

NH Legislature This Week—May 14, 2018

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Quote of the Week

"Governor Sununu remains opposed to HB1264 and HB372 and believes that the bills should undergo a strict review by the New Hampshire Supreme Court in order to determine any potential unintended consequences." **Benjamin Vihstadt**, Governor Sununu's spokesman on the bills to discourage college students from voting by essentially creating a poll tax.

We are winding down! The House and Senate will meet on Wednesday, May 23rd to take up all remaining bills where the House and Senate have not come to an agreement. Those bills have been sent to committees of conference to work out a compromise. No further changes are allowed once the committees report out. The only voting options available are to pass or defeat.

These meetings of May 23rd (and, if necessary, May 24th) will be the last before the summer. After that, all bills will have been either defeated or sent to Governor Sununu. Several bills have already been sent to the Governor and he has yet to officially take action on the ones that we are following.

If the Governor vetoes a bill, it will go back to the legislature where a 2/3 supermajority is required in both the House and the Senate to override. There is no word yet on when such a session may be held.

We will not be publishing an issue next week. We will be back in a couple of weeks.

Senate create a mini-budget bill out of the blue

HB1817 started as a simple bill to create the position of a state demographer. However, the senate has added on several amendment to authorize spending on a wide range of areas – salary increases for state employees, red listed bridges, hospital payments, and Medicaid. It is not clear how much spending would be authorized by these changes, but it is in the tens of millions. The House has taken exception to this and asked for a conference committee to work out a compromise.

Legislature hands Governor an embarrassing defeat on the national stage

Governor Sununu has been advocating taking funds from public schools to give to private schools, religious schools and homeschooling families very publicly and nationally. He was set to make himself a national figure on this issue by inviting **President Trump's** Education Secretary, **Betsy DeVos** to NH just as the legislature was expected to pass a bill doing just this. However, Republicans were not able to get their House members in line and the bill was defeated despite making several attempts. The House defeated SB193 on a razor thin 172-165 vote. State Democrats point out that recent

special elections which have given seats to Democrats may have made the difference. Another issue is several Republican House Representatives have missed many legislative sessions – including Brookline/Mason **Rep. John Carr**, as has been noted here on many bills.

The Senate decided to make another attempt by tacking the language from SB193 onto an unrelated House bill – HB1636. However, the House again rejected the amendments and defeated the underlying bill 168-173. **Rep. Ammon and Lewicke** voted in favor of the Senate amendment. **Rep. Belanger and Gargasz** voted against the amendment. **Rep. Carr** had an excused absence.

Republicans keep opposition to marriage equality in their platform

For many years now, NH Republicans have included in their state platform a statement opposing marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples. Now that the issue has been settled and polls show overwhelming support for equality, one would expect the GOP to remove this embarrassing position, but not so much. This weekend, the party bosses met to hammer out the next iteration of the state party platform and former Chair Jennifer Horn proposed to remove the statement in favor of a general statement in support of all families. This still generated significant opposition among Republican leaders and in the end, the anti-gay statement was kept by a technical maneuver that stripped Horn of her status as a delegate, in effect punishing her for even proposing to support civil rights.

How to contact Governor Sununu

There are many bills heading to the Governors desk that he should be encouraged to sign or veto. You can contact the Governors office through the state web site here:

<https://business.nh.gov/nhgovernor/comments.asp>

Bills sent to Governor Sununu

HB587 would prohibit “conversion therapy” on gay minors.

HB1264 would essentially create a poll tax by requiring students registering to vote to register their cars in NH.

HB1319 would add “gender identity” to NH’s civil rights laws, prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations.

HB1575 would permit hunting with air rifles.

HB1586 would provide direction to judges approving marriages for under aged individuals.

HB1587 would set the minimum age for a marriage at 16 for all couples.

HB1686 would divert some education funding from public schools to private schools.

HB1816 would keep the expanded Medicaid program for another 5 years.

SB170 would allow towns to issue bonds to expand broadband infrastructure.

SB500 would allow loaded guns in stationary vehicles.

SB593 would repeal the death penalty. Senator Avard is the primary sponsor.

Bills in Conference Committees

HB1354 would make the Speaker of the House and Senate President voting members of the University System Board of Trustees.

HB1415 would provide a health benefit for teachers killed while performing their jobs.

HB1817 would provide new funding for state employee raises, red listed bridges, hospitals and Medicaid.

SB438 would create a process to allow elections to be postponed in the event of an emergency.

Where to find more information

The New Hampshire legislature web site is www.gencourt.state.nh.us. Here, you can find the full text of all bills, find the full list of sponsors of bills and see more detailed status. If you have questions about how to use the state website, we would be glad to help. Just email us at brooklinedemocrats@gmail.com.

Watch and listen to House and Senate sessions live and archived

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/media/default.htm>