



Rep. Warren Van Wyck (R)

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KEY ROLL CALL VOTES – 2013-14

(For detailed roll call reports, go to <http://ethanallen.org/category/roll-call/>)

2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

4.7% STATE SPENDING INCREASE (H.530). Passed 91-49, March 29, 2013. Those members voting YES on the “Omnibus Appropriations Bill” voted to increase state spending by 4.7%. This is nearly two and a half times the rate of inflation.

VAN WYCK – NO

\$50 MILLION PROPERTY TAX INCREASE (H.265). Passed 96-45, Feb. 19, 2013. Those who voted YES on this bill voted to increase the residential property tax rate by \$.05 per \$100.00 of assessed value, and \$.06 on non-residential property to \$.94 and \$1.44 respectively. The total tax increase on Vermont property taxpayers as a result of this bill is estimated at over \$50 million. **VAN WYCK – NO**

\$21.8 MILLION GAS TAX INCREASE (H.510). Passed 105-37, March 20, 2013. Legislators who voted YES on this bill supported a \$21.8 million tax increase on gasoline – a roughly 7.5 cent per gallon increase by 2014. This represents the largest gas tax increase in Vermont history. **VAN WYCK – NO**

\$27 MILLION MISCELLANEOUS TAX INCREASE (H.528). Passed 85-55, March 27, 2013. Those members voting YES voted to expand the Vermont state sales tax (6%) to bottled water, clothing (including shoes) over \$110, candy, soft drinks, and dietary supplements, and to increase the tax on cigarettes and smokeless tobacco by \$0.50 (total: \$3.12) and \$0.88 (total: \$3.12) respectively. They voted to increase the Rooms & Meals tax from 9% to 9.5% for 2014, and they voted to apply the Meals tax to food sold out of

vending machines. They voted to cap all itemized tax deductions at 2.5 times standard deduction, eliminated Vermont's 8.8% tax bracket, moving those earning \$178,651 and more into the top 8.95% tax bracket, formerly reserved for those earning \$388,351 and above. The total estimated cost to Vermont taxpayers: \$27 million in 2014 and \$32.3 million in 2015. **VAN WYCK – NO**

STOP 'RAIDS' ON THE TRANSPORTATION FUND (Koch Amendment to H.510). Failed 49-88, March 21, 2013. Those voting YES on voted to assure that no transportation funds will be appropriated for the support of government other than for true transportation purposes. This would have reduced or negated the need for a gas tax increase. **VAN WYCK – YES**

STATE OVERRIDES LOCAL CONTROL, MANDATES PRE-K (H.270). Passed 95-43, May 1, 2013. Those voting YES on H.270 voted to saddle Vermonters with an estimated \$10 million cost/tax increase over the next five years, and to take away local control regarding the decision of whether or not to offer publicly funded pre-kindergarten. When the legislature established publicly funded pre-k in 2007, it did so with the assurance to communities that funding pre-k would remain voluntary. This bill reneges on that deal. **VAN WYCK – NO**

FORCE NON-UNION WORKER TO PAY FEES TO UNIONS (S.14). Passed 85-43, April 26, 2013. Those voting YES on S.14 voted in favor of forcing non-union workers to pay a fee equal to 85% of the dues unionized workers pay to the union, effectively using government power to require citizens to make payments to a private organization that they want nothing to do with. S.14 affects roughly 2,600 education, state and municipal employees, mostly low-wage support staff who can least afford the payment. **VAN WYCK – NO**

LIMIT CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS (S.82). Passed 96-49, May 8, 2013. Those voting YES on S.82 voted in favor of capping donations to independent political committees that do not coordinate with candidates or parties, despite Supreme Court precedents that are pretty clear that this constitutes a violation of the First Amendment. If this bill became law and was challenged in court (which was probable), the state would most likely lose the case, leaving taxpayers on the hook for an estimated \$5 million in legal fees. **VAN WYCK – NO**

SET FIVE YEAR TIME LIMIT FOR WELFARE BENEFITS (Donahue Amendment to H.530) Failed 51-88, March 28, 2013. Those voting YES on this amendment voted to limit Reach Up benefits to 60 cumulative months of financial assistance, excluding child-only grants, per family. This amendment is similar to a proposal from Governor Shumlin, about which he cautioned, "Vermont was the only state left in America where welfare benefits were timeless, not temporary." **VAN WYCK – YES**

