

## League of Women Voters legislative alert for week of Feb. 6-9, 2018

### **The NH House will meet in full session on Wed., Feb. 7, and likely continue on Feb. 8.**

The bills on the Consent Calendar (the committee that heard the bill voted unanimously or near unanimously on its recommendation) is 15 pages long, but will be dealt with quickly unless a House member pulls a bill off consent for discussion. No League priority bills.

Bills that will be discussed on the floor of the House, in which League has particular interest or there has been great public interest, include those listed below. Page numbers from the Calendar are listed in parentheses in case you want to read the pro-con committee statements for yourself. All of the bills to be voted on, their amendments, and the majority/minority reports can be found in this week's House Calendar:

[http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2018/HC\\_5.pdf](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2018/HC_5.pdf)

If you wish to express your views on any bills to your own representative(s), now is the time to call or email them. If possible mention the bill number and the general topic of the bill, identify yourself as a constituent, and then ask them to support or oppose the bill.

*(League chose the bills as being of particular interest to League and the public.)*

**HB 628-FN, family and medical leave insurance program.** Vote nearly split (11-9) Inexpedient to Legislate. Hot topic in the state, will have lots of argument. (p 20)

**HB 1793-FN-A, establishing a New Hampshire single payer health care system.** Another close vote in committee (10-8) Inexpedient to Legislate with the minority arguing the issue should be sent for further study. Cost is a big issue in the ITL decision. (pp 20-21) **(League would prefer this bill go to Interim Study, come up with a good plan for NH. Affordable healthcare for all is a national League position.)**

**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, but will accept interim study rather than see the bill killed.**

**HB 1773-FN-A, providing for public funding of elections** for governor, executive council, and state senate. This was a priority bill for the NH Campaign for Voting Rights, in which League participates. The House Election Law committee voted 16-3 Inexpedient to Legislate, with a minority vote for Interim Study. **League and others urge this bill go to Interim Study and will continue to work on campaign finance reform.** (pp. 21-22)

**HB 1531, establishing a commission to study the performance of the Medicaid managed care program** and making an appropriation therefor. Vote was 12-9 Inexpedient to Legislate, with the majority saying in part they "grant that the data this commission would study would be valuable. We do have significant reservations regarding the amount appropriated...[and] we are concerned passage of this bill would complicate efforts to negotiate the future of expanded Medicaid." (p.23)

**HB 1811-FN-A, relative to the New Hampshire health protection program.** Majority recommends Interim Study 12-8. Majority argues in part “This bill would reauthorize expanded Medicaid in its current form as a premium assistance program. It does include cost savings from expansion of the definition of “medically frail” amounting to \$65.97 on a per member per month basis, per Milliman data. It does not include conversion of the program to a managed care program amounting to cost savings of \$436.12 per member per month. The majority believes more work is required to create a program that the taxpayers can support and therefore recommends Interim Study.”

The Minority says in part “This bill reauthorizes the New Hampshire Health Protection Program, New Hampshire’s unique program that provides health insurance coverage for over 50,000 low income adults who do not qualify for Medicaid. If not reauthorized, this successful program will end on December 31...” (p.24)

**HB 1749-FN, relative to the state’s authority to prohibit or regulate firearms and relative to the selectmen’s authority to manage town property.** *(This bill made headlines last week, so we are copying in full the argument for Interim Study recommended by the Municipal and County Government committee 18-2.)* “This bill came about as the result of infractions of state statute by local officials. This bill should have been directed at any violation of state law by local officials, governing bodies, etc. Since existing statutes don’t specify a fine or punishment for such violations, the Attorney General does not consider it a crime and, therefore, prosecution is not administered. This bill could have corrected that issue. During the initial presentation at the first hearing in Representatives Hall, the bill’s sponsor had an amendment to make changes to the bill. Since then, two other major amendments have been filed and there is a report that a third may be in the process. The committee felt this bill had merit and should not be found Inexpedient to Legislate but, at the same time, the details in the amendments needed attention, which could only be ironed out in a subcommittee. Since the bill was an early bill, the only reasonable course of action was to refer it to interim study. This way the bill is not lost, the amendments can be considered and possibly combined, and the entire bill can receive the attention it deserves. It is expected to result in a correctly worded report to be presented as a bill for future action.” **The League supports Interim Study** on this important bill. From statements we heard in the committee’s executive session on Jan. 31, we believe that they will do a serious study over the summer and fall.

