

Legislative Alert for **May 21-24**, from League of Women Voters NH

Exciting news about the independent redistricting commission bill: The Senate Election Law Committee voted 5-0 recommending Ought To Pass as Amended on HB706. It goes up for a vote in the full Senate on **May 23**. Sincere thanks to Senators Gray and Birdsall who worked with our voting rights coalition to make this bill acceptable to the Republicans. If your senator is a Republican, please email or call to ask your own senator to support this important voting rights bill. Democrats are already on board. Talking points you may want to include—pick one or use your own.

NH needs an independent redistricting commission to draw maps after the 2020 census. HB 706 will bring transparency to this process and ensure fair districts.

HB706 still allows the Legislature to choose members of the commission and to vote any plan up or down, but an independent redistricting commission makes the process transparent and non-partisan.

An independent redistricting commission will make sure that each town's constitutional right to representation is honored.

This week's civics note: Veto override requires a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, in each body of the legislature, to override a governor's veto.

We reported last week that the Governor vetoed the **Death Penalty Repeal bill, HB455**. It is likely that the House and the Senate will each take a vote to override Gov. Sununu's veto, when they meet on May 23. If all who voted to repeal the death penalty stand firm, there will be enough votes to get rid of this expensive punishment not used in NH since 1939 in favor of life without parole. So thank your reps and senator if they voted for HB455 and ask them to stand firm. (You can find out how Representatives and Senators voted at these links. A YEA vote is for repeal.) House

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/Roll_calls/billstatus_rcdetails.aspx?vs=71&sy=2019&lb=H&eb=HB0455&sortoption=&txtsessionyear=2019&txtbillnumber=HB455&ddlspendors=&q=1&lrs=185

Senate http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/Roll_calls/billstatus_rcdetails.aspx?vs=127&sy=2019&lb=S&eb=HB0455&sortoption=&txtsessionyear=2019&txtbillnumber=HB455&ddlspendors=&q=1&lrs=185

The Senate and the House will each meet in session on Thursday, May 23 at 10:00 am.

Here are some bills of interest to League or broad general interest in the SENATE:

HB 186, establishing a **state minimum wage** and providing for adjustments to the minimum wage. Recommended Re-refer to Committee, Vote 3-2.

ELECTION LAW AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

HB 105-FN, relative to **domicile residency, voter registration**, and investigation of voter verification letters. Ought to Pass, Vote 3-2. *This bill would overturn the dreaded SB3 from 2017, so League definitely supports this bill!*

HB 611-FN, allowing voters to vote by absentee ballot. Ought to Pass, Vote 3-2. *League supports.*

HB 651, allowing the use of campaign funds for child care expenses. Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 3-2.

HB 706-FN-A, establishing an **independent redistricting commission**. Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 5-0. *Hurray, and thanks. See note at the beginning of this alert. League supports!*

JUDICIARY: **HB 109-FN**, requiring **background checks for commercial firearms sales**. Ought to Pass, Vote 3-2.

HB 514-FN, imposing a **waiting period** between the purchase and delivery of a **firearm**. Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 3-2.

HB 564, relative to **possession of firearms on school property**. Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 3-2

HB481, legalization of marijuana. Despite long study already, the senate Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to re-refer this bill for further work before 2020.

Below are some bills of interest to League or broad general interest in the HOUSE. The complete list of bills to be voted on is in this week's House Calendar.

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC_25.pdf

Election Law bills include

SB 104-LOCAL, explaining **postponement of local elections procedures**. This bill "is a melding of SB 104 and HB 408, which was retained by the House Election Law Committee after a lengthy bipartisan effort to address the concerns of the towns and the Secretary of State. The bill is the result of numerous conversations between the Secretary of State's office, town moderators and the New Hampshire Municipal Association, all of whom reached consensus on the language of the bill." Recommended Ought To Pass unanimously. *League supports.*

SB 106, definition of political advocacy organization. Recommended Ought To Pass unanimously. *League supports.*

