

NH Voter, the newsletter of LWVNH

January 2021

*Scroll through to find sections on the **presidential election, the NH Legislature, how to contact your elected officials in Congress and in NH, the partisan make-up of the NH Legislature and how individual towns voted, redistricting warrant articles at spring town meetings, two upcoming events via zoom, and League Facebook pages you may want to follow.***

What to expect next:

Regarding the presidential election: Electors cast their votes for President on December 14.

January 6 is the day Congress must approve and count all the votes. Just like Democratic members of Congress who challenged certain states' votes in past years, Congressman Mo Brooks (R) of Alabama plans to challenge certain states on January 6. He needs at least one US Senator to join him in challenging any particular state, to have an hour of debate on the topic (Democrats in their past challenges failed to get a Senator to join their challenges). News reports suggest that Senators Ron Johnson of Wisconsin and Rand Paul of Kentucky have signaled they would be open to doing so. However, to actually throw out the votes of a state, a majority of both the House and Senate would need to agree. That is unlikely to happen, news sources agree, no matter how the Georgia senate election turns out.

January 20 is Presidential Inauguration Day. The actual ceremony is at noon and will, of course, be televised.

What to expect next:

NH Legislature: The Legislature will meet on **January 6**, as required, for the first day of the 2021-22 session.

Will the Senate meet in person at the State House in Reps Hall? New Senate president is Chuck Morse. Sen. Jeb Bradley has been appointed majority leader. Minority leader is former Senate president Donna Soucy. The Republicans hold a 14-10 majority in the state Senate.

For the House, will it be virtual? In person at UNH field house? Drive thru? Still to be decided. Minority leader Rep. Renny Cushing said on Dec. 18, *"Representative Packard and I both have seen the effectiveness and accessibility of meeting remotely, as recently as this week when we met together on Zoom with the House Rules Committee. As the New Hampshire Supreme Court has recently affirmed, meeting remotely is a legal and effective way to continue operating while the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic persists. ... it is our job as leaders to protect all legislators and staff from harm and meeting remotely is without a question the safest and most accessible way to do this."*

First topic for the House will be the election of a new speaker, following the death of Rep. Dick Hinch just a week after he was elected by members at the December 2 "organization day." Rep. Sherman Packard was nominated by the Republican caucus on Dec. 18 and will be formally elected at the first House session. Rep. Renny Cushing is House minority leader. Republicans hold a 213-187 majority in the House.

Once committees begin meeting to hear bills, the challenge will be where and how to hold those meetings, which must be open to the public. League has been present at many in past years and often testified on proposed legislation, so this matters. We'll let you know when we find out.

How to stay informed: When the session starts, League will begin emailing weekly **Legislative Alerts** about priority bills being heard in committee.

If you wish to track bills and committees yourself, you can do that from the Legislature's website, which is <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/> The weekly Calendar for each body will be found under House of Representatives and State Senate, generally posted each Friday.

How to connect with your elected officials:

Federal: Never hesitate to express your views to your Congresspeople. To send email to your Senators and to your Representative in Congress, go to their websites. You will have to fill out a webform to send **email**, with your name and address or at least ZIP code. This is done to make sure that constituents' emails are given attention over mass emails from around the country. You will likely get a form email back, summarizing the official's position on the topic.

The Congresspeople's websites also include **office phone numbers**, both in DC and in NH offices. It is highly unlikely you'll get to speak to the Senator or Representative personally, but the staff are very good at taking your message and tallying your support or opposition on specific topics. Those tallies are given to the Congresspeople. If you have a personal story to share on an issue, do share it. Be sure to tell the staff that you live in NH and are a constituent.

Those calls and emails from constituents do matter to the Senators and Representatives.

(Paper mail does not get thru because of security concerns. You must use phone or email.)

Here are NH's **Congressional websites and DC phone numbers:**

Senator Maggie Hassan <https://www.hassan.senate.gov/> DC phone: (202) 224-3324

Senator Jeanne Shaheen <https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/> DC phone: (202) 224-2841

Congresswoman Annie Kuster <https://kuster.house.gov/> DC phone: (202) 225-5206

Congressman Chris Pappas <https://pappas.house.gov/> DC phone: (202) 225-5456

You can also sign up for e-newsletters from your Representative and Senators at their websites.

