

## Legislative Alert Feb. 13-16 League of Women Voters NH

**Both the NH House and NH Senate will meet in session at 10 am on Thursday, Feb. 15.** They will begin in joint session to hear Gov. Sununu's State of the State address, then at 11:30 am or so go into separate sessions.

**The House postponed its session on Wed., Feb. 7, because of the storm.** They worked hard at their Thursday session, but leftover bills will be addressed on Feb. 15.

**Below are some bills we listed last time that they didn't yet vote on, so citizens have another chance to make your views known to your own state reps.**

**SB 33**, closes the loophole allowing independent spending groups to avoid registering with the Secretary of State and filing expenditure reports. Committee recommends Interim Study 18-2, which unfortunately would mean any new reporting requirements would not go into effect until well after the 2018 elections. **League supports Ought to Pass instead on this high priority campaign finance reform bill.**

**HB 1511-FN**, relative to the death of a fetus for the purpose of certain homicide charges. Majority vote of 13-7 for Interim Study. Majority explains that SB 66, defining fetus in terms of "another," went into effect January 1, 2018. There has not been time to evaluate the consequences/effectiveness of SB 66. This bill tightens the intent of SB 66 by reducing the gestational age for criminal assault charges from 20 to 8 weeks.

**HB 1566**, prohibiting open carry of a firearm in certain public places. Criminal Justice/Public Safety committee recommends Inexpedient to Legislate 12-8. They argue "it is against the constitution to tell private bars, doctor's offices, and churches that open carrying of a firearm is prohibited. Those businesses and churches [already] have the right to ban open carrying of a firearm if they wish. For many years NH citizens have had the right to carry a firearm in public unconcealed. This bill is not needed."

**HB 1355**, establishing a commission to study adaptation of the tax structure of the state to economic and demographic change. Split 13-10 in favor of Inexpedient to Legislate. League did not cover the hearings but our first impression is that studying tax structure is a good thing. Interesting reasons given on both side on p. 33 of last week's Calendar.

**HB 1821-FN**, repealing Keno. Inexpedient to Legislate, 15-8 split on this along interesting lines. Both sides do not want to repeal Keno (Keno is allowed thru law passed last year), but the minority want to maintain state funding—irrespective of how much revenue Keno produces for the state—for full-day kindergarten. Minority amendment would "de-link Keno revenues from full-day kindergarten. The minority supports this part of the bill believing that communities providing full-day kindergarten should be able to do so knowing that the amount of state aid that they will receive will not be subject to the ups and downs of Keno play. Accordingly, the minority believes that the majority's inexpedient to legislate recommendation goes too far and urges its rejection so that the minority's amendment may be considered. The minority amendment strips out the part of HB 1821 that would repeal Keno and leaves in place the part that de-links Keno revenues from full-day kindergarten funding." **League opposes linking expanded gambling with education funding, so we support the minority view here and would like the minority's amendment to pass.**

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In addition a number of bills heard in the Science, Technology & Energy committee are on the Feb. 15 docket for the House, but League has not studied them in order to offer a position.

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**The Senate will vote on a number of bills on Feb. 15**, many of them on the Consent Calendar (meaning committee recommendation is unanimous, so unlikely to be debated). On the Regular Calendar are several bills of interest, including **SB362**, requiring disclosure of federal income tax returns by presidential & VP candidates. (House has heard a similar bill). Committee recommends Inexpedient to Legislate 3-2. **SB440** would expand civil penalties for violations of campaign finance laws; committee recommended Interim Study 3-1. **League Supports Ought to Pass!** **SB 394**, enabling municipalities to establish term limit for elected officials; unanimous committee recommendation of Inexpedient to Legislate.

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**Among the significant bills voted on in the House on Feb. 8:--here are some results:**

**HB 628-FN**, family and medical leave insurance program. Committee had recommended Inexpedient to Legislate, 11-9. House voted to pass this bill anyway.

