

This week's legislative alert from the League of Women Voters NH includes a **call to action**, for those who can take a few minutes to phone or email their state representatives before the House session. The House meets on **Wed., Feb. 27** (probably continuing into Thursday) to vote on a number of bills important to the League. Below are the bill numbers, a brief description, and the recommendation of the bill from the appropriate House committee. (*information on how to find out your reps' names and phone #s or emails is at the end of this email. Your emails or calls can make a difference!*) Senate is taking the week off--no session and no hearings.

Most important: **HB 706 to create an independent redistricting commission** (a big step in ending gerrymandering). The bill was very effectively amended, then recommended unanimously Ought To Pass by the House Election Law committee. League asks you to urge your reps to vote YES on Ought To Pass As Amended. This is no longer a partisan issue--Dems and Republicans on the House Election Law committee all approved this bill as amended. Tell your Republican reps that when you contact them. The recommendation from the committee ends this way: "The commission is independent but the process continues to involve the Secretary of State, and the elected leadership of both the NH House and Senate. The process leaves the ultimate decision to adopt the commission's plan in the legislature as our NH Constitution requires. 21 other states have adopted an independent process for redistricting. This ... commission will put the interest of voters, constituents, and communities of common interest ahead of purely political considerations"

HB 709 school funding bill as amended after much work by both parties, recommended Ought To Pass by a 17-2 vote of House Education Committee. This bill adjusts the funding formula to give extra state aid to school districts with large numbers of low-income students and allots fiscal disparity aid among school districts in the formula. This may not be the final solution but is a big step in the right direction to equalize educational opportunity and tax burden in our state. You can read the amended version here: http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billtext.aspx?sy=2019&txtFormat=amend&id=2019-0526H

HB 177 school funding via stabilization grants restores funding for eligible school districts to 2016 levels (which means more state money for those schools). House Education Committee recommends this Ought To Pass by a 17-3 vote. The minority agrees with the concept but argues that the 2018 levels should be used as the 2016 levels would be too expensive to maintain. (League has no position on this specific bill.) Read the amended version here: http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billtext.aspx?sy=2019&txtFormat=amend&id=2019-0258H

HB 184-FN, including full-day kindergarten students in the state funding formula (rather than basing funding on Keno revenues, which have fallen short of projections and counting kindergartners as fractions of pupils). House Education Committee voted 12-6 Ought To Pass. League supports state funding of kindergarten on a stable basis.

Also to be voted on in the House Feb. 27 & 28 are the following bills of broad public interest:

HB 455 to abolish the death penalty in NH, substituting life without parole for capital offenses. The House Criminal Justice Committee recommended this bill Ought To Pass by a vote of 11-6. Last year a similar bill passed in Senate and House but was vetoed by the Governor. The goal this year is a veto-proof big turnout of YES votes. League's national position supports repeal.

League has no position on **HB 481 legalization of marijuana bill**. It will have a tough floor fight, as the House Criminal Justice Committee voted Ought To Pass by a vote of 10-9.

HB 564, possession of firearms in safe school zones was recommended Ought To Pass 11-8. Arguments pro-con are on page 18 of the Calendar.

HB 101, regulating possession of firearms in a school district. House Education Committee recommended Inexpedient to Legislate (kill the bill) 14-5.

HB 712-FN family and medical leave insurance program, recommended by committee 12-6 Ought to Pass as Amended. Arguments pro-con on page 21 of the Calendar.

HB 686-FN-A-LOCAL, funding an adequate education and extending the interest and dividends tax to capital gains, passed House Ways & Means with a vote of 12-7. Extensive pro-con explanation on pp. 27-28 of the Calendar. This would be a new tax (capital gains are currently not taxed in NH) to fund education.

HCR 1, rescinding all requests by the NH legislature for a federal constitutional convention. Recommended Ought To Pass 8-6 by House Legislative Administration Committee. LWVNH testified for this bill based on our national position; we are mentioned in the pro-con page as one of the supporters.

For a complete list of bills the House will vote on, check out this week's House Calendar: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC_13.pdf

*****Next Senate session will be March 7, 10 am.** Bills to be heard are listed in the Calendar but might be added to next week--don't know:

http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2012.pdf Some bills in the Senate coming up for a vote March 7 include:

One bill we will support on March 7 in the Senate is **SB140**, that reads "Substantive Content of an Adequate Education; Alternative Programs .RSA193-E:2-a,V(b) is repealed and reenacted to read as follows (b)Each local schoolboard shall determine whether to grant academic credit for alternative, extended learning ,and work-based programs." Recommended Ought To Pass 5-0 by Senate Education & Workforce Committee. (see earlier alert re state board of education).

We need to find out more about **SB309 that gradually increases the school stabilization grants.**

Also **SB 24** and **SB 76**, continuing participation in RGGI and prohibiting offshore oil drilling, recommended Ought To Pass unanimously.

SB 310 is the perennial **casino bill**, recommended Inexpedient To Legislate by vote of 4-2. We'd be happy to see this bill die.

*****Hearings in the coming weeks:** no League priority bills will be heard Feb. 25-26 in the House. No bills at all will be heard in the Senate as they enjoy NH's Feb. school vacation week.

House hearing on Feb. 26 that may be of interest: HOUSE RESOURCES, RECREATION AND DEVELOPMENT, Rooms 305-307, LOB10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. HB 495, establishing a commission on drinking water. 1:30 p.m. (executive session will be on March 6)

Looking ahead to hearings in early March:

March 6:

HOUSE STATE-FEDERAL RELATIONS AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, Room 206, LOB

10:00 a.m. *Executive session* on HCR 6, applying to congress to propose a congressional term limits constitutional amendment; HCR 7, urging the President and Congress to adopt a policy renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons; HJR 2, recommending and requesting the President and Congress to exclude NH from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities.

SENATE ELECTION LAW: LOB 102

11:30 a.m. SB 104-L, relative to the postponement of city, town, village, and school district elections.

March 13:

SENATE ELECTION LAW LOB rm 102

11:00 a.m. SB 67, repealing HB1264 that equates domicile with residency (League supports repealing HB1264)

*****Not sure how to reach your state representatives?** Go to this link on the NH government site: <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/wml.aspx> Then scroll down in the "Select your town" box to find your town, click on "go" and the names and addresses of your state rep(s) will come up, followed by your state senator. Click on your representative's name and you may see a photo plus home address, email, and maybe a home phone number. State senators don't have their home phones listed, usually, but they do have email.

When you email your rep or senator, be sure to let him/her know you are a constituent. Identify yourself and tell him/her what town you live in. Give the bill name or description and tell your rep or senator whether you support or oppose the bill. Give a brief reason if you want, but the important thing is to have constituents let their legislators know which bills are important to voters!