

## Legislative alert from League of Women Voters NH for May 22-26

**The Senate will be in session on Wednesday, May 31, at 1:00 PM and on Thursday, June 1** (no time given in the calendar). We assume the major item will be the 2-year budget. Other specific bills will be listed on next week's calendar.

### Senate committee meetings:

Senate FINANCE will continue executive session on **budget** items Monday at 11:00 AM, Tuesday at 9:00 AM, and Wednesday at 9:00 AM, all in State House Room 103.

Budget revenues are likely to be finalized on Tuesday, 10 am, by Senate WAYS AND MEANS committee in State House 100.

Tuesday, May 23

SENATE ELECTION LAW committee 10 am, LOB 102: Executive session, but we think the only bill left for them is HB 372, which they have been holding onto. It seems a simple bill regarding definition of domicile for voting purposes and deleting the phrase "for the indefinite future" in the determination of domicile, residency, inhabitant, etc. But those terms are used very differently in hundreds of NH statutes, thus not simple at all. It is, also, an opportunity for the Senate to tack on amendments relating to election law that didn't quite go the way they planned in full session. So this is a very important executive session for League and others to watch. Any amendments are not likely to be available in advance (which bothers the League in terms of good government procedures).

Several other Senate committees are meeting this week in executive session. As far as we can tell, there are no hearings (no opportunity for public testimony) this week. Keep in mind, however, that executive sessions are open to the public and often reveal the reasons behind the resulting votes. For a full list, see the Senate calendar: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/scaljournals/calendars/2017/sc%2024.pdf>

**The House will be in session on Thursday, June 1, 10 am.** At that time they will vote on about 60 House bills that were amended in the Senate. For most of them, the committees have recommended the House simply concur with the Senate's version. On others, the committees recommend non-concurrence (which effectively kills a bill they earlier passed, because they don't like the Senate's version), or non-concur but create a committee of conference. Committees of conference begin in early June, must work fast for final votes in mid-June. (Want to know the details of how Committees of Conference work? See pp 4-5 of this week's House calendar:

[http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2017/HC\\_25.pdf](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2017/HC_25.pdf)

One **education** bill that will likely need a committee of conference is **HB 356**, which started out creating a study committee for education funding, specifically adequacy and differentiated aid and looking at sources of funding. That seemed like League to be a very good idea when it passed the House! But the Senate Education committee hijacked the bill in a contentious and much publicized hearing, amending the bill to add a study about restructuring the department of education and the duties and responsibilities of the Commissioner of Education. That study may also be a good idea, but to assign them to one study committee would create a huge amount of work in a short time, and the

Senate further wanted to give itself more power on the study committee. The funding piece could be moved to the back burner, the House fears. For those reasons the House education committee wants a committee of conference and will make its views known strongly.

The House will vote on a further amended **SB3**, and League still opposes this bill that makes voter registration more difficult, both for voters and for elections officials. If you see your representatives at Memorial Day services or elsewhere over the weekend, make the pitch again--unfounded perceptions of voter fraud are no reason to potentially disenfranchise voters who may not be able to prove domicile easily!

The House will also vote on SB8, the bill commonly called the Croydon bill, affecting school districts that don't have schools for all grades in their districts and pay to send students to other schools. The House amended version disallows religious schools from being used for that purpose but does allow contracts with private schools.

The list of other Senate bills the House will vote on June 1 is not yet available, will be in next week's calendar.

### **House committee meetings:**

Tuesday, May 23

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY Rm 204 in Legislative Office Bldg, 11:30 am--work session on HB156, a retained bill that includes a fetus in the definition of "other" for certain criminal offenses (such as vehicular homicide) and HB544, earned time credits for prisoners participating in various programming, and HB656, legalizing marijuana. Executive session may also be held.

ELECTION LAW Rm 308 in LOB, 9:30 am--Public hearing on (non-germane) amendment to SB248--this is the bill we discussed earlier that was amended to set up a committee to clarify procedures in situations that might necessitate postponing an election, such as the blizzard last March. The amendment also clarifies the use of absentee ballots in these situations. Copies of the amendment are in the Sgt at Arms office. The League strongly supports creating clear procedures for emergency situations regarding elections.

FINANCE Divisions II and III will meet. Div. III at 10 am will continue its work session on SB247, the lead poisoning prevention fund at 10 am in LOB rm 210-211.

Wednesday, May 24

FINANCE Rn 210-211 LOB at 10 am-- executive session on a number of bills including SB57 (drinking water), SB38 (local hwy and bridges allocation), SB155 Medicaid managed care program, SB247 lead poisoning prevention fund.