

Call to Action April 14-20 from the League of Women Voters NH

Two big but separate calls for your action this week:

First call is to come to Representatives Hall in the State House, Tuesday April 18 by 10 am, to sign in as OPPOSED to SB3. Over 200 people turned out when this voter suppression bill was heard in the Senate; let's make that show of force again. In spite of a minor amendment in the Senate taking out police visits to verify domicile, SB3 still makes voter registration much harder and intimidating for potential voters who do not have established stable housing. This includes people with disabilities who don't have drivers licenses or leases in their own names, people temporarily or chronically without a permanent residence, and even college students who would have to provide written proof of their dormitory or other housing when registering to vote. **Come out, sign in as Opposed, testify if you wish, and let's kill this bill in the House.** Click here to read the bill, all 14 pp.

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2017&id=885&txtFormat=pdf&v=current

And if you can get to the Legislative Office Bldg by **9:15**, please show up for the press conference opposing the **casino bill**. (League opposes expanded gambling. See more details below under House hearings on Tuesday-- SB242)

Second call to action is to contact your own state representative(s) or senator on bills that you care about, as the Senate and House will both meet in full session on Thursday, April 20, at 10 am. If there are any bills that you personally care about that are coming up for a vote, now is the time to call or email your own state representative(s) or senator. Be sure to give the number and topic of a bill, identify yourself as a constituent, and state whether you support or oppose the bill. To find your representatives' and senators' contact information, scroll on this website to your town's name:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/wml.aspx>

To find the complete lists of bills being voted on in each body, click on the Calendar for April 13 or 14 on the General Court's website. <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us>

Below we highlight some bills that are either League priority bills or bills we're aware have generated much interest in the public.

In the SENATE: A light week in the Senate's full session this time.

A number of education bills are on the consent calendar this week. The consent calendar is usually handled with a single voice vote to approve all the bills on the list, which have been recommended unanimously one way or another by the relevant Senate committee. It is unlikely to generate debate.

One election law bill is on the consent calendar. **HB 218**, relative to activities at polling places, was voted Inexpedient to Legislate in the Election Law committee by a vote of 5-0. It passed the House on a voice vote on Feb. 15. Senator Woodburn for the committee: "This bill prohibits distributing campaign materials and electioneering inside the polling place. This bill also expands the applicability of existing electioneering prohibitions. The committee found that moderators already have the authority to enforce the prohibition of electioneering at the polling place, making this bill unnecessary."

On the regular calendar, indicating floor debate is likely, is the following bill:

HB489 http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2017&id=392&txtFormat=pdf&v=current

establishing a commission to study adaptation of the tax structure of the state to economic and demographic change. Senate Ways and Means Committee recommends Inexpedient to Legislate, by a vote of 4-0. League believes looking at our state's tax structure in a systematic way is a good thing, so we are disappointed that the committee does not recommend passage. The bill passed the House on a voice vote Feb. 16, so why the committee sees this as an inexpedient bill is unclear.

Also on the regular calendar for election law is HB 537, relative to campaign contributions. Committee recommends Inexpedient to Legislate, Vote 4-0. Sad—this modest campaign finance reform passed the House on March 8 on a voice vote, so we don't know why the Senate Election Law committee doesn't like it (we missed that hearing). (League supports passage of this bill.)

SENATE HEARINGS of note this week:

League has no priority bills in Senate hearings this week. Many committees are conducting executive sessions, where they decide how to recommend bills to the full body. No public testimony is taken at executive sessions, but the public is welcome to attend and listen.

The Senate Finance committee will be meeting every day April 17-21 to work on the **budget** (State House room 103). Check the Senate Calendar for specific times. Much work to be done after the House dropped the ball on the budget last week; thank you to the Senators on Finance for their dedication and hard work.

On Monday April 24, the Senate will begin hearing agency presentations on the **Capital Budget** beginning at 10 am in State House room 100. This will be another multi-day event.

In the HOUSE:

Consent calendar items seem straight-forward this week, unlikely to be pulled for full debate.

On the regular calendar:

Two ENERGY bills:

SB 125 (New Title) establishing a committee to study transmission, distribution, generation, and other costs in the state's electricity system. It has been recommended OUGHT TO PASS in the Science, Technology and Energy committee by a vote of 15-4. Rep. Herbert Vadney for the majority writes, "New Hampshire's electricity rates are among the highest in the nation with many factors contributing to those prices. This study will identify and evaluate ways to lower our rates and will consider grid modernization. Making our electricity cheaper will lower manufacturing costs and spur our economy." (Study committee creation bills are seldom controversial, so debate by the minority on this should be revelatory.)

