

Legislative Alert for **May 28-early June, 2019**, from League of Women Voters NH

Breaking news! At 4:30 pm on May 23, **the Senate passed the independent redistricting bill on a voice vote, with no dissenters.** This has been a League objective for 15 years, and the bill (HB706) has true bi-partisan support. Thank you to all the organizations and individuals who worked so hard this year to make this happen, and especially to the representatives and senators from both parties that united to craft a bill that will truly restore transparency and fairness to the redistricting process. Yippee!

Which bills passed in the House on May 23?

The House voted 247-123 to **override the Governor's veto** of the **death penalty repeal** bill. That is just one vote more than the 2/3 needed for the override. Next week the bill goes to the Senate for a similar override attempt.

The House also passed **SB140**, which puts the power for granting credit for alternative, extended learning, and work-based programs in the hands of the **local school boards.** vote 224-146.

House also passed **SB100**, the **"ban the box" on job applications** bill, vote 217-130. This bill delays questions about criminal records until the job interview process.

In **Election Law** the House passed **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.*** Vote was 215-138.

Also election law, the House passed **SB 104-LOCAL**, explaining **postponement of local elections procedures.** This is a true collaboration of parties and the result of numerous conversations between the Secretary of State's office, town moderators and the NH Municipal Association, all of whom reached consensus on the language of the bill. Passed on a voice vote.

Also election law, the House passed **SB 68**, which "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." Passed 214-141. . *League supports, as this may help us with our SB3 lawsuit.*

Which bills passed in the Senate on May 23?

See top of the page for the big news, from the League's perspective.

In the Senate **three firearms bills each passed 13-10** along party lines. These bills require background checks (HB109), a 3-days waiting period when purchasing a gun (HB514), and allowing school districts to prohibit guns on school grounds (HB564).

The HOUSE will next meet in voting session on June 5 at 1 pm and June 6 at 10 am.

The list of bills will be available in next week's Calendar (on Thurs evening or Fri morning).

The SENATE will next meet in voting session on May 30, 10 am.

We had expected that several important election law bills would be voted on in the Senate on May 23, but some were postponed to May 30 and are included below.

On the Consent Calendar (meaning there is no debate expected because the committee approved these unanimously) are the following:

HB 531, expanding methods for the delivery of absentee ballots cast by elderly or disabled citizens. *League supports.*

Also recommended unanimously Ought To Pass is

HB 25-A, making **appropriations for capital improvements**. The Capital Budget is on pp 7-22 of this week's Senate Calendar. http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2024.pdf

On the regular calendar, the following bills are included:

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

Related to Election Law:

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 315, relative to the **Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program**. Recommended Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 3-2. *[this would replace our current interstate voter registration checking method with a far better one. League supports.]*

HB 556, allowing municipalities to **process absentee ballots** prior to election day. Recommended Ought to Pass, Vote 5-0. *This is processing only, not counting of absentee ballots. Makes sense in communities with large numbers of absentee ballots.*

HB 611-FN, allowing voters to **vote by absentee ballot**. Recommended Ought to Pass 3-2. *This bill allows anyone who wishes to do so to vote by absentee ballot, rather than just those who meet narrow requirements. League supports.*

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

Of general public interest are these bills:

HB 567, switching to the Atlantic Time Zone in NH. Recommended Inexpedient to Legislate 4-1.

HB 480-FN, relative to **sports betting**. Recommended Ought to Pass with Amendment 6-0.

HB 481-FN-A-L, legalization and regulation of cannabis. Recommended Re-refer to Committee 5-0. *That means study this further, perhaps bring it back in 2020.*

HB 486, relative to department of corrections procedures concerning the requirement for restoration of the **voting rights of felons**. Ought to Pass 5-0. *League has committed to helping the Dept. of Corrections and Dept. of Probation and Parole spread the word that in NH released felons do have the right to vote. This bill doesn't change the law, simply requires better information be given to released felons.*

Committee hearings coming up:

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

Friday, May 24

SENATE FINANCE, Room 103, State House.

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

Tuesday, May 28

HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Room 201, LOB

10:30 a.m. Executive session on SB 241-FN-A, relative to funding for the project development phase of the capitol corridor rail project; SB 285-FN, establishing a coastal resilience and economic development program.

Wednesday May 29

HOUSE Ways and Means Committee LOB rooms 202/204.

10 am, Overview of bipartisan amendment regarding Wayfair Decision (US Supreme Court Decision on requirement of online retailers collecting taxes for other states) Presenters: House Ways and Means Committee Members. Discussion of the proposal and the impact on small and medium size NH businesses

HOUSE FINANCE, Rooms 210-211, LOB

10:00 a.m. Executive session on SB 82-FN school food and nutrition programs; SB 185-FN-A, development of the NH state rail trails plan by the department of transportation and making an appropriation therefor; SB 290-FN, relative to the NH granite advantage health care program; SB 292-FN, relative to implementation of the new mental health 10-year plan; SB 293-FN, relative to federally qualified health care centers and rural health centers reimbursement.