

LWVNH Legislative Alert for week of March 19-22, 2018

For those following the school “voucher” bill: A planned House vote on the latest edition of the bill, SB193, will not occur until sometime after April 4, when the House Finance committee will discuss and render its recommendation. The stack of amended versions keeps growing. A great summary of SB193 as it stands on March 15 is given at the Advancing NH Public Education website. Please take a minute to read it and clear up confusion about what the proposed shifting of public funds would do and for whom. <https://anhpe.org/2018/03/15/nine-misconceptions-about-sb-193-and-the-proposed-amendments-under-consideration/> *League opposes SB193.*

Most important committee hearing next week is this one:

Tuesday, March 20, 10:00 a.m. in Representatives Hall, State House. **SB313 is the Medicaid Expansion continuation bill.** Medicaid Expansion currently serves 50,000 low-income people in NH, and unless this bill becomes law, it will expire at the end of this year, leaving those people without affordable healthcare. *League urges your support. If you have a personal story to share, please come do so.*

The SENATE will meet in voting session on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2018 at 2:00 pm. and THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2018 at 10:00 am. Among the bills they will vote on are the following:

SB 383, establishing a commission to assess benefits and costs of a “health care for all” program for NH. Ought to Pass with Amendment, Vote 5-0. *[League supports creating a commission to study healthcare.]*

SB 357, safe school zones. Ought to Pass, Vote 4-1. *[Last week an important amendment to this bill, that would have allowed school boards to **create gun-free zones on school grounds**, was defeated in committee 3-2. We are hoping there will action by some Senators to bring Sen. Hennessey’s amendment to the floor during the session and then vote Ought to Pass. As the bill stands now, it considers only syringes on school grounds.]*

The list of bills that the Senate will vote on is relatively short, considering that they plan to meet for two days. We wonder whether some bills that will be voted on in the House will be sent directly to the Senate for a vote. This is possible only if the bill under consideration in the House is one the Senate already passed in a different version. We don’t know.

The HOUSE will meet in voting session on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2018 at 10:00 am and THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2018 at 9:30 am. Among the bills they will vote on are the following. You can read summarized arguments from the majority and minority on the House Calendar for March 16:

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2018/HC_11.pdf

HB 1707-FN, requiring specific information be provided to patients requesting abortion, with a defined time lag before providing abortion services. MAJORITY recommends REFER FOR INTERIM

STUDY. MINORITY recommends INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. Vote 11-9. This will would create a 24-hour waiting period under the guise of “women having sufficient information.” *[League opposes this bill, prefers ITL, as it creates a process interfering with the right of patients to make timely decisions in consultation with their doctors.]* Arguments on p. 5 of the House calendar.

HB 1816-FN, Medicaid managed care. MAJORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. MINORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. Vote 13-9 Two amendments involved here, agreeing on some points and disagreeing on others. If this bill is one you are following, please see the arguments from both sides in the House Calendar on page 5.

HB 1373, relative to an individual’s property right in his or her DNA (or when is trash subject to search) MAJORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. MINORITY recommends INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. Vote 9-6. Interesting discussion both in Judiciary committee and in the printed arguments on p. 6 of the House Calendar.

HB 1485, increasing rental security deposits that landlords may require from one month to two. MAJORITY recommends INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. MINORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS. Vote 10-8. pp. 6-7

HB 1680-FN, restricting abortions after viability. MAJORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS. MINORITY recommends INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. Vote 10-8. *[League opposes this bill that interferes with the decision-making process of a woman and her doctor.]* p. 7.

HB 1721-FN, prohibiting coercive abortions. MAJORITY recommends INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. MINORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS. Vote 15-3. Rep. Charlotte DiLorenzo for the Majority of Judiciary explains “This bill is purportedly intended to protect women from so-called coercive abortions, but it does so by targeting medical providers rather than individuals doing the “coercing.” Moreover, nowhere in the bill’s five pages does it define “coercion.” This bill claims to protect women from coercive abortion by dictating a specific screening process, ignoring the fact that health care providers are already legally and ethically required to obtain a patient’s independent informed consent.” *[League agrees that this bill should be defeated.]* More on p. 8 of Calendar

HB 628-FN, family and medical leave insurance program. MAJORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. MINORITY recommends OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. Vote 15-11. *[see expanded explanation of this bill at end of this document, with thanks to AFSC for the clear explanation of its evolution. *]*

HB 1763-FN-A, establishing a road usage fee [for fuel efficient vehicles] and making an appropriation therefor. OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT Vote 20-5. This bill would charge fuel efficient vehicles more when one registers them to make up for the lost gas tax revenue, money to go to the state’s highway fund. “Typically for vehicles in the 20-30 mpg this would result in a charge of \$23.94 collected on yearly registration payment and designated as ‘road usage fee.’ Payments would go as high as \$111 for vehicles that used no gas. It is estimated that this fee would bring \$21 million to the Highway Fund.” More on p. 20.

A number of bills, including several Election Law bills that passed out of committee with unanimous recommendations, have been pulled from the earlier Consent Calendar and will be debated on the floor. We don’t know why.

Senate committee hearings March 19-22:

Tuesday, March 20

EDUCATION LOB room 103

10:00 a.m. HB 1493, statewide assessment system of performance in schools.

10:15 a.m. HB 1494, definition of academic standards. *(Both bills passed the House, should not be an issue in the Senate)*

Some other Senate committee hearings are also scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday, all on bills that have already passed the House. If there are particular bills of interest to you, please check the Senate calendar to see when they are being heard.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/scaljournals/calendars/2018/sc%2013.pdf>

House committee hearings week of March 19-22:

All bills to be discussed in the House committee meetings are bills that have already passed the Senate. No Election Law meeting has been scheduled yet. No priority bills are up for public hearings.

Education will meet on Tuesdays, March 20 and 27 in LOB 207.

Of interest is one bill on March 20 that we somehow missed when it went thru the Senate:

10:45 a.m. SB 360, establishing a commission to study whether the department of education should be required to conduct criminal history records checks, via a fingerprint check, on all applicants for teacher certification. *[League asks: why isn't this being done already? We need a commission to study it??]*

*From American Friends Service Committee: [HB 628](#), creating a family and medical leave insurance program, was introduced last year, held over in the House Labor Committee which released an amended version with bi-partisan support at the beginning of 2018. It passed the full House, then went to the Commerce Committee. They tweaked it, brought it back to the full House, where it was passed again. Then it went to Finance, where a subcommittee held multiple work sessions ending only this week when Representative Lynn Ober, the subcommittee chair, brought forward an amendment with an entirely new – and deeply flawed – approach, which was never brought before a public hearing. The amendment would require NH employers to offer a private insurance benefit that would be likely to come with a high price tag, if it were available at all. It would also block the creation of a program to ensure affordable access to paid leave, while giving the illusion of taking action.

The actual backers of Family Medical Leave want to introduce an amendment making a minor change to the previously approved version. In order for this to happen, they will encourage Representatives to vote down Representative Ober's amendment, substitute the other amendment (from Representative Mary Jane Wallner), and then vote for the third time to approve the bill. Only then will it move over to the Senate.

Bill is likely to come up Thursday.

That's it for this week, folks!