SB 67, relative to the definitions of resident and residency. Recommended Ought to Pass 12-8."The effect of this bill is to modify the definition of residency in the NH statutes to enable constitutionally-eligible voters to vote in NH without having to incur financial costs to do so. The bill ensures that a person cannot be accused of violating motor vehicle laws if he or she does vote. The bill clarifies that a person who has their place of abode, home, and domicile address here, and who has demonstrated the intent to make NH his or her "principle place of physical presence to the exclusion of all others," but who also may know or believe that at some point in the future they may or will move away from NH, may nonetheless vote where they are living without having to pay fees and obtain a NH drivers license, or to register a car that they may own in NH." *In other words, this bill would reverse last year's HB1264, which League and many others opposed. So we support SB67.*

SB 68, relative to the centralized voter registration database. "This bill allows for the limited release of information from the centralized voter registration database when required for judicial proceedings concerning voter infringement. The information will remain private via a protective order and will only be made available to the court when "it is reasonably necessary to determine whether the right to vote is being infringed on and to protect the right to vote from such infringements." Recommended Ought To Pass 12-8. *League supports, as this may help us with our SB3 lawsuit.*

Natural Resources bill: SB 164, establishing a committee to study unprotected drinking water sources and estimating the costs of protecting such sources. Recommended Ought To Pass unanimously.

Education bill: SB 140, Puts the power for granting credit for alternative, extended learning, and work-based programs in the hands of the local school boards, *where it belongs, in the League's opinion*. Recommended Ought To Pass 12-8. *This would affect the proposed Learn Everywhere program, which gives the state Bd of Education extraordinary power to make local high schools grant credit for work done in non-school settings. Does the Dept of Education have the staff to monitor all these potential "educators"? Do we want our students*

to get graduation credit for a program that may be taught by a for-profit company without local school board oversight? We think not, so we support this bill.

Criminal Justice: SB 100, relative to discrimination in employment based on criminal background checks. *(aka the “ban the box” bill that delays questions about criminal records until the job interview process. League supports, based on our knowledge of the challenges women offenders face when they reenter society after incarceration.)* Recommended Ought To Pass 12-7.

What happened this past week: The Senate was in session on Wednesday, May 15. Here are some highlights of their votes.

HB 558-FN, restricting the distribution of **plastic straws**. Killed on a voice vote..

HB 560-FN, banning t **single-use carryout bags**. Gutted and replaced by a bill to require towns to report annually on recycling and waste tonnage that did pass. Both of these “ban the plastic” bills in debate were described as unnecessary because citizens and businesses were already moving in the right direction. *So bring your reusable tote bags the next time you go to the supermarket. It’s up to each of us to make a difference. Editorial comment from me personally.*

HB 447, authorizes local **school boards** to determine opening & closing school calendar dates. Voted to re-refer to Committee, Vote 3-1. *(Re-refer means the Senate Education Committee wants to study this further, may amend it and bring it back for a vote in 2020.)*

HB 489, changing a pupil’s school or assignment because of a **manifest educational hardship**. Killed on a voice vote.

HB 582-FN, relative to the **regional greenhouse gas initiative cap and trade program** for controlling carbon dioxide emissions. Passed with Amendment.

HB 397-FN, relative to **drivers’ licenses for NH residents who do not possess a social security card**. Re-referred to Committee for more study.

HB 591, HB 592, and HB 660, **OHRVs** laws & impact. All passed.

HB 480-FN, relative to **sports betting**. Passed and referred to Senate Finance Committee for another hearing.

Committee hearings coming up:

Most are work sessions or executive sessions. Check the Calendars if you want details.

Wednesday, May 22

SENATE CAPITAL BUDGET, Room 100, State House

10:00 am Executive session on the capital budget

HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Rooms 201-203, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am SB 241-FN-A funding for the project development phase of the capitol corridor rail project

Friday, May 24

SENATE FINANCE, Room 103, State House.

9:30 a.m. Executive Session – State Budget Deliberations

Wednesday May 29

HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, Room 204, LOB

1:00 pm Full committee work session on retained bills.