SB 51, (New Title) establishing a committee to review subsidies for energy projects provided by the renewable portfolio standard. MAJORITY: OUGHT TO PASS by a 9-8 vote. Rep. Michael Vose for the Majority of Science, Technology and Energy: "This bill creates a study committee to investigate whether energy subsidies resulting from the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) are appropriate. The five-member legislative committee will try to determine if energy producers can provide energy without subsidies, or if subsidies should be enhanced, maintained, reduced, lowered or phased out. The committee will also assess whether it is in the public interest of ratepayers of the state to continue to provide energy subsidies. The RPS program currently costs ratepayers approximately \$30 million per year, according to the Public Utilities Commission. (League hopes some of our members will step up in future to follow energy bills—no takers for that assignment this year.)

HOUSE HEARINGS of note this week:

Tuesday, April 18:

EDUCATION, Legislative Office Bldg Rooms 305-307

9:30 a.m. **SB 191-FN**, establishing the **kindergarten** initiative development support grant program.

1:00 p.m. Or immediately following the public hearing on SB 191-FN, full committee work session on **SB 45**, requiring a course in **civics** for high school graduation, and on **SB 43**, relative to **non-academic surveys** administered by a public school to its students. Executive session on pending legislation may be held throughout the day, time permitting, from the time the committee is initially convened.

ELECTION LAW, Representatives Hall, State House 10:00 a.m. **SB 3, relative to domicile for voting purposes.** (See top of p. 1—this is a big event for League as we strongly oppose this bill and will so testify).

HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS, Room 205, LOB beginning at 9:30—Executive session on several bills including **SB 7-FN-L**, relative to eligibility for **food stamps** and establishing the Granite Workforce pilot program. This bill has received much criticism from the public and we can expect the hearing room to be crowded, even though the public is not allowed to testify

during Executive Session (when the committee decides how to recommend a bill to the full body for later vote.)

WAYS AND MEANS, Room 202-204, LOB 10:00 a.m. **SB 242-FN-A-L**, relative to video lottery and table gaming. Don't be fooled by the name—this is the **perennial casino bill** which has often been passed in the Senate and killed in the House (this time the bill allows 2 casinos in NH). League opposes this bill, as we have opposed other bills to rely on expanded gambling to fund state government, as an unreliable and regressive form of revenue, even more so now that Massachusetts has started construction of its own casinos. League will again submit testimony in opposition (see Testimony on our website later this weekend). The hearing will be preceded by a press conference in the Legislative Office Bldg lobby at 9:15, organized by Casino Free NH, the NH coalition against expanded gambling, of which League is a partner member.

Wednesday, April 19:

EDUCATION, Room 207, LOB 10:00 a.m. Full committee work session on **SB 193-FN**, establishing **education freedom savings accounts for students** (similar to a voucher system for charter schools, private schools, and home-schooling) and on **SB 191-FN**, establishing the **kindergarten** initiative development support grant program (testimony taken on Tuesday).

HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS, Room 205, LOB

9:30 a.m. SB 155, relative to implementation of the **Medicaid managed care** program.

10:15 a.m. SB 161, establishing a commission to evaluate the **direct care workforce** and preparedness of **long-term care and support services for aging adults** with dementia or other cognitive brain injuries. (The League hopes that a member will take on responsibility for following Medicaid and long-term care bills.)

That's it for Hot Legislation this week in NH—maybe. We sometimes miss things; email us if you see something else we should look at closely. Last week we missed including an important hearing on Wed., April 12, which was: **HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS, hearing on SB 2-FN-A, reducing the rates of the business profits tax and the business enterprise tax**. This would cut another \$80 million a year in state revenue in FY20-21, above and beyond the \$30 million that will be cut in FY18-19 because of an item in last term's budget. Funding for many items will have to be adjusted if this passes (it's already passed the Senate, will go the House later this spring.) Not sure when this bill will have executive session or go to the House full session for a vote—exec session is possible after the casino bill hearing on Tuesday.

Past Calls to Action and Legislative Alerts as well as Testimony we've given are on our website, LWVNH.org <http://lwvnh.org/index.html>