

NH Legislature This Week—May 22, 2017
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Quotes of the Week

"Unfortunately, the falsehoods, lies and comments of an overzealous blogger and some of my colleagues have created a situation where I must genuinely consider the safety and wellbeing of my girlfriend, my family, and myself. It has been a pleasure to serve in this house with those members who have integrity. I'm happy that the House committee stood firm for free speech today, it is with a heavy heart that I will be unable to complete my term." **Rep. Robert Fisher** (R-Laconia).

"I don't think anything in this bill is a huge win. I have reservations. I wouldn't have voted for it myself." **Governor Chris Sununu** on the Republican American Health Care Act that repeals President Obama's Affordable Care Act.

No newsletter next week

At the statehouse, things are in a bit of lull until the Senate finishes work on the budget. Neither the House nor the Senate will be meeting this week, but they will both be meeting next week. We will be skipping a week and expect to return on June 5th.

Correction

Last week, when we quoted **Rep. Al Baldasaro**, we stated that it was in reference to "Rep. Sherry Fisher (D-Dover)". The Representative's name **Sherry Frost**.

Rep. Fisher resigns, but only after Republican leadership throws their integrity out the door to defend him

This week, the Republican dominated House Legislative Administration Committee held "hearings" regarding **Rep. Robert Fisher** (R-Laconia) and his founding and support of the misogynist Red Pill reddit forum. All along, Republican leadership in the House has bent over backward to defend him, divert attention away from him, or excuse his actions. The debate on the House floor about the matter was restricted to not discussing anything that he said or any positions that were advocated by the forum that he founded and may well still be running. When it was agreed that a committee would need to look into it further, the committee was restricted to looking at only statements that he has made since January and not during his previous term as a State Rep and they decided that they would include in the hearing a discussion of controversial tweets made by a Democratic Representative (**Rep. Sherry Frost** [D-Dover]) which had been resolved earlier.

During the hearing, in which Rep. Fisher spoke under oath, he expressed no regret and offered no apologies. He also insisted that he was not still running the forum despite evidence to the contrary.

After the "hearing" (again, Republican leadership emphasized that it was not an "investigation"), the Chair of the Committee, **Rep. Richard Hinch** (R-Merrimack) announced that the committee would only be able to make one single recommendation and that it would be applied to both Rep. Fisher and Rep. Frost. Democratic members

objected as the two issues involved are not comparable – a few angry tweets vs. dedicating years of your life to run and promote a forum, including “anonymous” media interviews. **Rep. Sherman Packard** (R-Londonderry) then moved that no action be taken. That motion passed on a party line 8-6 with Republicans supporting no action and Democrats opposed. Rep. Hinch also ruled that the minority will not be allowed to submit a minority report to the full House, which goes against past practice.

Later that day, Rep. Fisher resigned, sparing the Republican House leadership the public embarrassment of having to continue to defend him. In an email sent to WMUR, Rep. Fisher stated that he was resigning because of “the falsehoods, lies and comments of an overzealous blogger and some of my colleagues”. That and perhaps the fact that the Democratic House members have called on the state Attorney General to investigate whether or not he perjured himself under oath by claiming to not still be running the forum.

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>

Terms and Abbreviations

ITL means “**Inexpedient To Legislate**”. If the full House or full Senate votes to ITL a bill, then the bill is defeated.

OTP means “**Ought to Pass**” meaning that a committee is recommending that a bill be passed.

Consent Calendar: If a bill receives a unanimous recommendation from a committee, the committee may place the bill on the Consent Calendar. When full House meets, the first vote taken is to approve all recommendations on all bills in the consent calendar. This allows the House to quickly dispense with non-controversial bills and move on to topics that need discussion. If any legislator requests that a bill be removed from the consent calendar, then it will be removed and it will be brought up for discussion and a vote along with the other non-consent calendar bills.

Resolutions: Sometimes the House, the Senate or both will pass resolutions. These are just public statements of opinion or interest, but they have no legal standing. It is similar to issuing a press release. HCR is a House resolution. HJR is a joint resolution (both House and Senate) that originates in the House.

LOB refers to the **Legislative Office Building**, which is immediately behind the statehouse. Most committee hearings are held in this building.

