



January 19, 2024

# Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



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

This week, my committee continued with public hearings. HB 1413, deleting the statute describing mental health supervision agreements, seemed to be misunderstood by almost everyone in favor. The sponsor described it as “housekeeping” to delete some duplicative language – but I couldn't find the duplication and she didn't give specifics. One witness thought that this would allow him to hire recent graduates and set them to work immediately, as he stated the local non-profits do – but that would require amending a different section of law to modify the exemptions. The only person who understood what the bill would actually do was opposed – she thought the language describing supervision agreements was appropriate and necessary! The subcommittee will have fun with this one.

HB 1112, establishing a continuing education requirement in human trafficking, seemed rather broad for what health care professionals could actually do about human trafficking (report suspicions to law enforcement.) The requirement for biannual training seemed excessive to many of us – yes, give people one class on it, but it would get repetitive very quickly.

HB 1410, on professional licenses, made a number of changes to the Board of Nursing, some simple cleanup, others more nuanced. With over 30,000 licensees, this board has no problem with appointees nor getting a quorum, so I don't see the need to reduce the size of the board over their objections. It also deleted the registration of medical technicians and of medical imaging specialists. The imaging specialists showed up in force to oppose the bill, with stacks of data to show

how important safety was in their profession. Again, this bill went to subcommittee to examine the details.

HB 1427, creating a new license category of “deputy physicians” would take medical school graduates without a residency and have the state board of medicine set up (essentially) an apprenticeship program in its place. There was opposition from doctors, nurses, medical schools, and the board of medicine, and the sponsors didn't seem to have convinced anyone that this was necessary or appropriate.

HB 1394, licensing music therapists, was a repeat of a bill that died in committee of conference in June. The testimony was brief, and mostly consisted of saying the insurers, Medicaid, and the Veterans' Administration would only deal with licensed professionals, so music therapists needed to be licensed.

HB 1454, benefits for childcare employees, originally allowed childcare agencies to enroll their employees in the state health plan, at their own expense. However, the sponsor brought in an amendment to have the state pay for it. That dampened the committee's interest in the bill, since it would expand the number of people in the plan by almost a third, and cost (most likely) over \$400,000 per year.

HB 1546, on government purchasing, forbade any government entity – state, county, local – from dealing with companies that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or ethnicity. Since such discrimination is illegal by both state and federal laws, it didn't seem that the bill would accomplish much. It did state that simply having a DEI statement was evidence of discrimination, but it also required investigation, monitoring, and reporting on contracts that would be difficult to



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enforce, costly, and cumbersome. The committee voted 14-1 to recommend killing the bill.

HB 1601, on the prescription affordability board, would allow the board to hire an executive director for a four year term, not two. The sponsor didn't convince me that this was necessary – after all, we all need to get re-elected every two years!

HB 1486, on proxy carbon pricing, was an attempt to incorporate the effects of a carbon tax before the federal government imposed one. The sponsor and several enthusiasts spoke at great length about the necessity of limiting carbon emissions, and the cost effectiveness of pricing in more expensive fossil fuels when procuring long-lived equipment. However well-intentioned, the bill would be a nightmare to implement, increase purchasing costs and complexity, and require a team of economists to develop the criteria to do this.

Next week, two more full days of hearings.



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