for when it passed in September 2020. The GWSA created legally binding green-

house gas emission reduction requirements for the State of Vermont, with the first deadline for reductions coming next year in 2025. The Plan seeks to reduce the worst impacts of climate change via a wide range of emission-reduction strategies, focused on the thermal heating, transportation, and agriculture sectors, and economic and equity considerations.

Unfortunately, since the passage of the GWSA and the creation of the initial Climate Action Plan, Vermont has sustained numerous natural disasters that can be linked to climate change, including several catastrophic floods, off-season freezes, damaging winter wind storms, and extreme heat events. Thus, while emissions reductions are more urgent than ever, we must also focus on pragmatic climate resiliency to help Vermont withstand dramatic weather events. We literally have to rebuild Vermont towns to prevent and tolerate extreme floods, heat, wind, and ice, and must do so without leaving Vermonters with lower-incomes behind. It is crucial that proactive climate change prevention and equitable resilience go hand-in-hand.

# Bienvenue

(Continued from Page 2)

of Vermont has recently passed laws regarding additional educational financial resources such as increasing the rooms and meals tax earmarked for education. One of my recommendations is to significantly increase taxes on cigarettes. This tax would be allocated for education projects such as replacing furniture and building improvements through grant programs. My expectation is that this tobacco tax would eventually become obsolete when this toxic chemical is permanently banned. Shut down all tobacco companies and no imports. These buildings could be cleaned out and turned into a textile manufacturing company such as footwear. Vermont does not have enough employment opportunities. All people are to be paid for services and poverty will become extinct.

My second recommendation is to evaluate our school cafeteria program. The cafeteria is disposing of way too much food. Composting is an expensive clean up. Menus need to be revised. In addition, I recommend students have recess first and then lunch. Many students socialize a lot during lunch and their food gets cold or they run out of time and the food is thrown away. The intention is that the socialization would occur during recess and not have such a heavy impact on lunch.

Reduce, reuse, recycle materials should be used for curriculum development in our schools. Henceforth, reducing taxes.

**4) HOUSING:** Utilizing existing building properties that have been abandoned. Contacting the current owner and purchasing the property at fair market value and renovating the structure for

housing. That old barn that has been sitting empty for twenty years could be a single-family home or a four-apartment complex. Addison County Residents are requesting country living rental properties. They can not afford to purchase single dwelling homes. All rentals must be a two bedroom floor plan for financial efficiency, this concept accomodates all family structures.

**5) CLIMATE:** Vermont has been consistently improving upon environmental protection issues. Our recycling program began in the late 1980's and look where we are today. The Vermont Natural Resource Council has passed into law H.126 also known as Act 59 demanding community resilience and biodiversity. Currently Vermont has 76 percent forestland. The intention is to preserve and protect 30 percent of this land by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050 which should meet our needs in this state. Most recently Vermont purchased Wheeler Mountain in Sutton, VT one of the plan of action initiatives. Vermont is the 3rd most forested state out of 48. Forestry management is a huge proponent in climate control, building strong healthy forests for clean air, soil, shade and providing our wood products as necessary but at full grown capacity. Solar panels and wind turbines have provided energy as well as climate control abilities. It is imperative that excessive lifestyle habits be abolished. Clean up is expensive. Repair is expensive. Decline in appreciation value. Reduction in available commodities. Be educated. Moderation is a requirement for manageability. All aspects affect our financial status.

Henceforth, my leadership sets ideals supporting community values, collaboration, communication and compliance. Elect Lesley Bienvenue as the moderate Republican Senator for Addison County.

# Get to know the Primary COUNTY CANDIDATES

The following candidates are running for the Vermont House or Representatives of Vermont Senate. Their names will appear on the Primary ballot for the parties indicated.

The incumbent is indicated by (inc). A contested race features a \*.

## DEMOCRATIC BALLOT

- State Rep. Add 1 ..... Amy Sheldon (inc) of Middlebury
- State Rep. Add 1 ..... Robin Scheu (inc) of Middlebury
- State Rep. Add 2 ..... Peter Conlon (inc) of Cornwall
- State Rep. Add 3 ..... Diane Lanpher (inc) of Vergennes
- State Rep. Add 3 ..... Matt Birong (inc) of Vergennes
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Herb Olson of Starksboro
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Jeanne Albert of Lincoln
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Mari Cordes (inc) of Lincoln
- State Rep. Add 5 ..... Jubilee McGill (inc) of Bridport
- State Senator Add \* ..... Caleb Elder of Starksboro
- State Senator Add \* ..... Christopher Bray (inc) of Bristol
- State Senator Add \* ..... Ruth Hardy (inc) of Middlebury
- High Bailiff ..... Dave Silberman (inc) of Middlebury

## REPUBLICAN BALLOT

- State Rep. Add 3 ..... Rob North of Ferrisburgh
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Chanin Hill of Bristol
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Lynne Caulfield of Monkton
- State Rep. Add 4 \* ..... Renee McGuinness of Monkton
- State Rep. Add 5 ..... Del Thompson of Bridport
- State Rep. Addison Rutland ..... Jim Casey of Hubbardton
- State Senator Add \* ..... Landel James Cochran of Huntington
- State Senator Add \* ..... Lesley J. Bienvenue of Leicester
- State Senator Add \* ..... Steven Heffernan of Bristol
- High Bailiff ..... Ron Holmes of Middlebury

# How to vote in Vermont's 2024 primary election

BY VTDIGGER.ORG

To take part in this month's primary election, you must be registered to vote in Vermont, though you may still register on the day of the election.