Reps Hall refers to **Representatives Hall** in the Statehouse where the House of Representatives meetings. This room is used for hearings that are expected to be very large.

“Retained” means that a Committee has voted to keep a bill until next year. Next year, any bills that have been retained must be sent to the full House/Senate for a vote. Any bill that does not get retained must be sent to the full House/Senate for vote by Crossover or the end of the session.

“Crossover” is March 31st. The House will vote on all bills introduced in the House by this date except for bills that have been retained until next year. Similarly, the Senate will vote on all bills introduced into the Senate by this date except for bills that are being retained until next year.

“Tabled”: The full House or full Senate can “table” a bill which means that the bill is kept in “limbo” without being passed or defeated. For tabled bill to be brought back up for a vote again (to pass it) requires a 2/3 majority. If the bill has not been passed when the legislature adjourns at the end of the year, it is defeated. Tabling a bill usually happens when the legislature wants to defeat a bill but doesn’t want to directly oppose it. It can also sometimes happen if there are not enough votes to pass, but leadership hopes to be able to come up with enough votes later—but this then requires a 2/3 majority.

A brief guide to how legislation becomes law

Bills introduced in the House:

1. The bill is assigned to a committee and the committee holds a public hearing.
2. The committee either retains the bill or votes to recommend that the bill be passed (OTP), changed (OTPA), or defeated (ITL).
3. Except for retained bills, all other bills go to the full House which can pass, defeat, change a bill or send it to a second committee.
4. If sent to a second committee, the committee must then retain or recommend to pass, change or defeat the bill. It then goes back to the full House for a second vote.
5. If passed by the House, the bill goes to the Senate
6. The bill is assigned to a Senate committee which then holds a public hearing
7. The Senate committee either retains the bill or votes to recommend that the bill be passed (OTP), changed (OTPA), or defeated (ITL).
8. Except for retained bills, all other bills go to the full Senate which can pass, defeat, change a bill or send it to a second committee.
9. If sent to a second committee, the committee must then retain or recommend to pass, change or defeat the bill. It then goes back to the full Senate for a second vote.
10. If passed by the Senate, the bill goes to the Governor who may sign the bill into law or veto it.
11. If the Governor vetoes the bill, it goes back to the House
12. If 2/3 of the House votes to override the veto then the bill goes back to the Senate
13. If 2/3 of the Senate votes to override the veto then the bill becomes law.

For Senate bills, the process is the same except that it goes through the Senate before it goes to the House.

For Constitutional Amendments (CACRs) the process is slightly different.

CACRs introduced in the House:

1. Assigned to a committee and the committee holds a public hearing.
2. The committee votes to recommend that the CACR be passed, changed, killed or sent to study
3. Regardless of the committee recommendation, all CACRs go to the full House which can pass, kill or change a bill or send it to study. Passing a CACR requires 60% of the House members present to vote in favor.
4. If passed by the House, the bill goes to the Senate
5. Assigned to a Senate committee which then holds a public hearing
6. The Senate committee votes to recommend that the bill be passed, changed, killed or sent to study
7. Regardless of the committee recommendation, all bills go to the full Senate which can pass, kill or change a bill or send it to study. Passing a CACR requires 60% of the Senate members present to vote in favor.
8. If passed by the Senate, the CACR will put on the ballot at the next election (November 2012). If 2/3 of the voters vote in favor of it, then it becomes part of the NH Constitution.

Where to Send Letters to the Editor:

Nashua Telegraph

letters@nashuatelegraph.com

Hollis Brookline Journal

cabnews@cabinet.com

The Journal welcomes letters from its readers that are exclusive to this newspaper. Letters must be 400 words or fewer and are subject to editing either for content or for length. Letters must be received no later than noon on Monday. The Journal does not publish anonymous letters, those written under an assumed name or containing only the writer's initials. Nor does it publish form letters, or those written as part of an orchestrated campaign. Letters must be in good taste and free of libel or personal attacks. Important: Letters must contain the writer's name, home address and day/night telephone numbers and e-mail for confirmation purposes. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published. The deadline for submitting letters is noon on Monday. The Journal is published every Friday.

The Mason Grapevine

Residents of Mason can submit letters to the Mason Grapevine at

TheMasonGrapevine@yahoo.com

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