



October 29, 2021

Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



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

To my constituents in Pittsfield,

This week, my committee met to vote on the bills we held over from the spring. We voted unanimously to kill HB 619, moving police and fire dispatchers to retirement Group II, since the sponsor had not thoroughly dealt with the issues we brought up earlier in the year; HB 452, prohibiting the secretary of state from running for other offices; HB 211, changing the Manchester retirement system; and HB 170, declaring a commemorative day for the first labor strike in the US by women, since we felt that the city of Dover was appropriately commemorating this event (with one dissenter.)

HB 414, on evacuations during a state of emergency, would codify the current practice that if someone chose to not evacuate, they would be left alone and not forced to leave. Some members thought it was unnecessary, others that it was too vague and impractical to implement; we voted to kill it, 12-6, with the opposition (including me) not willing to force people to act against their best judgment even in an emergency. HB 204, declaring "Granny D" Day, was killed, 15-3; most of us were opposed to creating commemorative days in statute, rather than by activists petitioning the governor or localities celebrating their own heroes. HB 84, commemorating Ona Judge Staines, was amended to correct her name (she preferred her married name, not her maiden name) and make it a one-time commemoration. Mrs. Staines had been a slave in George Washington's household, but she escaped to New Hampshire and lived the rest of her life here, as a free woman.

HB 230, on child care licensing; HB 275, on states of emergency; and HB 457, on the youth advisory council, were discussed but not voted out of committee due to problems with the amendments we wanted for them.

I'm also working on the redistricting committee, mostly on the state representative districts. The Senate will do its own districts and the executive council; we have the congressional districts as well as our own. Keeping the districts equal in population is a challenge, since we can't split towns or cross county lines. I've been to four of the county listening sessions, including for Merrimack county, and the common issues are big districts and broad floterials. Some object to floterials in general, but they are handy in picking up the fractions – if we eliminate them, the regular districts would have to be big enough to have an even number of reps. Most towns don't: in my district, Allenstown is 1.37 reps, Epsom, 1.4, and Pittsfield 1.18. So we can go for a three town, four rep district, or for two or three base districts plus a floterial. Pembroke is an even two reps, but it's the only town in Merrimack county that doesn't need either another town or a floterial. It's an interesting puzzle!



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