**HB 1101-FN, regulating groundwater pollution caused by polluting emissions in the air.** Committee voted unanimously Ought to Pass with Amendment, so we don’t know why this excellent water protection bill is not on the Consent Calendar. **League supports.** (p.25)

**HB 1592-FN,** requiring the commissioner of the department of environmental services to revise rules relative to **arsenic contamination in drinking water.** By a vote of 15-2 the committee recommends Ought to Pass with Amendment, but the minority have a conflicting amendment they will support with more stringent regulations. League did not attend these hearings, but we support water pollution regulations, will leave it to the better informed to determine the ppb allowed. (pp. 25-26)

**HB 1763-FN-A, establishing a road usage fee** and making an appropriation therefor. Committee recommends Ought to Pass with Amendment 23-0. Drivers of fuel-efficient cars may not like it, but this bill evens the cost to maintain roads in NH, currently coming from gas taxes and under this bill also coming from a fee charged at registration to cars with a US (EPA) fuel economy rating of more than 20 mpg. Revenue collected would be credited to a

newly established separate account within the highway fund that would be non-lapsing and continually appropriated to the Department of Transportation for the maintenance, design, rehabilitation, and construction of state roads and bridges, including right-of-way acquisition. *(Not sure why this is not on Consent Calendar; perhaps because it is a new fee?)* (p. 28)

**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. (p. 31)

**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 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 the 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 amendment to pass.** (p. 34)

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Now—on to **hearings being held by committees on other bills.** Complete list is in the House Calendar, beginning on p. 34. Senate has mostly work/executive sessions scheduled.

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

Senate ELECTION LAW AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS Room 102, LOB  
9:00 a.m. EXECUTIVE SESSION ON PENDING LEGISLATION (League will observe—may include **SB 438**, the bill that would require moderators to ask the Secretary of State for permission to postpone town meeting voting sessions in the event of hazardous weather. )

House CHILDREN AND FAMILY LAW, Room 206, LOB A number of interesting bills beginning at 10 am, followed by a work session in the afternoon including the marriage age bill. Anyone want to cover them for League, report back?

EDUCATION, Room 207, LOB

10:00 a.m. Presentation by Department of Education on Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

10:30 a.m. Subcommittee work session on HB 1493 (assessments), HB 1494 (academic standards), HB 1495 (adequate education), HB 1496 (performance based accountability), HB 1497 (accountability), HB 1674, adding computer science and digital skills required for an adequate education.

FINANCE - DIVISION II, Room 209, LOB continues its work sessions on education bills:

10:00 a.m. HB 609-FN-A, establishing a student career and college investment program

11:00 a.m. HB 1814-FN-L, additional education grants to municipalities for restoring reductions in stabilization grants

1:00 p.m. SB 193-FN, the school "voucher" bill

MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Room 301, LOB

2:00 p.m. CACR 19, relating to right to govern. Providing that the people of the state may enact local laws that protect health, safety and welfare. (will this cover gun laws...?) A work session on CACR 19 immediately follows. *(League note for those not familiar with the process: A CACR is a proposal for a NH Constitutional Amendment. It needs to pass both bodies in the legislature in order to appear on the November ballot, and the public would need to pass it with a super-majority for it to be added to the Constitution.)*

PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS, Room 201, LOB

10 am, work session including HB 1541-FN, registration & road toll fees for hybrid & electric vehicles

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7** (No House hearings scheduled)

SENATE WAYS AND MEANS Room 100, SH

9:20 a.m. SB 586-FN-A-L, casino gambling. Would allow 2 casinos. (Again?! Didn't we lay this to rest last year? League opposes expanded gambling as an unstable and socially irresponsible way to finance state govt.)

**Looking ahead a week:**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13 and WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14**

EDUCATION, Room 207, LOB 10:00 a.m. each day: Executive session on a number of bills both days--charter school bills on Wed.

MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Room 301, LOB 9:00 a.m. Subcommittee work session on CACR 19, relating to right to govern (both days)

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

**THURSDAY, Feb. 15:** The Governor's State of the State Message at 10 am. (watch it livestreamed via General Court website; may be on WMUR or NHPTV; likely on NHPR)

**FRIDAY, Feb. 16**

COMMITTEE TO STUDY EDUCATION FUNDING/ ADEQUATE EDUCATION (HB 356, Chapter 190:1, Laws of 2017)

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