



March 17, 2023

Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



To my constituents in Allenstown, Dunbarton, Epsom, & Hooksett,

This week, my committee had a last day of hearings on House bills. HCR 2 was a house resolution condemning vandalism and intolerance, which had no opposition or support, other than the sponsor. We voted 17-3 to kill it, as a resolution has no real effect.

HR 11, on welcoming communities, was a resolution expressing support for immigrants and diverse cultures and people. We discussed it for a while, with the supporters talking about it as a branding opportunity, and opponents concerned that welcoming meant different things to different people. The vote was 10-9 to kill the resolution; I was opposed more because these resolutions are just a waste of time and energy than worried about being welcoming. Municipalities can already declare themselves welcoming communities – Nashua already has.

HB 96 would create a new holiday, Old Man of the Mountain Day. The caretakers of the Old Man came to talk about the day he “died;” others talked about what the state symbol meant to them. Very heartwarming, but, as usual, most of the committee thought putting it into statute was a waste of time compared with organizing a remembrance ceremony for the 20th anniversary or fundraising to support the memorial in Franconia Notch. We voted 16-3 to kill the bill.

HB 428, clarifying the statutes on conditional licenses under the board of mental health practice, also had an amendment presented at the hearing to join the social worker interstate compact. This generated a bit of testimony, all in favor. I'm strongly opposed to these compacts as

unconstitutional, because compact rules *must* be accepted as laws in every member state! The committee voted unanimously to retain the bill, since even those members who favored the compact didn't want to vote on it immediately.

HB 390, restructuring the New Hampshire commission on Native American Affairs, was a bill sponsored by a member of the committee, a first term representative who is a Native American. Unfortunately, it turned into a series of attacks on her credibility and motives by a large number of Native Americans who opposed her bill; I was kept busy trying to enforce decorum. After that exercise, we voted 16-3 to kill the bill: our first intention was to retain it, as a courtesy to the member, but the vitriol at the hearing would be repeated at any meeting on the bill, and we couldn't take that!

Thursday we met in session. Seven bills from my committee were on the consent calendar, including HB 594, which grants New Hampshire professional licenses to anyone with a out of state license that is in good standing and has “comparable” licensing requirements, which is nearly all of them. (I know of only 4 cases where our requirements are not considered “comparable” to other states.) This isn't quite universal license recognition, but it's most of the way there! HB 655, recodifying the statutes of the Office of Professional Licensure & Certification, another important bill, was also on consent. They passed without comment along with 26 non-controversial bills from other committees.

HB 497, changes the privacy of case records in DCYF from closed, unless the commissioner agrees to share them with interested parties (primarily parents!) to open, unless the commissioner petitions the court to keep them



Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



sealed. It was debated, passed, 178-173, and not reconsidered, 174-182. This was a partisan vote, and we've learned from previous sessions to reconsider any such vote immediately to prevent a later reconsideration when the numbers are against us. (A vote may be reconsidered only once, and there's a time limit on doing so.)

HB 76, imposing a 3 day waiting period between purchasing and receiving a firearm, was debated on the grounds that it might prevent some suicides, not passed, 168-193, then killed on a voice vote. HB 89, granting posthumous exonerations and annulments, was debated and passed, 317-45. I voted against it because, constitutionally, it is not the legislature that grants exonerations; that's the function of the governor (pardons) and the court system (annulments.) Still, this should be the last time we have to debate Goody Cole of Hampton, who was convicted of witchcraft (by a Massachusetts court!) during the early colonial era.

HB 328, legalizing hallucinogens for adults, was debated at some (rather amusing) length before being killed, 290-76. Dan and I were with the anti-prohibitionists, on a totally non-partisan vote. HB 360, simply legalizing cannabis for adults, without creating a regulatory structure or tax, was debated, not killed, 160-210, then passed on a voice vote.

HB 444, prohibiting possession of a firearm at a polling place, was actually debated before being killed, 202-167. Since open carry of firearms has been legal here since before New Hampshire was a state, this seemed like a strange time to try to ban it. HB 596, prohibiting law enforcement from racial profiling, was debated on whether a bill was needed, and how to determine if racial profiling actually occurred. It passed, 186-185, and was not reconsidered, 185-187. I voted against it because this bill would be impossible to enforce, not

because I favor racial profiling. Making statements rather than laws is not the true function of the legislature.

