

## Legislative Update from League of Women Voters NH June 14, 2019

First, two reports on things that happened this week. In the House, the members voted 208-137 to concur with the Senate on the **Independent Redistricting Bill, HB706**. This was a League priority bill, so we ask everyone to encourage Governor Sununu to sign the bill. If you think that it is unfair to voters to have legislators manipulate voting districts for their own benefit, let the Governor know you **support HB706**, which puts the process of defining voting districts into the hands of an independent commission. The Legislature will still vote, as they are constitutionally required to do. But the districting plan will be drafted by 15 non-legislators representing both parties and undeclared voters. And it will be public, taking public comment! Big improvement over 2011!

On Thursday, June 13, the **state board of education voted 4-3 to approve an amended set of rules about “Learn Everywhere.”** At the hearing and in emails and editorials leading up to the meeting, many voiced objection to the plan, including League. You can learn more about this threat to public education in NH at this website: <https://anhpe.org/> The next step is that JLCAR (the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules) will consider the rules as approved yesterday. Don't know when that will happen. (The amended version's primary difference is dropping the requirement from 100% to 33%, of how many graduation credits a local school district must accept for a particular student, earned outside the school's own program.)

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### **Closing in on the end of the 2019 session:**

Information below is borrowed shamelessly and with thanks from the NH Municipal Assn's newsletter of 6/7, with minor omissions or editing, to **explain what happens with bills remaining at this time.**

All **committees of conference** must be created by Thursday, June 13, and must issue their reports by Thursday, June 20.

Information about each committee of conference, including the names of members and time and place of the first meeting, will appear on the bill's docket and at the “Committees of Conference” link under “Resources” near the bottom of the general court website's home page. Committees frequently meet and then recess until a time later the same day or the following day, and the time and place of the recessed meeting do not necessarily get posted on the website; thus, it often is necessary to be at the initial meeting to know when and where the recessed meeting will occur.

If a committee of conference on a given bill reaches agreement, the agreed-upon version of that bill then goes to both the House and the Senate for an up-or-down vote—no further amendments are permitted. If both chambers approve the committee of conference report, the bill passes and goes to the governor. If either chamber rejects it, the bill dies.

**The House and Senate will each meet on June 27 to vote on those Committee of Conference reports. 10 am for the House. Time not determined for the Senate.**

**Retained and re-referred bills.** 157 bills have been retained in the House and 74 re-referred in the Senate, all of which must receive a committee recommendation by late this calendar year. Most committees will meet to discuss those in September or later. Every retained or re-referred bill will ultimately get a committee recommendation of Ought to Pass (or Ought to

Pass with Amendment), Inexpedient to Legislate, or Refer for Interim Study. Those recommendations will go to the full House or Senate, as the case may be, at their first session in January, and each bill will proceed from there in the same manner as other bills. *[Note: bills retained by the House are listed in this week's House Calendar.]* **House Calendar:**  
[http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC\\_29.pdf](http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC_29.pdf)

Oddly the **Senate Calendar** does not have a list of re-referred bills:  
[http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars\\_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2027.pdf](http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2027.pdf)

**Tabled bills.** Bills that were still on the table after June 6th sessions will languish there. It is theoretically possible for a bill to be removed from the table now and passed, but this is extremely unlikely as it involves a suspension of rules.

A bill's demise on the table doesn't necessarily prevent it from living on in spirit. In more than one case, the language of a tabled bill has been added to another bill. A tabled bill also could come back next year with a different bill number. This may surprise some who are familiar with the rule that if a bill is killed in the legislature's first year, a substantially similar bill cannot be introduced in the second year. But that doesn't apply to tabled bills.

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### ***So what happens next for some of our favorite bills?***

Eventually bills that passed both bodies get to Governor Sununu's desk. He can sign a bill into law, he can veto it, or he can do nothing for 5 business days and the bill becomes law without his signature.

If he vetoes bills that were favored by enough legislators, they may meet in session later this summer/early fall to try to override his veto, as they did recently with the repeal of the death penalty.

### ***What can each of us do about our priority bills?***

Like any elected official, the Governor pays attention to his constituents. You can phone his office, send him email, or send him a paper letter advocating for your position.

This is not the time to be long-winded. Name the bill, state your view, and encourage his support.

Here's Governor Sununu's webpage: <https://www.governor.nh.gov/contact/index.htm>

Click on "Share my Opinion" to send an email.

Phone number is 603-271-2121.

*For paper mail, here is the Governor's address:*

Governor Christopher Sununu

State House

107 North Main Street

Concord, NH 03301

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If you have an idea for a bill, summer is the perfect time to sit down with your representative(s) over iced tea and discuss the possibility. You can find each legislator's contact information on this website:

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

And while we're doing that, we'll remember to thank our legislators for all the work they have done on our behalf at the state house!

In September legislators will submit new bill proposals (called LSRs), which then get fine-tuned for the next session's start in January. League will be looking carefully at election law proposals filed. Other organizations will be doing the same thing with their priorities.

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If you have been following particular bills and don't know what has happened to them, here is how to find out:

Go to the Legislature's home page, and on the left side click on Advanced Bill Status Search.

You should get to this page: [http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill\\_Status/default.aspx](http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_Status/default.aspx)

In the left column, type in the Bill Number like this: hb706 (no spaces) OR

If you don't know the bill's number, type in the key word in the "Title Search" field.

Then click SUBMIT.

Sometimes the key word search will bring up no bills, so try another key word. Sometimes you'll get multiple bills, and just go thru them until you find the one you care about.

Then click on "Bill Status" or "Bill Docket". (the Docket includes more details of past hearings and votes. The Status will tell you when the Governor has signed a passed bill.)

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*The League of Women Voters New Hampshire's weekly Legislative Alert emails will recess for now and resume in January. But if one of our priority bills or a bill of broad public interest comes up for a veto override, we'll try to keep track and let you know. We'll also let you know whether our priority bills have become law.*

*Thank you for following the League's work this year!*

*Visit our website for events and news, candidate forums, and updates on election-related procedures: [LWVNH.org](http://LWVNH.org)*