

## Legislative Alert March 12-16

Reminder that most towns are holding **town elections on Tuesday, March 13**, with town meeting either the same day or sometime in the week following. Vote in your town; it matters. Polling hours vary so call your town clerk before Tuesday to find out.

**House sessions:** Because of last week's nor'easter the Wed. afternoon and Thursday House sessions have been postponed until Thursday, March 15, at 9:30 am. For those following along at home, they will resume the bills beginning on p. 58 of the House Calendar for March 2.

[http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2018/HC\\_9.pdf](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2018/HC_9.pdf)

The House will also meet in session on Wed., March 21, and Thurs, March 22 if necessary. Those bills will be announced Friday in the March 16 calendar, and we'll give you highlights in our next Alert.

**Senate sessions:** The Senate delayed its meeting to Thursday afternoon on March 8 because of the storm, then got their work done. They will next meet in session on March 15. They have only 12 bills on March 15, none of which are League priorities.

### HOUSE AND SENATE VOTE RESULTS FROM MARCH 6-8:

In the Senate on March 8, we were sorry to see the version of **SB438** that passed. The bill clarifies procedures should town elections or town meetings need to be postponed. Okay. Unfortunately, it puts that decision in the hands of the Sec. of State rather than town elections officials who can see the weather or other emergencies first-hand. For those who have been following this bill with League, an excellent explanation of the issue and result is given by the NH Municipal Assn on pp. 2-4 of their weekly alert. You can read it at this website:

<https://www.nhmunicipal.org/Resources/LegislativeBulletin/157#election> The bill will go on to the House where NHMA and others will try to amend it along the lines suggested by Sen. Martha Fuller-Clark's defeated amendment.

The Senate did approve the bi-partisan Medicaid Expansion continuation bill, 17-7, which will move on to the House. That bill is [SB313](#). 50,000 low-income NH residents will continue to get healthcare if the House approves it too.

We have updated Election Law and Education bills following votes in the House. That list is on our Hot Legislation page of LWVNH.org.

For an excellent review of selected bills in the House and Senate that were voted on, you can read the list and comments from American Friends Service Committee. League simply didn't have time this week to do the extensive update they did. Thank you, Arnie and Maggie.

<https://www.afsc.org/action/nh-state-house-watch>

### COMMITTEE HEARINGS IN THE WEEK OF MARCH 12-16:

**Monday, March 12 at 1 pm in State House room 100.** Senate hearing for **SB 593 to repeal the death penalty**, replacing it with a life sentence without chance of parole. (Monday hearings are unusual, but that is the official day and time.)

Concern for victims' rights is not the issue here, in spite of what Governor Sununu says. Rather it is whether having a death penalty is in the best interests of the state. If for no other reason than the huge

financial burden of capital punishment trials and the fact that NH no longer has a usable death chamber and would have to build one at great expense, we would urge passage of this bill to repeal the penalty. Ethical and moral reasons come into play as well. League's national position opposes the death penalty. For details about costs, see the fiscal note appended to the bill:

[http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill\\_status/billText.aspx?sy=2018&id=1723&txtFormat=html](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2018&id=1723&txtFormat=html)

The bill will likely pass the Senate, as it has 13 senators from both parties as co-sponsors. The tougher fight may be in the House, and the governor has said he will veto it. So keep this on your radar as the bill moves forward.

**Tuesday, March 13, Reps Hall at the State House.** Rally at 9 am, hearing at 10 am. **GUNS IN SCHOOLS:** Although it is too late to create new bills, except by special permission, legislators can amend existing bills. [SB357](#) was originally aimed at drug-related school safety. However, a proposed amendment by Sen. Martha Hennessey would **expand the bill to clarify that public schools have the right to create gun-free zones** at their institutions.

The **school voucher bill, SB193**, had a public hearing on March 9 at which two League members testified in opposition. The Finance committee will hold a **work session on Tuesday, March 13** beginning at 1 pm with several other bills. Then they will finally have an **executive session** to decide their recommendation on **Wed., March 14, 10 am in LOB room 210-211**. The House will then vote on the amended version of this hugely important bill on March 21 or 22. The impact of this bill on public education and state and local funding of education is huge!

In the same Wed. Finance committee meeting, they will also hold executive session on **HB628, the family and medical leave insurance program**, another bill with long-term implications for state finance and the "NH Advantage." That too will head back to the full House on March 21 or 22.

Just a few other Senate hearings next week, none on League priorities.

**March 22 is "crossover day."** Any bills that have passed one body get assigned to committees in the other body, which will hold hearings with public testimony, etc. The process is repeated. However, bills not passed by the first body are dead, so the list of bills needing hearings is much shorter.

We promised you a much shorter Legislative Alert this week!