

Legislative alert from League of Women Voters NH, for early March 2020

The Senate will meet in session on Thursday, March 5, at 10 am. Among the bills they will vote on are these of League or broad public interest:

On the Consent Calendar (meaning recommended unanimously by the appropriate committee)
SB 522, requiring providers to get a **verbal acknowledgment for an initial prescription for opioids**
Ought To Pass As Amended

SB 600-FN-L, requiring **medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders for prisoners** incarcerated in a county correctional facility “...will require medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders for prisoners incarcerated in a county correctional facility. The Committee amendment changes the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2021.” Ought To Pass As Amended

On the Regular Calendar (likely to be debate on the floor)

SB 493-FN-A, register of deeds fees used to support the **land and community heritage investment program (LCHIP)**, and establishing a committee to study the economic impact of land conservation and to review the LCHIP surcharge. Ought to Pass, Vote 4-0.

SB 487, **repealing the housing appeals board** and establishing a commission to advance **affordable housing** in NH. Inexpedient to Legislate, Vote 4-0.

The House will be in session on Thursday, March 5 at 1:00 pm House will also meet on Wednesday **March 11** and Thursday **March 12** at 9:00 am both days.

Among the bills to be voted on are a number carried over from Feb. 20. Here we list some League priority bills or bills of broad public interest. We expect more bills will be added to the list next Friday for March 11 & 12.

SB 7-FN-LOCAL, establishing the secure modern accurate registration technology act (SMART ACT). MAJORITY: OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. MINORITY: INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. Vote 13-7. “This bill as amended would implement an **automatic voter registration system** named the Secure Modern Accurate Registration Technology Act (SMART). At the time a citizen applies for or renews a driver license at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) they would be automatically registered to vote unless the citizen opts out of being registered to vote...” [*League supports this move into the 21st century*]

CACR 14, Providing that the state shall not infringe or unduly inconvenience the right of **reproductive medical decisions**. MAJORITY: INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. MINORITY: OUGHT TO PASS. Vote 18-2. [*note; this is a proposed constitutional amendment*]

HB 1699-FN-A, relative to a **tax on electronic cigarettes**. MAJORITY: OUGHT TO PASS. MINORITY: INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE vote 12-8. “This bill proposes to tax electronic cigarettes at a unitary rate of 40% on the wholesale price of nicotine-based e-liquid, replacing the bifurcated rates enacted as part of last year’s budget bill of 8% of e-liquid wholesale price for open systems and 30 cents per milliliter of e-liquid for closed systems. Devices used for vaping e-liquids will not be taxed under this proposal unless sold as part of a package containing both a device and e-liquid. Any e-liquid that is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for smoking cessation purposes is exempt from the current tax and will be exempt from the proposed 40% tax, but there has been no such FDA approval to date...” (see p 10 of the [Calendar](#) for a full rationale on both sides)

Commission and committee hearings are open to the public. Many committees are holding **Executive Sessions** this week, as we are approaching **Crossover** date. See the end of this email for explanations of those terms and for information on **how to access the text of a bill**.

Monday, March 2

COMMISSION TO STUDY **SCHOOL FUNDING** (RSA 193-E:2-e), Rooms 210-211, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am Regular meeting

Tuesday, March 3

SENATE FINANCE, Room 100, State House

1:00 pm HB 712-FN, **family and medical leave insurance program.**

1:45 pm SB 730-FN-L, establishing the **granite state paid family leave plan.**

HOUSE COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Room 302, Legislative Office Bldg

10:30 am Executive session on a number of bills including some related to **prescription drug pricing, single use plastics, etc.** See p. 12 of the [Calendar](#) for the complete list.

HOUSE **ELECTION LAW**, Room 308, Legislative Office Bldg

11:00 am Executive session on a large number of bills (possibly continuing on Wednesday) including these League has been following: HB 1534, establishing a commission to study the **creation of online voter registration** for the 2022 state elections; HB 1665-FN-A, establishing an **independent advisory redistricting commission** [*League priority bill this year—we support the amendment worked out by the committee*]; HB 1668-FN-L, relative to **early voting** for persons with disabilities; HB 1672-FN, allowing voters to vote by **absentee ballot.**

HOUSE **ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE**, Room 303, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am Executive session on bill including HB 1319, prohibiting the **siting of new landfills or expansions of existing landfills** near state parks, national parks, or United States Department of Agriculture forest land; HB 1373, establishing a committee to study the use of **Styrofoam** in schools, hospitals, and government buildings; HB 1388, prohibiting the **sale of cats, dogs, and rabbits** in retail stores; HB 1422-FN, establishing a moratorium on the issuance of permits for **new landfills or the expansion of existing landfills** for the purpose of studying the creating of municipal waste districts; HB 1630-FN, relative to pet vendors.

HOUSE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Room 301, Legislative Office Bldg

9:00 am HB 1160-L, allowing municipalities to collect an occupancy fee from operators of **local room rentals** [to increase local revenue]

10:00 am Executive session on a number of **bills relating to town warrants and town budgets**, including HB 1309, relative to the effect of warrant articles; HB 1105-L, relative to warrant articles in official ballot town, school district, or village district meetings; HB 1173-L, relative to the use of an official ballot in towns; HB 1115, relative to the discharge of a firearm in the compact part of a city or town; HB 1211, relative to a capital reserve fund in towns under the control of the budget committee; HB 1352, relative to municipal budget meetings; HB 1451, relative to the definition of contracts relative to official ballot default budgets.

HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Room 201, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am Continued public hearing on HB 2020, **the 10-year transportation improvement plan.**

11:00 am Full committee work session on HB 2020, r the 10-year transportation improvement plan, continuing on Thursday too [*As we drive over frost-heaved local and state roads this week, we thank the Public Works Committee for their work trying to prioritize our roadway needs, no easy task.*]

HOUSE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENERGY, Room 304, LOB10:00 am Executive session on a large number of **energy and water quality** bills. See p. 16 of the [Calendar](#) for the complete list.

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS, Room 202, Legislative Office Bldg

1:00 pm Executive session on a number of bills including CACR 17, providing that a **new state broad-based tax** may be enacted only to reduce property taxes; HB 1477-FN, rate of the tax for cigarettes; HB 1646-FN, relative to **historic racing** [*League opposes HB1646, an expansion of gambling which could turn charitable gaming venues around the state into slots parlors*]

Wednesday, March 4

SENATE ELECTION LAW AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, Room 102, Legislative Office Bldg

9:00 am SB 483, relative to the **property tax exemption for educational organizations.**

9:15 am SB 484, establishing a commission to study **payments in lieu of taxes.**

9:30 am SB 516, relative to a **property tax credit for active duty military personnel**.

10:00 am SB 530, relative to property tax exemptions for **renewable energy** systems.

Executive session may follow on two bills related to **zoning**: SB458 would prohibit any municipality from restricting **short-term rentals** of single- and two-family dwellings in any zoning district. SB482 would require every municipality to allow “**tiny houses**” as a matter of right in every zoning district where single-family dwellings are permitted. (Or these bills may be exec'd the following week)

HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, Room 204, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am Executive session on a number of bills including HB 1608-FN, **prohibiting** the manufacture, sale, transfer, and possession of **large capacity ammunition feeding devices**

HOUSE ELECTION LAW, Room 308, Legislative Office Bldg

11:00 am Continued executive session on bills listed under Tuesday's meeting including the **independent redistricting commission bill** HB1665, which *League supports*.

HOUSE JUDICIARY, Room 208, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am Executive session on a number of bills including these: HB 1226, prohibiting **surveillance** by the state on public ways or sidewalks; HB 1236, relative to the expectation of **privacy**; HB 1376, establishing a civil penalty for unauthorized sharing of **electronic location information**; HB 1475-FN, prohibiting **abortions** after detection of fetal heartbeat; HB 1640-FN, relative to parental notification prior to **abortion**; HB 1659-FN, relative to patient directed care and patient's rights with regard to **end-of-life decisions**; HB 1675-FN, relative to the right of any infant born alive to medically appropriate and reasonable care and treatment; HB 1678-FN, relative to prohibiting **abortion** in certain cases

HOUSE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Room 301, Legislative Office Bldg

10:00 am HB 1218-FN, relative to **net energy metering limits** for customer generators and the purchase of output of limited electrical energy producers.

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS, Room 202, Legislative Office Bldg

1:45 pm HB 1603-FN, establishing the **per and polyfluoroalkyl substances contamination remediation and mitigation** revolving loan and grant program and fund. (work session on this Thursday at 11:00 am.)

Thursday, March 5

HOUSE COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Room 302, Legislative Office Bldg

9:45 am SB 248-FN, increasing the age for sales and possession of **tobacco** products (exec session on this on March 17 at 1 pm)

HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, Room 204, Legislative Office Bldg

10:30 am HB 1662-FN, relative to the purchase, use, and possession of **tobacco products and e-cigarettes**.

Wednesday, March 11

SENATE ELECTION LAW AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, Room 102, Legislative Office Bldg

9:00 am SB 457-L, establishing **communications** districts.

9:30 am SB 459, determining access to **broadband**.

9:45 am SB 424-L, property tax exemption for **solar energy systems**.

10:00 am SB 559, municipal **broadband infrastructure bonds**.

Tips of the week: In **Executive Sessions**, the committee that earlier heard each bill discusses the bill thoroughly. Questions may be asked of agency heads or staff. The public may observe but has no opportunity to speak or to register an opinion. Amendments may be proposed which need to be voted on.

Then the committee votes (roll call) on how to recommend the bill to the entire body. The majority party members' names are called first, then minority, so it is easy to see if the vote is along party lines. They will vote on one of these possible recommendations: **Ought To Pass (Ought To Pass)** or **Ought To Pass as Amended (Ought To Pass-A)** mean precisely that. **Inexpedient To Legislate (ITL)** means

kill the bill. **Interim Study** or **Re-refer to Committee** means they want to work on it more, but in the second year of a session (which 2020 is) it can mean let this die a quiet death.

Why so many Executive Sessions on today's list? Because We are nearing **Crossover**, this year March 26, when the originating body (House for bills numbered HB..., Senate for bills titled SB...) must act on a bill. If they don't do so by March 26, it can't "crossover" to the other body for consideration.

How to Find the Text of a Bill you care about: Go to the <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/> website. On the left side find "Advanced Bill Search" and click. When the box comes up, put the bill number in the space indicated. Be sure to use either hb or sb plus the numerals. Then click Submit. Then you'll see the bill and its title. Click on Bill Docket if you want to find out the next hearing or action. If an amendment has passed on the bill, you'll see it highlighted near the end of the information. Click on the amendment number to see the text. To see the original wording of the bill go to Bill Text PDF instead of Bill Docket.