**HB 1749**, the bill that would have eliminated selectboard's authority to restrict the firing of guns on town property-and would have subjected them to fines and removal from office for attempting to do so-was put on hold for further study yesterday. By a roll call vote of 239-71, the House voted to send the bill to interim study. The House Municipal and County Government Committee will consider the issue over the summer and fall. The committee chair promised the study would be taken seriously, with the intent of new legislation if warranted, and also stated that it is a broader bill than just guns laws.

**HB 1793** to create a single-payer health plan was defeated on a voice vote.

**HB 1773**, the public funding of elections bill that League and our colleagues in the NH Campaign for Voting Rights supported, was defeated 214-135. The big issue is how to fund such a campaign voucher system, but we still believe this major campaign reform initiative is worth pursuing in future. A positive note: House Election Law chair Rep. Barbara Griffin Barbara Griffin has volunteered to be a member of an *ad hoc* committee to see how HB 1773 can be improved.

**HB 1531**, commission to study the performance of the Medicaid managed care program, was defeated on a voice vote.

**HB 1811**, would have reauthorized expanded Medicaid in its current form as a premium assistance program, went to Interim Study by a 192-154 vote. Confusion at the federal level about healthcare programs is at least part of the reason behind the vote.

**HB 1101**, regulating groundwater pollution caused by polluting emissions in the air, passed on a voice vote and is going to Science, Technology, Energy committee next.

**HB 1763**, establishing a road usage fee for drivers of fuel-efficient cars passed with an amendment 194-132, is on to Finance next.

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On to **committee hearings for the week**: With Thursday a session day, committees will meet only Tuesday and Wednesday.

## **TUESDAY, Feb. 13**

House Education Committee LOB room 207, beginning at 10 am, executive session on a number of bills including some about cooperative school districts, assessments and standards. (League will observe.)

House Election Law LOB 308, beginning at 11 am, executive session on 3 CACRs, other bills of interest. (League will observe.)

Senate Election Law LOB 102, beginning at 10 am, executive session probably including SB438 re postponement of local elections, of great interest to League. (League will observe.)

Senate Education LOB 103

9:15 SB525, prohibiting higher ed and adult ed financial assistance to students who are not legal residents, plus several other bills will be heard.

House Finance LOB 209 11:00 work session on SB 193, school voucher bill (League will observe)

House Municipal/County Govt LOB 301

9:00 am work session on CACR 19, the right of local govt to make laws to protect health, safety and welfare. Bill was heard last week before a packed room. Oddly, they have allowed only ½ hour for this work session!

1:30 pm HB 1702, management of Gunstock Area (of interest to members & new friends in Laconia area)

House Public Works & Highways, LOB 201

10 am HB2018, the 10 year transportation improvement plan. Hearing, then work session.

House Judiciary, Representatives Hall in the State House, 10 am continued hearing on HB 1319, prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity. League has signed in supporting this civil rights bill.

**WEDNESDAY, Feb. 14.** Kiss your sweetheart, then consider attending one of these hearings: House Education LOB 207, 10 am – more executive session. (League will observe.)

House Municipal/County Govt LOB 301

9:00 work session on CACR 19, the right of local govt to make laws to protect health, safety and welfare. Continued from Tuesday. *Is anyone available to observe & report to League?*

House Judiciary LOB 208, 10 am HB1721, coerced abortions. Continued from last week.

House State-Federal Relations LOB 206

10 am Work session on several resolutions, including HCR 12 applying to Congress for a term limits constitutional amendment and HCR 10 applying for an Article V convention. *Is anyone free to observe on behalf of League, keep us informed of the arguments?*

**FRIDAY, Feb. 16**

COMMITTEE TO STUDY EDUCATION FUNDING/ ADEQUATE EDUCATION

1:00 p.m. Room 209, LOB Regular Meeting (League regularly observes these meetings.)

To do: We will track HB 1485, heard in House Judiciary 1/24, but it has not yet been exec'd (that is, the committee has not decided how to recommend the bill to the full House.) This bill would make landlords happy, with 2 months security deposit instead of the usual one, plus first month's rent. But it will create a significant problem for those trying to rent an apartment.