

League of Women Voters NH Legislative alert for weeks of May 1-5 and preview of May 8-12

Several people have reported that my legislative alerts have been coming as very dense, hard to read text in their emails. I don't know why--not how it looks on my computer. However, I'm trying a new way to send these and also alerting you that you can read them on the League's website as a pdf, where they should be very legible. If you wish to do that, visit the Hot Legislation page of LWVNH.org Much shorter list this week than past couple of months as bills are winnowed out.

The next Senate full session is Thursday, May 11, at 10. The list of bills will be available May 5.

The next House full session is Thursday, May 4, at 10 am. For a full list of bills to be voted on, check the calendar: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2017/HC_22.pdf

Of particular interest are the following **bills to be voted on in the House**:

Health and Human Services has 7 bills with unanimous or nearly so Ought to Pass votes, all of which seem to be good things to support.

Education: SB45, requiring a high school course in civics. Recommended Ought to Pass unanimously. As often happens, the devil will be in the details, and the bill allows local school districts to define the curriculum (some broad concepts are listed in the bill.) We hope school districts will emphasize civic participation and hands-on learning rather than rote treatment of government facts; the goal should be the civic engagement of our young people.

Education: SB191 provides \$14.5 million for full-day kindergarten, part of the Governor's "Kids Grant" targeted aid program. Vote was 15-4 in committee Ought to Pass, so this may cause some debate. The cost is a concern as is perceived expansion of basic education expectations. *If you wish to make your views known to your own representative(s), now is the time to call or email or catch them at the transfer station.*

Public Works/Highways: SB38 would send \$30 million back to towns and cities for local highway/bridge reconstruction. Also adds \$6.8 million for municipal bridges. Ought to Pass vote was 16-1.

Ways and Means: SB240 is the bill to allow 2 casinos in NH. It was voted Inexpedient to Legislate 19-1, and as one legislator said of casinos, "that ship has sailed." **League opposes** this expansion of gambling as an irresponsible way to fund govt and we are happy this will likely be defeated. *If you wish to make your views known to your own representative(s), now is the time to call or email.*

For once, no election laws on the calendar this time! Apparently SB3 is being held closely as more technical flaws are discovered . Has not had executive session yet.

House hearings and executive sessions (just a reminder that executive sessions are public, but the public is not allowed to testify. It is the time for committee members to discuss and then vote on their recommendations for passage or not.) Very few hearings at this time of year; mostly executive sessions. Highlight of League interest:

Tues., May 2 EDUCATION in LOB 207, 10 am, exec session on SB8 (towns with no public schools of their own); SB43 (parental options re non-academic surveys); SB44 (prohibiting the state from requiring the adoption of Common Core standards)

No ELECTION LAW committee meetings listed for first week of May. Maybe on May 9 or 10? But not listed yet.

Senate hearings and executive sessions week of May 1-5 and preview of May 8-12:

Lots of **Finance, Capital Budget, and Ways and Means hearings for both weeks**, as the Senate works on the state's budget. Please check the Senate calendar for details:

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2017/HC_22.pdf

Tuesday, May 9 ELECTION LAW LOB 102, 10 am: Executive session on two important bills: **HB372** that changes the definition of residence, inhabitant, etc. for voting purposes, deletes phrase "for the indefinite future" from the definition. Also **HB552** that authorizes the Secretary of State to investigate any letters returned as undeliverable when people have registered or voted without standard documentation. An amendment discussed thoroughly on April 25 allows the Secretary of State to use a cross-check database that is used by a number of other states to find duplicate registrations, attempt to verify the eligibility of voters who appear thus, and then pass along to the Attorney General the remaining unresolved cases for further investigation.

To end on a bit of good news: This week the Senate passed and then the Governor signed **HB354**, an education bill that averts more law suits over inadequate funding to 24 towns that were shortchanged in 2016. The bill allows them to get their fair share of education adequacy aid.