

**Legislative Alert** from League of Women Voters NH – **first week of March 2019** with some hearings already announced for the following week.

**Outcomes from some major bills voted on in the House last week.** Thank you to those who called or emailed your state reps on these bills. Some bills go on to Senate if they passed the House; some go to a second committee in the House, often Finance, for a hearing and then another vote.

HB706, to create an **independent redistricting commission**, passed by a vote of 218-123. League is joyous! Now it's on to House finance for a hearing.

HB709, to **increase state share of public school funding**, passed by a vote of 262-82. Good news. Goes to House Finance. Related to this, HB686 creating a **5% capital gains tax** to be directed to state funding of education, passed 199-143. Also goes to House Finance.

HB184, to **count kindergartners as whole pupils** for purposes of school funding. Passed 203-148. Good news. Goes to a special Friday hearing in House Finance II, March 1 at 10:30.

HB481 to **legalize marijuana**, passed 209-147. Gov. Sununu has promised to veto this bill. (League has no position on marijuana.)

Two bills about **possession of guns in school** were voted on. HB564 passed 194-154, moves to House Criminal Justice committee. HB 101 was tabled.

HB712 to create a **family & medical leave insurance program** passed as amended 199-133.

(my apologies—I mistakenly had the death penalty repeal bill, HB455, on the Feb. 27-28 agenda. It will come up for vote in the full House on March 7, recommended Ought To Pass 11-6 by the Criminal Justice committee.)

*Several bills scheduled for a vote on Feb. 27-28 were moved to March 7 including HCR1, to rescind calls for an Article V convention.*

**Both the House and the Senate will meet in session on Thursday, March 7.** The full list of bills they will vote on is in each respective Calendar. House starts at 9 am. House Calendar [http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC\\_14.pdf](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2019/HC_14.pdf)

Senate Calendar of Feb. 21 lists bills they will vote on March 7. As of this writing, no additional Calendar for March 1 has been issued, as Senate took the last week off. Here is Feb. 21 Calendar link: [http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars\\_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2012.pdf](http://gencourt.state.nh.us/Senate/calendars_journals/calendars/2019/sc%2012.pdf)

**League priority bills and other bills of broad interest to be voted on March 7 in the House:** Call or email your own reps before Thursday to let them know your views.---

**HB 604**, establishing a **commission to assess benefits and costs of a “health care for all”** program for NH. Recommended Ought To Pass as Amended 12-7.

**HB455**, to **repeal the death penalty** in NH. Recommended Ought To Pass by House Criminal Justice 11-6. *League supports repeal.*

**A bunch of Election Law bills:**

**CACR 5**, (a proposed Constitutional amendment) providing that **17 year olds** who will be eligible to vote in the general election be permitted to vote in that election's primary. Recommended 16-3 by House Election Law committee. *League testified in support.*

**CACR 6**, providing that any inhabitant who so desires may vote by **absentee ballot** in primary and general elections. Recommended 12-7. *League supports.*

**HB 611-FN**, allowing voters to vote by **absentee ballot**. Recommended Ought To Pass 12-8. Similar to CACR 6 in intent, but not requiring a change in the constitution. *League supports.*

**HB 105-FN**, essentially repealing SB3 passed in 2017, **voter eligibility** relative to **domicile residency and voter registration**. Recommended Ought To Pass 12-8. The majority states in part “The majority feels returning to the more straightforward voter registration process will eliminate problems created by the changes for many eligible voters and also for our hardworking election officials.” *League sued the state over SB3. We have won two preliminary injunctions in our favor. But the suit has not yet had a full trial. Passing this bill would overturn SB3. League supports this bill to overturn SB3!*

**HB 106, voter eligibility** terms “resident,” “inhabitant,” “residence,” and “residency.” Recommended Ought to Pass 12-8. This bill would overturn 2018’s HB1264 that would put an unnecessary burden on eligible voters who intend to live in the state for a specific term (such as a hospital intern, military families, college students). *League supports this bill.*

HB 364, permitting qualifying patients and designated caregivers to **grow their own cannabis for therapeutic use**, in specified small quantities. Voted Ought To Pass 17-4.

**HB 608, expanding the law against discrimination based on gender identity** to other areas of the law prohibiting discrimination. Voted Ought to Pass as Amended 16-4. “The majority of the committee believes this is an extension of the Protection From Discrimination [that was signed into law last year]” The minority makes this interesting observation: “The continual addition of smaller and smaller groups is counterproductive and dilutes the stated intent of the bill. A better approach would be to eliminate the classes entirely and recognize the inherent dignity of all people.”

**HB 622-FN**, prohibiting collective bargaining agreements that require employees to join or contribute to a labor union. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 12-6. **Right to work** law again.

**HB 504**, relative to **election related amendments to the US Constitution**. “This bill recognizes that the influence of money and gerrymandering have increasingly become highly corrupting factors in our political system – nationally, and locally – and calls on Congress to pass Constitutional amendments to help resolve these issues.” Recommended Ought To Pass 8-6.

