1   H.555

2   Introduced by Representative Donahue of Northfield

3   Referred to Committee on

4   Date:

5   Subject: Health; mental health; Vermont State Hospital cemetery;

6   preservation; appropriation

7   Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to appropriate

8   funds to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in fiscal year 2024 to

9   enclose the Vermont State Hospital cemetery.

10   An act relating to enclosing the Vermont State Hospital cemetery

11   It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

12   Sec. 1. FINDINGS

13   The General Assembly finds that:

14   (1) The need and moral imperative to enclose the Vermont State

15   Hospital cemetery were recognized by the General Assembly as early as 1896,

16   when the General Assembly, reporting on abuses at the then-new hospital,

17   declared: "The space occupied for the purpose is three or four rods square,

18   where there is no growth of bushes. It is unfenced and uncared for. We think

19   there are 18 unmarked, untended graves and we cannot but feel that the

1   decencies of civilization require a more suitable place of burial and

2   recommend that proper enclosure be set apart for that purpose."

3   (2) Over a century later, the General Assembly reaffirmed the

4   importance of enclosing the Vermont State Hospital cemetery, resolving in

5   2013 Acts and Resolves No. R-109: "That the General Assembly observes the

6   powerful role that the Vermont State Hospital played in the history of mental

7   health treatment in Vermont and requests the State to maintain and preserve

8   perpetually the hospital's cemetery."

9   (3) Today, the Vermont State Hospital cemetery is subject to ongoing

10   damage arising from the use of newly developed bike trails adjacent to the

11   cemetery.

12   Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION

13   The sum of $13,398.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the

14   Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in fiscal year 2024 for the

15   purpose of enclosing the Vermont State Hospital cemetery.

16   Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

17   This act shall take effect on passage.