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2010 session ends with budget, no veto showdown

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The 2010 legislative session is officially over after the final gavel fell early this morning.

Lawmakers wrapped up their work just after midnight after agreeing on a budget with Gov. Jim Douglas, R-Vermont, and avoiding a veto showdown.

To reach a deal on the \$1 billion budget, Democrats backed away from new broadbased tax increases and rolled back estate and capital gains tax increases passed last year. In exchange, the governor gave up on a plan for property tax reform. This year both sides also agreed to reform the unemployment insurance trust fund and to change the judiciary system to save the state money.

"We can feel good about the work done here under the golden dome in 2010," Gov. Douglas said in his final address to the Legislature. "While other states are cutting programs and raising taxes in response to the fiscal crisis, Vermont is moving in a different direction. We're looking toward the future and striving to economic success."

"We learned the lessons of last year," said Rep. Shap Smith, D-Vt. House Speaker, "and we learned them well. And we worked together, not only within the body, but with the administration and Senate to put together something that would have tripartisan support."

The budget had a \$160 million shortfall. To make that up there are \$39 million in cuts to Human Service programs and changes in retirement plans for teachers and state employees.

Lawmakers also passed the Challenges for Change bill that cuts the costs of government and a plan to rein in the expense of state pensions. They restructured the judicial system to make it more efficient, approved a new health care study aimed at universal coverage and they took aim at driver safety; banning texting behind the wheel and requiring ignition locks for drunk drivers.

One bill that was noteworthy for its failure was the relicensing of Vermont Yankee. The Senate voted overwhelmingly not to allow the nuclear plant to keep running past 2012.

We'll have a full wrap up on what did and did not pass and the impact tonight on the Channel 3 News at 6.

[Kristin Carlson](#) - WCAX News