

Legislative alert for March 18-21, from League of Women Voters NH. If you have trouble reading this in your email, it is also posted on our website: http://lwvnh.org/files/leg_alert_march_18-21.pdf

House will meet in session on March 19 and 20, extending into March 21 if needed.

Senate will meet in voting session on March 21.

Report on some bills of interest that were voted on March 14 In the House:

HB415 that requires any vote to change a town's town meeting to or from **SB2 status** be put on the official ballot *House voted to move this bill to March 19 session.*

HB 676-FN-A-LOCAL, repealing the collection of the **state education property tax**. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 16-1 *House voted to move this bill to March 19 voting session.*

HCR 5, requesting the US Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to reverse the ruling of the US Supreme Court in **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission**. Got a new amendment, passed 198-132.

HB 186, establishing a **state minimum wage** and providing for adjustments to the minimum wage. In a 3-year progression, the minimum wage moves to \$9.50, \$10.75, and \$12.00 per hour. Different for tipped workers & youth. Passed 210-145.

HB 198, replacing the prohibition on texting while driving with a more comprehensive bill. commonly known as the **hands-free law** (while driving). Passed overwhelmingly.

CACR 10, Providing that **revenue from any state income tax shall be returned to the cities, towns, school districts, and counties** to assist in property tax relief. Defeated overwhelmingly. This will not appear on the Nov. 2020 ballot.

CACR 11, Providing that a **broad-based sales tax** shall be prohibited. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 12-8, but was tabled by a close vote.

HB 132-FN, net neutrality. "The size of the fiscal note, combined with the threat of legal action against the state by the national telecommunications companies, convinced the committee to unanimously recommend that the bill not pass." It was killed in the House.

In the Senate, these bills were voted on March 14:

SB 266-FN, education funding for kindergarten pupils, keno revenues, and school building aid. Passed unanimously, moves to Finance committee. *League supports. This uncouples state funding of full-day kindergarten from Keno proceeds. Keno money would go into education trust fund instead.*

SB 7 as amended, the **SMART voting improvement bill**. Passed 14-10, moves to Finance. *League supports. (SMART stands for Secure, Modern, Accurate [and Accessible] Registration Technology)*

SB 304 the **public funding of top state election campaigns**. voted to "re-refer to committee" which means the committee will do more work on it. *This bill was developed by Open Democracy. League supports.*

SB 303-FN, state aid to school districts re special ed & medicaid. Already passed the Senate. Sen. Finance recommended unanimously Ought To Pass, but Senate voted to table this bill.

SB 305 online voter registration portal, sponsored by Sen. Gray and amended. A good idea that needs more work. Senate voted to "re-refer to committee" to do more work on it.

SB 231 Truth in political advertising. Voted to "re-refer" this bill for more work too.

SB 283 that would provide for **audits of ballot machines** passed, moves to Finance.

The full list of bills for March 19 and upcoming hearings in the House can be found in this week's Calendar: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC_16.pdf

The Senate Calendar is at this link:

http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2014.pdf

Coming up for a vote on March 19, 20, 21, bills include the following in the House:

HB415 that requires any vote to change a town's town meeting to or from **SB2 status** be put on the official ballot (to rescind SB2) or to be on the discussion part of town meeting with a ballot vote on

adoption of SB2 (in other words, voters must attend a town meeting in person to vote for SB2 status so they don't have to go to town meeting in future). *Lots of arguments pro & con SB2; this bill makes sure that people have the opportunity to listen to the arguments before they adopt SB2.* Committee recommends Ought To Pass 18-1. *(carried over from last week)*

HB 676-FN-A-LOCAL, repealing the collection of the **state education property tax**. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 16-1 (state has no way to replace these funds needed to support public schools.) *(carried over from last week)*

HB632 to repeal the Education Tax Credit that funds scholarships to private schools, removing that money from state revenue. See explanation on pp 16-17 of the Calendar. Recommended Ought To Pass 10-9, so this will be a big debate on the floor. *League supports this bill, because we oppose public funds going to religious schools.*

Three proposed constitutional amendments:

CACR4 is being withdrawn in favor of very similar **CACR8**, the right to govern (local control), recommended Ought To Pass 12-6. See explanation on p 29 of the calendar.

CACR 12 to prohibit an income tax on earned income, recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 12-8.

Two gun violence reduction bills:

HB109 requires **background checks on gun sales**, recommended Ought To Pass 10-9 *League supports*

HB514 requires a **waiting period for gun sales**, Ought To Pass 12-8. *League supports*

HJR2 is a resolution to **exclude NH from off-shore oil/gas drilling**, Ought To Pass recommended unanimously. *League supports and so testified.*

HB 489, relative to **changing a pupil's school or assignment** because of a manifest educational hardship. Committee recommends Ought To Pass with Amendment, 17-2. "revises current ...These changes, as supported by the NH School Boards Association and NH School Administrators Association, both streamline and clarify the process available to a school administrator, school board, and parent when assisting a student having an educational hardship, such as severe bullying, in the current educational assignment." Vote 17-2.

A bunch of **energy** bills, too.

Senate bills that have already passed in the Senate are starting to come to the House:

SB1 family & medical leave bill, recommended Ought To Pass 12-7.

Coming up for a vote on March 21, bills include the following in the Senate:

SB 309-FN-L, restoring stabilization grants for education. Recommended Ought to Pass, Vote 4-1.

Hearings in committees next week. Not many because of extended House voting sessions. Some committees are holding executive sessions, which are open to the public to observe but no testimony will be taken. Finance is looking at bills that have already passed in the House or Senate.

Monday, March 18

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE will hold the Concord Public Hearing on HB-1A and HB 2-FN-A-L, (the state's 2 year budget plan) in Representative's Hall, starting at 1:00 p.m. This can also be viewed live on the General Court's STREAMING MEDIA link <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>

HOUSE FINANCE DIVISIONS, WAYS & MEANS, and **PUBLIC WORKS** will all be holding hearings or work sessions today. Check calendar for details.

Tuesday, March 19

SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, Room 103, State House will hear a number of bills dealing with net metering, beginning at 8 am.

Tuesday, March 26

HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, Room 204, LOB

11:00 am HB 564, possession of **firearms in safe school zones** (passed House as an Education bill, now in its second committee). Executive session on March 27.