



March 12, 2021

Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



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

This week, my committee met only once, to hear our last two House bills. HB 187, on emergency powers of the commissioner of HHS, deals with one oversight mechanism: using the existing HHS oversight committee. Much of the testimony was confused by confusion between the commissioner's order (one, restricting new prescriptions for three medications used to treat Covid as well as other existing diseases) and the many emergency orders issued by the governor.

HB 533, creating a division of enforcement and investigation in the lottery commission, seemed quite straightforward, since it reorganized their existing staff. However, the bill was badly written, with grammar and language problems that made it difficult to be sure it would do what the commission wanted! A senior committee member volunteered to come up with an amendment to clean up the language, which we'll need before finishing with this bill.

We also heard a non-germane amendment to HB 141, which was the fire fighting foam database. This amendment was brought in for Merrimack county, to allow a new county administrator be exempt from participation in the retirement system. This is desirable for people who have no history with the system and don't plan to stay very long: it lets them put their retirement investments into a more portable plan. It's also good for someone (such as the likely administrator in Merrimack County) with a long history in Group II (police, fire, and corrections) because a little bit of Group I will not improve their pensions significantly, and they would lose some special Group II benefits (earlier retirement age, maybe a medical subsidy...)

We discussed this at some length; we agreed that getting a good county administrator with some experience with the county was valuable, and it seemed reasonable since towns and cities have been able to exempt their chief administrator since 1973! Several members were concerned that the county would not be paying towards the retirement system unfunded liability, and a new amendment requiring this is being drafted.

The committee debated and voted on HB 575, setting the hours for a cosmetology apprenticeship equal to those for schooling, rather than twice as many, with the opportunity to mix both methods. This will increase flexibility for applicants, and probably increase the numbers of apprentices, since it would be possible to get some schooling and then practice as an apprentice. The vote was 10-9, as all the Democrats object to any relaxation in licensing requirements, no matter how minimal.

We also voted to retain HB 414, on evacuations in a state of emergency, because it conflicts with the federally mandated evacuation plan for an incident at the Seabrook nuclear plant.

I presented two of my bills to the Senate, and was pleased that they immediately voted to pass them: HB 94, adjusting some license renewal dates to make them easier to administer, and HB 70, eyebrow microblading.



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