**HCR1**, to **rescind calls for an Article V convention**. Recommended Ought To Pass 8-6. *League opposes Article V conventions based on our 2015 national League study, so we support this bill to nullify previous calls for a convention. See p. 15 of the Calendar for the arguments, in which League is mentioned as a supporter of this bill.*

**HJR 1**, supporting efforts to **develop wind power off the NH coast**. Recommended Ought To Pass 12-8. This is a resolution: “The committee applauds Governor Sununu’s January 2, 2019 letter to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) requesting initiation of a multi-governmental effort to develop offshore wind energy. Through this resolution, the General Court urges the Governor to make a formal request of BOEM to form a task force and stakeholder process for regional offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine.”

**HCR 5**, requesting the US Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to **reverse the ruling of the US Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission**. Recommended Ought To Pass as Amended 11-7. See pp. 19-20 of the Calendar.

**HB 198, repealing the prohibition on texting while driving**. Ought To Pass as Amended 15-3. “This bill, as amended, clarifies the prohibition against using mobile electronic devices while driving and increases the penalties imposed for violations of such prohibition. It also repeals RSA 265:105-a, which only refers to texting and was difficult to enforce; and reinforces a newer, more comprehensive RSA 265-79-c, commonly known as the hands-free law.”

**HB158**, requires the department of health and human services to publish an annual report consisting of an aggregate statistical summary of all induced terminations of pregnancy

performed in New Hampshire. This report shall be available to the public. Opponents argue that the many details required in the report threaten healthcare privacy. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 11-8.

**Three proposed constitutional amendments related to taxation:**

**CACR 10**, (proposed constitutional amendment) providing that revenue from any **state income tax** shall be returned to the cities, towns, school districts, and counties to assist in **property tax relief. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 16-1.**

**CACR 11**, providing that a **broad-based sales tax shall be prohibited**. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 12-8. The minority makes this interesting statement: "The minority is in favor of the Ought to Pass motion because we felt that a statewide vote would be the best poll we could take to gauge how the voters of New Hampshire truly feel about the potential imposition of a broad-based tax."

**CACR 12**, providing that an **income tax on personal income shall be prohibited**. Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 12-8. Minority makes similar argument as CACR 11. **HB 676-FN-A-LOCAL, repealing the state education property tax.** Recommended Inexpedient To Legislate 16-1, based on no proposed off-setting revenue.

**In the Senate, these bills of broad public interest or League priority will be voted on March 7.**

**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). *League supports*

**SB309 gradually increases the school stabilization grants.** Recommended Ought To Pass 5-0.

**SB 280 school funding** recommended Inexpedient to Legislate 4-1

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

**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. *League opposes*

**Bills to have hearings in committees in the next week or two:**

To keep these alerts short enough that you are willing to skim thru them, we will not usually include work sessions or executive sessions unless they are League priority bills.

**Hearings of interest coming up:** House Finance is working overtime now. Check the Calendar if you're following particular bills they are considering. Thank you for your service, Finance Committee members.

**Tuesday, March 5**

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS LOB rm 202

1:00 pm **HB 632**, this bill would end the Education Tax Credit Scholarship program, a voucher program set up several years ago to give money to students to attend private (mostly religious) schools and home schools. This hearing is continued from Feb. 5. The money comes from business taxes, at each business's choice, thus reducing money coming in to the General Fund. *League opposes using public money for private and religious schools, thus supports this bill to end the program.*

HOUSE ELECTION LAW, Room 308, LOB 9:30 am Subcommittee work session on **HB 408-L**, relative to postponement of town meetings and local elections., followed by executive session.

### **Wednesday, March 6**

HOUSE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Rooms 301-303, LOB

10:00 a.m. **HB 102**, municipal ordinances regarding the use of plastics.

10:30 a.m. **HB 559**, enabling municipalities to ban single-use sources of plastic pollution.

11:00 a.m. **HB 312**, municipal regulation of tiny houses.

2:30 p.m. **CACR 4**, (proposed constitutional amendment) providing that the people of the state may enact local laws that protect health, safety, and welfare.

2:40 p.m. **CACR 8**, providing that the people of the state may enact local laws that protect health.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION, Rooms 201-203, LOB

10:00 a.m. **HB 669-FN**, gender identity information included on drivers' licenses & ID cards.

11:00 a.m. **HB 397-FN**, drivers' licenses for residents who don't have a social security card.

SENATE ELECTION LAW, room 102 LOB

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

### **Wed., March 13**

SENATE ELECTION LAW LOB rm 102

9 am;, exec session on several bills including the independent redistricting commission bill

11:00 am, **SB 67** that would (sort of) lessen the impact of last year's voter restriction law HB1264. This bill carves out groups of residents who don't intend to remain in NH indefinitely – think military families stationed here, medical interns & residents, college students – to be considered residents except for requirements about motor vehicle registration. Related HB106 – which simply changed the wording of domicile/residency back to the distinctions before 2017-- came out of House Election Law recommended Ought To Pass 12-8, will be voted on March 7. *League supports efforts to overturn HB1264.*