There are two ways to vote:

1. Early voting by mail or in person, from June 29 to Aug. 12
2. In person at your polling place on Tuesday, Aug. 13

All U.S. citizens who are residents of Vermont and will be 18 or older for the general election on Nov. 5, 2024, are eligible to register to vote in the primary election.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

To vote in the primary, you must be registered to vote in Vermont, though you may still register on the day of the election.

If you're not registered, there are multiple ways to do so:

- In person at your town clerk's office in the days leading up to the election.
- In person at your polling place. You may register at your polling place on the day of the election (Aug. 13).
- You may also register online or by mail using a paper registration form, both available via the Secretary of State's Office website, but be sure to leave several days for your registration to be processed if you are using these methods.

According to the Secretary of State's Office, first-time registrants will be required to submit a photocopy of a valid form of ID. Acceptable documents include:

- Valid photo ID (driver's license or

passport)

- Current utility bill
- Current bank statement
- Another government document

First-time Vermont voters must also take the voter's oath, a short statement one may recite to oneself.

## EARLY VOTING

Early voting is available from June 29 to Aug. 12. There are multiple ways to request and submit your ballot.

### Request your ballot:

- In person at your town clerk's office, OR
- Online or by mail using a paper registration form via the Secretary of State's Office website.

### Then, submit your ballot:

- By mail, OR
- Drop it off at your town clerk's office.

Early ballots must be received at your town clerk's office by close of business on Aug. 12. If you're mailing your ballot, send it by Aug. 5 to allow a week for delivery.

For the primary, you will be offered a ballot from each of the major parties: Democratic, Republican and Progressive. You must pick one ballot to complete. However, all three ballots — including the two blank ones — must be returned in the envelope provided.

## PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

To vote in person on Aug. 13: Find your polling place on the Secretary of State's Office website. Polls open at various times from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

# Who does what in Vermont government

BY VTDIGGER.ORG

As voters prepare to fill elected positions for the next two years, they may be wondering what are the primary responsibilities of each elected position in Vermont state government?

There are six elected officers in Vermont who serve the entire state, along with 180 state legislators who represent smaller districts. These positions are filled through a general election every two years in November. The state's three major parties choose their nominees for these offices through primary elections held in August.

This year's general election is Nov. 5. The primary is Aug. 13.

As voters prepare to fill these positions for the next two years, VTDigger has summed up the primary responsibilities of each:

## STATE LEGISLATOR

Members of the Vermont House and Senate propose, debate and approve state laws. They play a key role in writing the annual state budget, which determines how Vermont spends its resources, as well as determining tax policy. The Legislature confirms certain appointments made by the governor, including judges, and conducts oversight of the executive branch. Though the two chambers have similar powers, the Vermont Senate has 30 members and is elected largely along county lines, while the House has 150 members who typically represent a handful of towns or a portion of a city.

## GOVERNOR

The governor of Vermont leads the state's executive branch. The officeholder appoints those who lead the agencies and departments that provide all state government services, as well as state judges. The governor proposes a state budget to the Legislature each year and can veto bills the Legislature passes, with some exceptions. This person carries out state laws and implements the state budget. The governor oversees the Vermont National Guard and can assume additional powers during a time of emergency.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Vermont's lieutenant governor is largely a ceremonial role. The officeholder serves as the presiding officer of the Vermont Senate, able to vote on measures before the body only in case of a tie. The lieutenant governor steps in to perform the governor's duties when that person is out of the state or incapacitated. More informally, people in the role have used it as a platform for advocacy and to convene Vermonters in public discussions of important issues to the state.

## ATTORNEY GENERAL

Vermont's attorney general leads an office that, like county-level state's attorneys, can represent the state in all civil and criminal legal matters. The attorney general tends to focus on more significant cases in state and federal court — and joins other states in national litigation. Lawyers in the office advise state officials, departments and agencies on questions of law. They defend legislative acts and administrative rules in court. The office enforces state laws on civil rights, charitable fundraising and consumer protection, as well as particular areas of criminal justice, including gun regulations, computer crimes and fraud by health care providers against the federal Medicaid program.

## TREASURER

Vermont's state treasurer leads an office that serves as the bank for all state activities. The treasurer manages the state's cash accounts, including processing checks and reconciling vendor payments and payroll. The office is also tasked with the investment of state reserve funds and the issuing of all state bonds. It oversees the state's three major employee pension programs and other retirement benefits for state employees, teachers and the staff of participating municipalities. It also receives, holds in trust and seeks to return abandoned or unclaimed financial property.

**THIS YEAR'S  
GENERAL  
ELECTION IS  
NOV. 5.  
THE PRIMARY IS  
AUG. 13.**

## SECRETARY OF

## STATE

Vermont's secretary of state leads a team tasked with a wide range of essential administrative functions, from overseeing the integrity of elections to maintaining the state's historical records. Among other duties, the office licenses, investigates and disciplines those in more than 50 professions. It maintains records on businesses and other organizations registered to operate in the state. Along with overseeing elections, the office also receives and retains campaign finance reports and the registration of all active professional political lobbyists.

## AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS

Vermont's auditor of accounts seeks to hold state government accountable by evaluating how taxpayer funds are spent. The auditor's office performs and contracts a variety of required audits of the activities, receipts and expenditures of the state. It also regularly takes on performance audits to determine whether a particular public program is reaching its intended purpose or whether a particular department or agency is operating efficiently.

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STAY ENGAGED

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