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Scott presses forward on teacher health insurance contract

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Mon, 06/05/2017 - 10:52am --

Vermont Business Magazine Governor Phil Scott and Representative Linda Joy Sullivan (D-Bennington-Rutland) hosted dozens of Vermonters at a town hall-style meeting Friday in Dorset. Sullivan was one of several House Democrats who voted for and nearly pushed through legislation that would create a statewide, teacher health insurance plan. Democratic leadership and the teachers' union oppose Scott's proposal.

In Dorset, a press release said the discussion focused on the governor's education savings proposal, which would allow the state to realize up to \$26 million in annual education savings available through a transition in school employees' health plans, while investing nearly \$50 million to keep out-of-pocket costs the same.

"The change in school employee health plans presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make Vermont more affordable with up to \$26 million in annual education savings, and we can do it without harming teachers or

cutting programs,” Gov. Scott told the Dorset residents in attendance. “This opportunity is too important to pass up. We are looking at up to \$26 million in savings each year, and we will not get another bite at this apple.”

Representative Sullivan, who was one of 74 House members who voted for the “Beck Amendment,” joined Scott and constituents to discuss this proposal and the opportunities to achieve these savings. The “Beck Amendment” incorporated the governor’s proposal into the property tax yield bill, H509, but was defeated when Speaker Mitzi Johnson cast a rare vote, creating a tie, which killed the proposal.

“We have a real opportunity to make Vermont more affordable, something I’ve heard my constituents call for loudly. You’ve pleaded for fiscal responsibility and restraint, and we’re listening,” Representative Sullivan said in a statement.



Governor Scott has said he intends to veto the yield bill and the budget to allow for continued negotiation with lawmakers to ensure these savings are achieved. At a press conference last Wednesday, he reiterated that commitment.

However, he also said that while he is working toward finding a compromise on this issue, he would not let the government close down over this issue and, thus, would sign the budget and yield bills eventually regardless.

The teachers' union has worked against Scott's plan saying it would take away a key component of collective bargaining and would reduce local control for school boards. Teachers are not state employees and currently all teacher contracts, including health insurance plans, are negotiated locally.

“The budget will overpay school districts by \$13 million this fiscal year, and that is why I will veto both the budget and the yield bills when they arrive on my desk. I know we can come to an agreement, and when we do, the budget – and Vermonters – will be better for it,” Scott said.

Source: Governor. 6.2.2017

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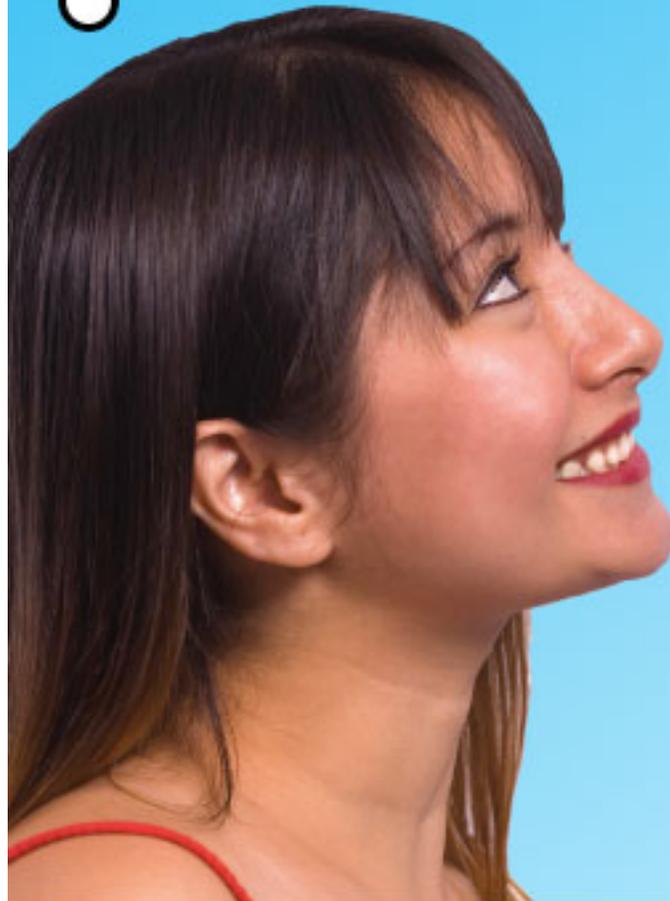


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Events

New UVM summer program for family businesses begins July 10

Monday, July 10, 2017 - 9:00am

REV2017: Renewables for All, on October 2 & 3

Tuesday, October 3, 2017 - 9:00am

“The Art of Fermentation” at Sterling College Aug 14-18

Friday, August 18, 2017 - 9:00am

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