



January 12, 2024

Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



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

This week, the House started public hearings on the new bills. My committee first met to review the performance audit of mental health professional licensing. There were no surprises; the auditors found conflicting requirements, various laws not enforced, and leisurely activity by the licensing boards. Most of the statutory changes suggested have been submitted already, so this audit was mostly a map of things to be aware of as we proceeded this year.

Then we heard seven pension bills, all of which were sent to subcommittee. HB 1647 was a recommendation from the retirement commission I chaired this fall, restoring the pension multiplier to 2.5 (from a staggered 2.0 to 2.4 currently) for Group II (police, fire, corrections) employees not vested in 2011. It improves the pensions for all GII employees, including new hires. HB 1653, adding overtime back into earnable compensation for only the employed but not vested group, and HB 1673, changing the calculation of final compensation for that group, both had moderate costs that compounded the effects of other changes, so we need to be careful about increasing costs.

HB 1299 added the fire instructors at the community college to GII if they had at least 10 years' service before becoming educators, in an attempt to recruit New Hampshire professionals. Teaching is a Group I activity, and going to GI after a career in GII is generally disadvantageous for the person: both because there are some special benefits that are only available if one retires directly from a GII position, and because the federal government penalizes Social Security if there is a GII pension (GII does not pay into, nor

earn, Social Security benefits.) The committee was skeptical mostly because there are only two instructors in this program, and we hate making exceptions for only a few people.

HB 1211 would increase the maximum hours worked by a retiree for ten years, to allow localities to hire them to cover openings. Since very few retirees work anything close to the maximum number of hours, I'm not optimistic we'll recommend this bill.

HB 1421 requires the retirement system to hire two investment consultants, rather than one, and only renew the contract of the one with the better results. It's an interesting idea, and might improve the investment results, but the bill puts this competition in the wrong statute.

Finally, HB 1307 grants a \$500 stipend to disability retirees who didn't get last year's bonus, because it was restricted to those who retired after at least 20 years of service. Disability retirees don't *choose* to retire early.



The committee will be holding

hearings at least two days a week for a while, since we have 66 new bills assigned.

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