

Legislative Alert Feb. 26 to March 3, 2018

As many of the House and Senate committees are taking some hard-earned time off this coming week, the League of Women Voters would also like to spend time with kids and grandkids on school vacation and maybe even wash the car. Not much happening at the State House, so this notice is short.

But if you share the anger and anguish of many of us about the latest case of school shootings, you might want to contact your Congressional Representatives. You can send email via their websites, which are listed here:

To send an email message to President Donald Trump, use the webform on this website:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact#page>

Representative Carol Shea-Porter (District 1) <https://shea-porter.house.gov/>

Dover Office: 660 Central Ave., Dover, NH 03820 Toll-free phone: 1-888-216-5373

Representative Ann McLane Kuster (District 2) <https://kuster.house.gov/contact>

Concord NH: 18 N. Main St., Concord 03301 phone:(603)226-1002 FAX: (603) 226-1010

Nashua NH: 70 E. Pearl St., Nashua 03060 phone:(603) 595-2006 FAX: (603) 595-2016

Senator Maggie Hassan <https://www.hassan.senate.gov/content/contact-senator>

Manchester office: 1200 Elm Street, Suite 2, Manchester, NH 03101 Phone: (603) 622-2204

Senator Jeanne Shaheen <http://www.shaheen.senate.gov/>

Manchester NH: 2 Wall Street, Suite 220, Manchester, NH 03101 phone:(603) 647-7500

Dover NH: 340 Central Avenue, Suite 205, Dover, NH 03820 phone: (603) 750-3004

Back to NH government: An upcoming Senate bill demands our attention. Coming up for a hearing in the Senate Judiciary (but not yet scheduled) is **SB 593, a bill to repeal New Hampshire's death penalty statute**. It changes the penalty for a capital crime from death to life in prison without possibility of parole. The bill has broad bipartisan support, with 13 senators already listed as co-sponsors. Yes, that is enough to pass the bill in the NH Senate! The full co-sponsor list (House and Senate) includes: Sen. Avard, Dist 12; Sen. Daniels, Dist 11; Sen. Ward, Dist 8; Sen. Giuda, Dist 2; Sen. French, Dist 7; Sen. Woodburn, Dist 1; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Fuller Clark, Dist 21; Sen. Feltes, Dist 15; Sen. Soucy, Dist 18; Sen. Hennessey, Dist 5; Sen. Kahn, Dist 10; Sen. Lasky, Dist 13; Rep. McGuire, Merr. 29; Rep. O'Leary, Hills. 13; Rep. Cushing, Rock. 21; Rep. Kotowski, Merr. 24; Rep. Souza, Hills. 43

League urges support for passage of SB 593. The League of Women Voters has a national position opposing the death penalty. The fiscal note for SB 593 points out that no one can know the number of future capital murder trials, but it is clear that the costs of a trial with the death penalty off the table are a fraction of the cost of capital trials and their mandated appeals process when the death penalty is involved. (The state pays for both prosecution and defense in these expensive trials.) Fiscal details can be found in the note at the end of the bill. Here is a link to the text of the bill:

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2018&id=1723&txtFormat=html

The Senate and House will next meet in session the first full week of March.

House will meet for all three days—March 6, 7, and 8, beginning at 10 am Tuesday, 9:30 am Wed. & Thurs. The list of bills they will vote will appear in the March 2 House calendar, so we have no alerts at this time.

The Senate will meet on Thursday, March 8, beginning at 10 am. Bills they will consider include the following of interest to League. It looks like a light session:

SB 438, relative to the postponement of local elections. Committee recommends Ought to Pass with Amendment, 4-0. League supports the concept of standardizing procedures when a local election must be postponed because of a weather or other emergency, but we object to making the Secretary of State the decision maker in what is a local matter. An amendment proposed by the NH Municipal Assn would take care of that problem.

SB 527-FN-L, re absentee voting. Committee recommends Ought to Pass with Amendment, vote 2-0. This bill includes signature verification in the process for absentee ballots but allows exception for those with disabilities who need assistance completing a ballot and for those who submit ID when applying for an absentee ballot. The NH-ACLU objected to the original bill, as did LWVNH in testimony, when a photocopy of an approved photo ID was to be submitted with the application. League believed that would be a deterrent to persons with disabilities and to elderly persons who no longer drive and may have no easy way to get photocopies made of IDs. With that requirement removed in the amended version, and if ACLU sees the original problems address, we are inclined to let this new process go forward and see how it works.

Committee Hearings week of Feb. 27-March 1

In the Senate, apparently **no committees will hold hearings or executive sessions during the vacation week.**

In the following week of March 6-8 only a few Senate committees have already scheduled executive sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday and a few hearings on non-priority bills (from the League's perspective) that have already passed the House. More will be added in the March 2 Calendar.

In the House, just a few committee hearings on **Tuesday, Feb. 27**

1:30 pm FINANCE in LOB room 212, work session on the family & medical leave program

10:00 am HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES in LOB 305-307, work session on HB 1813 & HB 1816 re Medicaid Expansion and managed care of Medicaid.

9:00 am MUNICIPAL/COUNTY GOVT in LOB 301, work session on CACR19, the right of localities to govern themselves by making laws that do not contradict state laws.

10:00 am TRANSPORTATION executive session

Note to our members and friends re the timing of these Legislative Alerts: On Friday mornings the Calendars for the following week are available online and in paper copy. That is when we prepare our alerts. Unless we happened to be in a committee hearing where the chair announced the next meeting, or someone on the committee alerts us when a bill is likely to be heard, we don't know until the Friday before the hearing what bills will be covered. In any case, it is not official which bills will be heard or which bills the House or Senate will vote on until the Calendar comes out.

All of which is to explain that we wish we could give you more advance notice of bills and hearings that we focus on, but we can't.

To follow bills that you care about personally, you can always go to the General Court website and look up specific bills or find the committee that will hear the bill. You can also check out the weekly Calendars yourself. That website is <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>