

Legislative alert from League of Women Voters NH for June 12-22, 2017

The next two weeks should close out the 2017 NH legislative session...if all goes well. There are no more committee hearings, but about three dozen bills that passed both bodies but in differently amended versions are now in "Committees of Conference."

This process is fully explained in the June 9 House Calendar on **p. 6**

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2017/HC_28.pdf , but the short version is this: several members of the relevant committees from the House and the Senate have been appointed to each Committee of Conference, and they must agree unanimously on one version of the bill (House, Senate, or a compromise version) for it to move on to a vote in each body. If they can't, the bill is dead for this year. The House will vote on Thursday, June 22, beginning at 10 am. It is likely the Senate will do the same thing, but the Senate calendar doesn't confirm that. The Committees of Conference must present their recommendations by June 15. They will be meeting next week to do the work. At the following link you can see the list of bills by number and name, the names of the legislators on the committees of conference, and the date of their next meeting. So if you want to give input on any of the bills, NOW is the time to contact committee members.

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/committee_of_conference/default.aspx

Perhaps most important of these committees are the two working on the state's operating budget and the state's capital budget. The operating budget is HB 144 and HB517, and the capital budget is HB25. The **operating budget** committee will meet Monday, June 12, at 1 pm, in Legislative Office Building room 211. We believe this will be livestreamed via the general court website: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/> . Items in the budget at contention include funds for mental health and substance abuse treatment, business tax cuts, kindergarten, and others. While the entire text of the budgets (Senate and House versions) are online (in red on the General Court website), they are daunting. For an overview, the 15pp pdf used in the Senate budget briefing will give you the highlights.

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/LBA/Budget/operating_budgets/2018_2019/Senate%20Finance/Senate%20Budget%20Briefing%205-30-17.pdf

The **capital budget** committee of conference will meet June 12, 9:00 AM in Room 201 at the Legislative Office Building. The Senate version includes an appropriation of \$3 million for the Affordable Housing Fund. The House version (which was never passed but it's the one the House considers its version for this compromise process) only

includes \$500,000 for the fund. Housing Action NH encourages voters to call the CoC conferees to urge them to support the full \$3 million.

Also of interest among the dozens of bills is [SB 191](#), establishing keno and designating its proceeds toward **full-day kindergarten**. That meeting is Wednesday, June 14, 9:20 AM, Room 103 in the State House. League opposes expanded gambling to fund government, but we like the notion of funding full-day kindergarten for communities that have opted to provide it. Our positions seem to be canceling each other out. This bill may get moved to the budget bill instead of stand alone--we don't know now.

Between now and June 22, you can contact your own state representative(s) and state senator to urge their votes one way or another on the budget bills or any of the other bills now in committee of conference. Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent and use the bill number or title when you urge your elected officials to support or oppose a bill. They do hear you, and they will be up for re-election in 2018 so they care what their constituents think.

We have opinions on many other bills that passed or failed, as do many other people and groups. Keep in mind that bills passed in both bodies are then sent to the Governor for his signature to become law, so the public has one more chance to try to influence outcomes. You can encourage him to sign or to veto any bill that gets to his desk. The Governor can be reached at this website: <https://www.governor.nh.gov/contact/index.htm>

League members and others who are following **state education issues** are reminded of the **June 20** meeting we mentioned last week: 1 pm in LOB room 207: a presentation by the Dept of Education to the joint House and Senate education committees on the draft plan for education as amended by [the federal directive] Every Student Succeeds Act.