

Legislative alert for week of April 11-15 from the League of Women Voters NH

House and Senate won't meet in full session until April 20, so hearings are the focus this week. If you care about decriminalizing marijuana or growing your own for medical use, drinking water contamination, education funding, kindergarten, roads and bridges, food stamps, or casino gambling, you'll definitely want to read on.

We ranted a bit last week about the failure of the NH Senate to address the concerns of more than 70 towns that had postponed their elections on March 14 because of the blizzard and needed something from the state to officially ratify their election results. The Senate passed the buck to the House, where the election law committee looked at a very different resolution and deadlocked on it. So back to the Senate on April 6, where finally a solution was agreed upon, although not without accusing just about everybody involved of doing something wrong. That bill (**HB329**) will have to be passed in the House, and then towns can breathe again. A bill for a study committee to create clearer direction for future emergencies will also need to pass. You can read an excellent summary of the issues at WMUR.com. <http://www.wmur.com/article/nh-senate-passes-new-plan-to-allow-towns-to-ratify-snowstorm-delayed-elections/9241802>

The Senate will meet in full session on Thursday, April 20, 10 am. The list of bills to be voted on will be available on 4/13/17. Likely to be on that list is **HB354** to allocate educational adequacy aid to 24 towns that were denied their fair share since 2008. This \$9 million will settle accounts (as the court did in the Dover related case).

Senate Hearings for the coming week:

April 11-15 the **SENATE FINANCE committee** will meet to begin its work on the state budget (note that the House failed to pass the budget on Wednesday, so the ball is in the Senate's court). We thank the members of the Finance committee in advance for the hard work they will be doing over the next several weeks: Senators Gary Daniels Chair, John Reagan, Bob Giuda, Chuck Morse, Lou D'Allesandro, Dan Feltes. These are public hearings, so if you want to attend here is when and where: In State House room 103, Monday 1 pm, Tues. 3 pm, Wed. 3 pm, Fri. 1 pm.

Tuesday, April 11

JUDICIARY State House room 100, 9:00 am: hearing on HB640 to **decriminalize** possession of less than 1 ounce of **marijuana**. This bill passed the House 318-36 on March 8.

ELECTION LAW Leg Office Bldg room 102, 10 am: executive session on a number of election law bills that have already passed the House. League will be there taking notes.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Leg. Office Bldg room 101, 1:30 pm: Hearing on HB472, allowing qualified users of **medical marijuana** to grow their own.

Thursday, April 13 CAPITAL BUDGET committee State House room 103, 9 am: hearing on the state's proposed **Capital Budget**.

The House will next meet in full session on Thursday, April 20, 10 am. The list of bills to be voted on will be available on 4/13/17.

House hearings for the coming week:

Tuesday, April 11

FINANCE, Rooms 210-211, LOB

10:30 am: SB 197-FN-A, making an appropriation to the department of justice to enforce election and lobbying laws. (**League supports** this funding to allow the Attorney General's office to do the investigation needed of voting irregularities)

11:15 a.m. SB 57-FN-A, making appropriations to the department of environmental services for the purposes of funding eligible **drinking water and wastewater projects** under the state aid grant

program and relative to making an appropriation from the drinking water and groundwater trust fund to the department of environmental services to address drinking water contamination in Amherst.

1:00 p.m. SB 56-FN-A-L, relative to **adequate education grant payments** to certain municipalities. (Seems to be the same as HB354 to allocate educational adequacy aid to 24 towns that were denied their fair share since 2008. This \$9 million will settle accounts (as the court did in the Dover related case). HB354 therefore seems likely to pass in the full Senate on April 20—No, we can't figure out why the same bill is both a House and a Senate bill.

PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Room 201, LOB *League admits this caught our attention because of the bumpy roads we are traveling at this time of year. The following two bills may be simply the annual allocation of roads/bridges funding, but when we see notice of a “non-germane amendment” being heard, we get suspicious. As of this writing, the amendment is not available online, so we can't give you any more information.*

1:00 p.m. SB 38-FN, making an appropriation to the department of transportation for **local highway aid and aid for municipal bridges**.

1:15 p.m. Public hearing on **non-germane amendment #2017-1311h to SB 38-FN**, relative to making an appropriation to the Department of Transportation for local highway aid and aid for municipal bridges. The amendment provides an appropriation to the Department of Transportation for local highway aid and municipal bridge aid, revises the allocation of funds from the highway and bridge betterment account, and revises certain provisions related to red list bridges. Copies of the amendment are available in the Sergeant-at-Arms office, Room 318, State House.

Wednesday, April 12

HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND ELDERLY AFFAIRS, Room 205, Leg Office Bldg

1:00 p.m. **SB 7-FN-L**, relative to **eligibility for food stamps** and establishing the Granite Workforce pilot program. (This bill had a rocky road before finally passing in the Senate on March 31. For those who wish to make their opinions known, going to this House hearing is an important step.)

Advance notice of some important hearings the following week:

Tuesday, April 18

EDUCATION, Rooms 305-307, LOB

9:30 a.m. SB 191-FN, establishing the **kindergarten** initiative development support grant program.

1:00 p.m. Or immediately following the public hearing on SB 191-FN, full committee work session on **SB 45, requiring a course in civics** for high school graduation; **SB 43, relative to non-academic surveys** administered by a public school to its students.

WAYS AND MEANS, Room 202-204, LOB

10:00 a.m. SB 242-FN-A-L, relative to video lottery and table gaming. (It's back—the **casino bill**. This time 2 casinos are proposed, even as neighboring MA is set to build their own. So how will this benefit NH, other than raking more money from our own residents to create an undefinable amount of potential state revenue and negative social consequences? Historically the Senate has narrowly passed casino bills—as they did this one on March 23, 13 to 10—and the House has been wary of putting the state in a precarious situation. We hope that holds true again and the House defeats this bill. **League OPPOSES SB242**)