REGULATE WATERFRONT PROPERTY RIGHTS (H.526) Passed 105-42, March 27, 2013. This bill gives the Secretary of Natural resources unprecedented power to

regulate the private property of waterfront owners. S.526 dictates that property owners will require a permit from the Secretary to create or expand anything with more than 500 square feet of “impervious surface” (defined as: “those manmade surfaces, including paved and unpaved roads, parking areas, roofs, driveways, and walkways, from which precipitation runs off rather than infiltrates.”), or create more than 500 square feet of “cleared area” (defined as: “an area where existing vegetative cover, soil, or duff is permanently removed or altered.”) in a “protected shoreland area” (defined as: “all land located within 250 feet of the mean water level of a lake that is greater than 10 acres in surface area.”) **VAN WYCK – NO**

EXEMPT “CLOUD” SERVICES FROM SALES TAX (Scheuermann Amendment to H.528) Failed 53-90, March 28, 2013. Those voting YES on this amendment voted to continue to exempt internet-based “Cloud” services from Vermont’s sales tax. Defined as “charges made for the right to remotely access and use prewritten computer software, where possession of the software is maintained by the seller or a third party”, this tax would presume to charge consumers for remotely accessed services, even if they are free. Examples of “cloud” computing include Skype, Google Voice, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, as well as “cloud” storage services (Google Drive) and software production (Google Apps). **VAN WYCK – YES**

ALLOW PRIVATE DOCTOR/PATIENT CONTRACTS (Browning Amendment to H.107) Failed 44-94, March 19, 2013. Those voting YES on this amendment voted to ensure that Vermont residents would maintain the ability to enter into voluntary financial contracts with their health care providers. It would also have prohibited the Green Mountain Care Board from placing restrictions on health care professionals’ practice locations. **VAN WYCK – YES**

2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

5.5% STATE SPENDING INCREASE FOR 2015 (H. 885). Passed 91-46, March 27, 2014. Those voting YES on H.885 supported general fund spending for FY2015 of \$1.438 billion. This represents a 5.5% increase (\$88 million) over the original FY2014 budget of \$1.362 billion as passed in 2013, and a 3.8% increase over the FY2014 budget as adjusted (upward) in 2014. The 5.5% spending increase is five times the current [rate of inflation](#) (1.1%), and nearly double Vermonters’ average rate of personal income growth (2.88% for 2013). **VAN WYCK – NO**

\$12.6 MILLION INCREASE TO 2014 SPENDING (H.655). Passed 110-33, January 24, 2014. The “Budget Adjustment Act,” is designed to “tweak” spending levels passed into law by the legislature in the previous year before in response to changes in fiscal conditions. Those voting YES on this 2014 Budget Adjustment, H.655, voted for a net increase of \$12.63 million in new spending to the FY2014 General Fund budget bringing total FY2014 General Fund spending up to \$1.37 billion. **VAN WYCK – NO**

\$56.2 MILLION PROPERTY TAX INCREASE (H. 889). Passed 89-51, April 4, 2014. Those voting YES on H.889 voted in favor of a \$56.2 million property tax increase. Residential property tax rates rise 4¢ (4%) from 94¢ to 98¢ per \$100 of assessed value. Nonresidential tax rates rise 7.5¢ (5%) from \$1.44 to \$1.515 per \$100 of value. **VAN WYCK – NO**

\$1.2 MILLION MISCELLANEOUS TAX INCREASE (H. 884). Passed 104-41, March 27, 2014. The Miscellaneous Tax bill is an annual adjustment of tax provisions needed to match revenues with spending. Those voting YES on H.884 voted in favor of increasing the tax on tobacco snuff from \$2.24 to \$2.62, which is projected to raise \$700,000, and to implement a 92% wholesale tax on electronic cigarettes, which was projected to raise \$500,000. **VAN WYCK – NO**

OVER \$800,000 INCREASE IN MISCELLANEOUS FEES (H.735). Passed 87-48, May 9, 2014. The “Fee Bill” sets the fees for business and professional licensing and a number of state services. This year’s bill was made controversial by a provision requiring \$200 fee for storage of firearms confiscated by law enforcement following domestic disturbances. Those voting YES on H.735 supported over \$800,000 in fee increases. **VAN WYCK – NO**