Connecting with State officials: As of this writing, not all the state representatives have completed their official webpages with phone numbers and emails, but eventually they will do this. To find the email and phone number of your state representative(s) or state senator, especially if you are not sure of your newly elected officials' names, go to this website and choose your town in the pull-down menu on the right. The list will come up; click on the individual name to get to the webpage with contact info, which should also include the committees the person is serving on this session and their party affiliation. Here is that website: <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/default.aspx>

NH Legislative make-up 2021: Republicans now have a four-vote majority in the Senate and 213 out of 400 seats in the House of Representatives. A Republican majority does not guarantee success for the Republican Party platform, however. Much like their constituents, New Hampshire's legislators have an independent streak. And most of them do pay attention to their constituents' views.

The Executive Council is now 4 to 1 Republican.

Curious about how NH towns differed on election day? Fascinating map and statistics released on 12/14/20 by WMUR on this website:

https://www.wmur.com/article/new-hampshire-election-results-2020-town-map/34935446?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Politics%20Shared%20-%20M%2CT%2CW%2CF%2011a%202020-12-14&utm_term=wmur_news_politics

Local Government. The New Hampshire Municipal Association is thinking ahead to town meeting in the spring, will be holding town and school moderators workshops in January and February. On the agenda for these workshops is "How to run a virtual annual meeting in a pandemic using HB 1129,

which will address when and how to run a virtual series of information sessions by the governing body and then conducting a drive up voting session as a substitute for an SB 2 Deliberative session or traditional town meeting business session. Also, when and how to conduct an in-person annual meeting while still complying with CDC social distancing guidelines and State of New Hampshire mask wearing mandates. " Covid exposure concerns will force changes in early 2021 to town meetings; encourage your town to plan ahead.

Redistricting warrant article—oppose gerrymandering in NH: Here is an action you can take now--Volunteers with Open Democracy, League, and other groups are getting signatures on petitions to place a redistricting warrant article on town warrants this spring.

The point of this initiative is to build public support for fair district maps and transparency in the process. The resolution is non-binding, but it sends a message that towns and citizens are opposed to partisan gerrymandering in our state.

If you are interested and want more information, sign up for the forms and wording and more instructions from Open Democracy: https://www.opendemocracynh.org/warrant_article_initiative

We are on Facebook. League has several FB pages. The primary one from the state League is [League of Women Voters NH](#). We also have a page to serve [Southern Rockingham county](#), where our newest unit is just waiting to get out of Covid protocols to restart their activities. Same with the [LWVNH-MWV](#) page and unit in the Mt Washington Valley. Our [League of Women Voters NH- Greater Nashua](#) page enjoys lively exchanges; that unit is holding almost monthly zoom meetings, as is the PeterboroPlus unit steering committee. Another FB page serves [League of Women Voters NH - Seacoast Unit](#), where we hope to get a unit up and running when conditions allow for in-person activities. These Facebook pages are open to the public.

Finally, we do have a closed group FB page, [League of Women Voters Members Forum](#). As the name implies, this is for current dues-paying League members only and you must request access. Non-members are invited to follow us on our other pages, which are public.

We encourage people interested in the League's work to "like" one or more of these pages and stay informed.

League membership: as a dues-supported all volunteer state League, we thank those members who have renewed their memberships by paying dues in 2020. It's not too late, and you can pay with a credit card at our LWVNH.org website, on the membership page. New members can join the same way.

If you don't wish to renew your membership, we will keep you on our email list so you can follow our activities in NH and get our Legislative Alerts. Thank you for your continued interest in non-partisan ways of improving our state.

(For those who have signed up for emails from the national League, please realize we have no control over their constant requests for donations. Donations to the national League do not constitute League membership, but do support the League's work on the federal level.)

Questions? You can email the state board by replying to this email or by sending email to lwvnewhampshire@gmail.com