HB 71, repealing a report on charter school funding, passed without comment. HB 104, requiring multi-stall bathrooms and locker rooms in schools be restricted to one sex, was tabled, 345-28, before the (undoubtedly lengthy) debate. HB 170, requiring schools teach cursive handwriting and multiplication tables, passed 199-174 after a short debate. I supported it because both are necessary, and I was rather shocked that they aren't routinely taught! HB 394, requiring cooperative school boards to rotate the meetings and the chairmanship among the districts, was debated and killed, 226-146. I supported the bill even though this is already within their authority: the problem is that with one large town and a number of smaller ones, the large town dominates the cooperative board.

HB 399, allowing a testing option to graduate from high school, was tabled on a voice vote. HB 514, on obscene materials in schools, was also tabled, 200-175. HB 590, allowing removal of political advertising on public property by the candidate, was killed on a voice vote. This appeared to be addressing signs with the candidate's name but not actually their signs, which I tend to think is a rare occurrence.

HB 231, banning declawing cats, was debated at some length, and passed, 225-147. I was in the minority because I wasn't convinced that this was a real problem. HB 58, prohibiting paying sub-minimum wages (only allowable to tipped employees) was debated, not passed, 176-194, and killed, 192-182. I was against this bill because tipped employees are against it: Maine made this change some years ago, and after it was in place



Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



for a few years the service employees led a movement to change back! Apparently they either got more money in tips or wanted to know that better work led to more pay.

HB 125, imposing limits on youth (16 or 17 year olds) employment, was debated and not passed, 175-195, then killed on a voice vote. This bill was an attempt to roll back some expansions in allowable hours and times of work that we passed last year. One worthwhile example is that if you work at Market Basket – which actually employs a **lot** of youth and treats them well – and the store closes at 9 pm, employees can't stop working at 9; you're expect to stay for 15 minutes or so to tidy up. So if the law mandates youth stop at 9 exactly, they aren't going to work evening shifts. I've heard of stories of similar problems at Dunkin, where youth might clock in a few minutes before 7 am, the mandated start time.

Next came five bills on energy regulation, all tied in committee and all debated at tedious length. I'm rather impressed by the optimism here, thinking that their speeches are going to change anyone's mind on this issue... HB 208, establishing greenhouse gas reduction goals and requiring a new climate action plan, was debated, not amended, 185-186, debated some more, then not passed, 183-187, and killed, 192-181. Reconsideration failed, 186-187, and we voted 214-159 to waste a lot of paper to print the debate in the permanent journal. I was opposed, as usual. HB 263, requiring all utilities to notify small solar generators that they might have gotten renewable energy certificates if they applied for them, was debated, not passed, 178-186, and killed, 187-180. HB 523, increasing the net metering limits to 5 mega W, was debated, not passed, 182-189, killed, 189-182, and not reconsidered, 178-193. This is the same attempt to lower rates for favored groups

(owners of solar arrays and their friends) while increasing them for everyone else that we've seen repeatedly over the last few years (at least.) HB 524, sending less of the greenhouse gas funds to ratepayers and more to favored energy efficiency projects, was debated, not passed, 181-186, killed, 187-180, and not reconsidered, 180-187. HB 605, drastically increasing the percentage of electricity generation that needs to be from solar, had a longer, duller debate than the others before not passing, 181-188, and being killed on a voice vote. Reconsideration then failed on a voice vote.

HCR 4, urging federal term limits, was not amended, 172-196, debated, not passed, 145-224, then killed on a voice vote. I voted against it because I think the ballot box is the best term limit mechanism – and also because I can't see Congress acting on the issue!

HB 54, moving antique car inspections from April to May, passed without comment. HB 93, allowing municipalities to lower speed limits seasonally, was tabled, 205-162. It had problems in the implementation, so even some supporters thought the language needed more work. HB 198, requiring new residents to notify the DMV if they move out within 60 days or their out of state license expires, is an attempt to keep our voter rolls more current. After some debate, it passed, 187-182, and was not reconsidered, 181-188. Finally, HB 222, requiring seat belt use, was debated and killed, 206-162. Clearly not as partisan an issue as, say, greenhouse gases.

Friday, I presented ED&A recommendations on HB2, the budget trailer bill, to the Finance committee – and a roomful of interested parties! The committee recommendations were to delete: the structural changes already passed in HB 655; the new massage establishment license killed in



Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



HB 341; repeal of licenses for foresters, landscape architects, and natural scientists; repeal of the LNA license; restructuring of the board of mental health practice; and make a number of minor editorial changes. These were discussed last week in committee, and a solid majority supported them. Other committee members came to present their particular concerns, which had been noted but not supported by the rest of the committee.



Carol McGuire

Representative Carol McGuire
carol@mcguire4house.com
782-4918