INCREASE MINIMUM WAGE 16% TO \$10.10 PER HOUR (H. 552) Passed 87-57, April 8, 2014. Those voting YES supported raising the minimum wage from \$8.73 to \$10.10 effective January 2015. This is a 16% increase and was estimated to cost Vermont businesses \$30 million. State economist Tom Kavet testified that a rise in the minimum wage to \$10 would result in the loss of 250 jobs or the equivalent in hours. Vermont already has the third highest minimum wage in the United States. **VAN WYCK – NO**

MANDATORY SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION (H.883). Passed 76-60, April 30, 2014. Those voting YES on the bill supported the mandate, "This bill proposes to require...[that] as of July 1, 2020, supervisory unions shall cease to exist and current school districts shall be realigned into expanded prekindergarten–grade 12 school districts (Expanded Districts) that are responsible for the education of all resident students in prekindergarten–grade 12." This would eliminate local school boards and erode local control over education. This bill would not reduce the cost of education, and would probably, in the short term, increase costs in order to pay for the transition. **VAN WYCK – NO**

ALLOW CHILDCARE BUSINESSES TO UNIONIZE/COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN FOR SUBSIDIES (S. 316) Passed 78-59, May 6, 2014. This bill would allow early childcare businesses to form a union to collectively bargain for taxpayer-funded subsidies. The legislature is essentially giving a union taxpayer money to lobby the legislature about something for which the legislature is already aware it is responsible, and forces hundreds of small business people in Vermont to pay “agency fees” (85% of union dues) to a union that they do not want to join. **VAN WYCK – NO**

EXEMPT NON-UNIONIZED CHILDCARE WORKERS FROM PAYING

“AGENCY FEES” TO A UNION (BOUCHARD AMENDMENT to S.316). Failed 53-86 on May 6, 2014. The underlying bill (S.316) allows early childcare businesses to form a union to collectively bargain with the state for subsidies. The Bouchard amendment would have exempted those early childcare providers who choose not to join a union from having to pay “agency fees” (85% of union dues) to that union.

VAN WYCK – YES

MAKE SINGLE-PAYER FINANCING PLAN(S) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(Browning Amendment to H. 884) Failed 39-102, March 28, 2014. The Browning Amendment to H.884 would have bound committees in the House (Ways & Means) and Senate (Finance) to formally request that the Shumlin Administration submit on or before April 30, 2014 one or more financing proposals for Green Mountain Care (single payer healthcare). If the proposal(s) are not complete by that date, “all drafts, reports and other documents related to financing Green Mountain Care” would be turned over. In the event the Administration did not comply, the committees would be bound to subpoena the Administration for the information. **VAN WYCK – YES**

REPEAL AND REPLACE EDUCATION FINANCING SYSTEM (ACT 60/68)

(Scheuermann Amendment to H. 889) Failed 49-83, April 3, 2014. The “Repeal & Replace amendment” proposed to repeal Vermont’s current education funding laws (Act 60/68) effective July 1, 2016 with a replacement to take effect for the 2016-2017 Academic Year. The Scheuermann Amendment comes in the wake of 37 Vermont towns voting down their school budgets. 43 towns lowered school spending, but, under the current financing system, still saw property taxes increase. Those voting NO voted to leave the status quo in place. Those voting YES voted for reform. **VAN WYCK – YES**

IMPOSE STRICTER CENTRAL PLANNING FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT

(H. 823). Passed 92-44, March 13, 2014. This bill was designed to funnel development into “approved, designated centers” (urban) and discourage development in other areas (rural) by making allowances for, and in some cases subsidies to, the former, and creating legal barriers to the latter. H.823 places strict regulations on the “conditions and criteria” for obtaining development permits. In the words of House Energy & Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Tony Klein, this bill turns Act 250 into a “living document.”

VAN WYCK – NO

REQUIRE “MAY CONTAIN GMO” LABEL ON SOME FOOD PRODUCTS (H.

112). Passed 114-30, April 23, 2014. The GMO labeling bill is popular with Vermonters because people quite logically want to know what is in the food they eat. Therefore, superficially this bill makes sense. However, there are two major concerns with H.112 in practice. 1) It opens Vermont taxpayers up to an estimated \$1.5 to \$8 million in legal liabilities if the law is challenged in court and the state loses – certain and likely scenarios respectively. 2) Given the number of exemptions to the labeling codified within the bill, it really doesn’t achieve the ostensible goal of enlightening consumers as to whether or not they are eating GMOs. **VAN WYCK – NO**