



June 14, 2024

Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



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

This week, the House met for the last time to vote on all committee of conference reports. No amendments allowed – just yes or no. And a motion to table is a non-debatable motion to kill the bill.

We started with memorial remarks for two former members, then a member moved to suspend the rules to create a special committee to investigate the family court system and DCYF. She spoke eloquently of problems in both, and that too many children in state custody died. She was hoping that this committee would uncover evidence to start prosecution of actual malefactors. I agreed with the opponents, who felt that this effort should have started sooner – the actual last active day of the session was too late. The motion failed, 120-247, and we voted 248-120 to print her remarks in the Journal.

We passed five Senate bills on one voice vote, then SB 266, on administration of school assessment programs. SB 340, on communication between parents and school on special education, had been amended to include a start on the non-communication problems found in the recent audit of special education programs. This was debated, with the opponents wanting to wait until the complete audit was released and a comprehensive fix developed; supporters wanted to start monitoring the situation immediately. We voted, 188-179, to accept the conference report.

We then agreed with six more bills, all without debate and on voice votes: SB 407, an ambulance cost study; SB 417, out of home placements for children; SB 480, real estate practice; SB 499,

SNAP and summer EBT programs, which also had the town disaster relief program, trimmed to \$25,000 per town; SB 555, pharmaceutical rebates; and SB 574, temporary agents for minors.

That style continued all day, with nearly all bills approved without debate, by voice votes. HB 194, keeping track of historical markers; HB 1030, repealing various task forces and study committees; HB 1274, judicial administration; HB 1278, qualifying conditions for medical cannabis; and HB 1622, administrative rulemaking. HB 318, on bail and bail commissioners; HB 458, studying power generation; and HB 518, administration of occupations followed quietly.

HB 1018, on various liquor licenses, *and* allowing land in current use to get the 20% tax break for allowing recreational use even if it was otherwise posted “no trespassing,” was debated on the added section. The opponents were concerned that the land would be patrolled by law enforcement looking for illicit border crossers, and the debate on how to tell one wasn't a legitimate hiker was rather amusing. The bill passed, 190-176.

HB 1079, on critical incident stress management teams *and* setting up an educator incentive program, was not debated, but passed 241-125. I was opposed because of the added program, which could add up to substantial amounts of money in the near future.

Dan spoke against HB 1091, on financing of political campaigns, because it would require tracking and reporting even small contributions. Right now, contributions under \$50 per person may be lumped together; after this, everyone who passes the hat at a political event or holds a 50/50 raffle must get the name and address of *every* contributor, just in case their contributions add up



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to \$50 over the course of the campaign. This problem was not taken seriously by the supporters, and the bill passed, 190-181.

Back to the non-debates, we approved HB 1127, on revocation of drivers' licenses; HB 1195, allowing school districts to allocate SAU costs in different ways; HB 1197, on criminal background checks; and HB 1202, on driveway permits.

HB 1215, though, had a lengthy debate. This bill started as a simplification of approvals and appeals for developments, especially preventing newer versions of building codes being applied to developments in process. Then it got a special approval for the Hampton town council to close D Street and lease it to the Hampton Casino Ballroom for 99 years! This is normally done by town meeting, but the lawyers were concerned about the 99 year lease – most long leases of town property require repeated approvals of subsequent town meetings. I wondered why the town didn't just *sell* the street to the ballroom, and found out they wanted the continual lease payments. So the debate was on both parts of the bill: many of the Democrats seemed opposed to the benefits for developers, and many Republicans were opposed to special purpose bills. Eventually, the bill failed, 102-261, on a non-partisan basis!

There was no debate on HB 1236, a recruitment and retention program in HHS and tweaking the “in and out medical assistance” program. HB 1241, on money transmitters and the public deposit investment pool, had a brief debate before passing on a voice vote.

HB 1243, laws on retail sales of motor vehicles, had a motion to table. The deputy speaker apologized for signing off one of the conferees even though he didn't agree with the conference

report; tabling failed, 146-202. I voted to table because I understand not wanting to sign off on a committee of conference report, and would feel betrayed if someone signed off for me under those circumstances. But most people seemed to think this was a routine bill, and it passed on a voice vote, as did HB 1459, an update to the insurance laws.

HB 1265, requiring school districts to report certain expenses in a user-friendly manner, was debated as unnecessary, since the data was available. Maybe available, but not easily found, and certainly not in a helpful format. It passed, 183-172.

HB 1292, on coverage of children in the retiree health plan *and* federal immigration enforcement, had been amended to only apply to individuals arrested or detained for violation of a *state* law. That wasn't enough to appease local governments, which were worried about having to deal with federal officials, nor those unwilling to have immigration laws enforced: it was tabled, 192-165.

HB 1313, access to the voter checklist, and HB 1365, about manufacturers of beer, wine, and liquor, and a study committee on land purchases near military bases, were both approved without debate.

HB 1369, verifying the voter checklist every four years rather than every ten, was debated as suppressing the votes of infrequent voters (who might have to re-register!) It was killed, 178-185.

HB 1370, eliminating exceptions to voter identification, was debated and *then* tabled, 223-141. I voted against tabling, but wasn't too unhappy with the result: this process of calling a hotline to verify identity would be challenged in



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court, and, even if upheld, I'm not sure it could be implemented in time for this year's elections.

HB 1380, on brew pub licenses, passed quietly.

HB 1386, banning disposal of lithium ion batteries in landfills, was debated as too broad, since it criminalized disposing of nearly all electronic devices as well as all sorts of batteries. It still passed, 238-118.

HB 1400, dealing with parking spaces, authority to evict squatters, and allowing towns to delay tax increases for converting offices to residences, was debated on all these issues. It passed, 205-149.

HB 1573, on out of home placements for children; HB 1585, creating the position of certified medication aide and funding the nurse student loan program; HB 1596, disclosure of artificial intelligence in political advertising; and HB 1600, a study committee on municipal net metering, converted to only technical corrections, all passed without comment.

HB 1616, parental consent to the Medicaid to schools program and a recruitment and retention program at the Sununu Center and Hampstead Hospital, was debated on both issues. The Democrats were opposed to parental involvement in the Medicaid program, and some Republicans to the retention program. The final vote was 173-179, with one Republican joining all Democrats against.

HB 1623, on involuntary retirement of electricity generators, passed without debate.

HB 1633, legalization and regulation of cannabis, started the debate, then was tabled, 178-173, with six or so speakers stranded. A later motion to take from the table failed, 162-189; this was not a

partisan vote.

HB 1665, expanding education freedom accounts, was partisan. It was debated and failed, 168-185, with seven Republicans joining all Democrats in opposition. Our "majority" always shrinks in the afternoon...

HB 2024, the ten year transportation plan, passed without comment.



Representative Carol McGuire
carol@mcguire4house.com
(603) 782-4918