



January 29, 2021

Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



To my constituents in [Allenstown](#), [Epsom](#), & [Pittsfield](#):

This week, my committee held hybrid hearings on eight bills related to the state pension system. I and four other members were together in the Legislative Office Building (following restaurant rules, so masks are optional when seated and distanced); the rest were remote. It went better than I expected; the only major issue was that one member was unable to vote, as House rules require video for that and he only had audio.

We immediately voted to pass HB 91, granting first responders who die from job-related suicide the state death benefit; HB 150, some technical corrections; and HB 173, requiring the retirement system to report investment fees in detail. All of these are repeats from last year, and died in the shutdown. We also, at the sponsor's request, voted to retain in committee HB 619, which would put dispatchers into retirement Group II (police and fire.) Even before the hearing, the sponsor realized he hadn't thought it through.

HB 274, requiring the state to pay 5% of the localities' pension payments, and HB 390, stretching out the retirement system's accrued liability, are both attempts by Nashua (and other localities) to avoid paying the accumulated debt (plus interest) from the underfunding they enjoyed in the 1990's. These were lengthy hearings at cross purposes, with the supporters saying "we can't afford it now" and the opponents pointing out that this debt must be paid, and sooner is cheaper than later. The retirement system is underfunded largely because of the attempts to spare cities the actual costs of the pensions they were promising their employees, and doing the same thing again is insane (as more than one person testified!)

HB 130 was a request to clarify language about the sequence of deductions from pensions for medical benefits; I co-sponsored it but had no real preference as long as the issue was resolved (the retirement system and administrative services were in disagreement.) Administrative Services trumped the retirement system by referring to an opinion of the Attorney General that legislative intent was on their side, so I expect we'll go with them.

HB 536 was another repeat, adding public works employees killed in the line of duty to those eligible for a state death benefit. We discussed it without coming to a vote.

My HB 629, a repeat submission that legalizes possession and small-scale cultivation of cannabis, was heard in another committee and immediately retained, along with HB 237, a bill to legalize, tax and regulate cannabis. I understand the committee wants to work on the regulations, but I'd hoped my bill would go forward – it doesn't clash with *any* regulatory scheme and protects citizens who buy it legally in Massachusetts, Maine, or Vermont!



Carol McGuire

Representative Carol McGuire
carol@mcguire4house.com
 782-4918