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Obama, DNC Dictate NH Dems' Legislative Agenda

New Hampshire Democrats often like to unfairly characterize some bills filed by Republicans as "model legislation" written by organizations like ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), a nonpartisan individual membership organization of state legislators which favors federalism and conservative public policy solutions. In fact, Rep. Cynthia Chase (D-Keene) filed a bill that would, "require the identification of a private organization responsible for distributing a model act used by a legislator to propose legislation, as provided by the legislation's prime sponsor or as identified by a third party."

Well, in case you haven't yet made the association between President Obama's and the DNC's major policy themes over the last few months and what New Hampshire Democrat legislators have been filing for legislation, we wanted to help highlight the clear connection.

Perhaps NH Democrats got an advance copy of the President's State of the Union address, because many of their legislative agenda items mirror the President's recent speeches and talking points.

In the *unlikely* event that Rep. Chase's bill becomes law, perhaps the below referenced bills would be subject to labeling as model legislation from the Democratic National Committee.

Raising the minimum wage

Nationally, there is a noticeable Democratic push to boost the federal minimum wage by 39% to \$10.10 an hour, especially after President Barack Obama made the increase a centerpiece his State of the Union address. 5 states have raised their minimum wage since the President made this a policy initiative last year.

In New Hampshire, Rep. Sally Kelly (D-Chichester) has filed a bill (HB1403) that establishes a state minimum hourly wage to be adjusted by the cost of living index.

Tying anything to an unpredictable index is a terrible idea, but in general, raising the minimum wage could strain the budgets of many of our small businesses. New Hampshire doesn't have a state-specific minimum wage, but simply mirrors what the current federal rate is.

Both state and national legislative proposals are unlikely to pass. But think about it this way: if the federal minimum wage is raised to \$10.10, that's a 39% increase. When was the last time you got a 39% raise?

(Continued on page 4...)

Important Upcoming Dates & Events

- Wednesday, February 5 – Republican Caucus- 9am- LOB 305-307
- Wednesday, February 5 – Governor's State of the State Address 10am
- Wednesday, February 5 – House session following State of the State Address
- Thursday, February 6 – Last day to report on House bills going to a 2nd committee

Mass Confusion with Massachusetts Health Insurance Marketplace

In a [recent edition of the Republican Review](#), we highlighted the problems and astronomical (\$172 million) cost associated with Vermont's Obamacare health insurance exchange. As it turns out, Vermont's problems are not unique to the region. Massachusetts, whose Health Connector website has been operational since 2006, has been experiencing major problems since it's "upgrade" to comply with provisions in the Obamacare law.

In the last month, Massachusetts media outlets have been publishing stories on the troubled system. On January 9th, the Boston Globe's article, [Mass. Health Connector fraught with uncertainty](#), stated, "The Connector's new website has performed so poorly that the state has all but abandoned attempts to fix it."

Many consumers were charged for coverage, but the Health Connector had no record of their enrollment. According to the Springfield, MA newspaper, The Republican, as a result of the poor performance and glitches, Massachusetts State officials took the rare step of having to put 22,000 people on temporary insurance plans, paid for by the state, while the connector processes coverage applications. And According to CBS News, new enrollment figures released in January show the state ranks dead last in enrolling people since the federal law kicked in.

Today, January 31, the Boston Globe reports in its story, [Uninsured left without health coverage despite paying state](#), "an untold number of people who... applied for Connector plans without financial assistance have not gotten coverage, because their payments were lost or somehow never linked to their accounts."

How much has this technological debacle cost Massachusetts taxpayers? The state had a \$69 million contract with CGI, the same company that was a major developer of the beleaguered federal insurance website and the same company that had an \$84 million contract to oversee the building of the Vermont exchange. The \$69 million price tag does not include the cost of fixes and workarounds associated with the poor performance.

When the New Hampshire House and Senate passed and Governor Lynch signed HB1297 in 2012, prohibiting the state from creating such a health exchange, perhaps this was what they were trying to avoid. As a reminder, legislation attached to HB544 includes a repeal of the prohibition of a state-based health insurance exchange. If signed into law, this enables the State to pursue a state exchange and leads us down the precarious path Vermont and Massachusetts have experienced.

New Hampshire shouldn't begin to think about dumping tens of millions of taxpayer dollars into such a quagmire.

Poll: Obamacare Support Declining Among the Uninsured

This month's tracking poll from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found that 47 percent of the uninsured said they hold **unfavorable** views of the law while just 24 percent said they liked it. These negative views have increased since December, when 43 percent of the uninsured panned the law and 36 percent liked it.



Congratulations, Rep. Joe Sweeney!

Every year, New Hampshire's Union Leader Newspaper highlights 40 of New Hampshire's best and brightest rising stars under the age of 40.

On their list this year is Representative Joe Sweeney (R-Salem) Sweeney, 20, is currently a sophomore at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, studying Political Science. He serving his first term in the House and is a member of the Election Law Committee.

To read more about Rep. Sweeney, see: [UL's 40 Under Forty](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT Session Review

KENO PASSES THE NH HOUSE

In a roll call vote of 202-141, HB485 passed the NH House on Wednesday.

This bill allows the operation and playing of keno games, provides for licensing of keno game operators by the lottery commission, and directs the keno revenue to the education trust fund.

HB485 will now move on to the Senate.

HOUSE VOTES NO ON WIND TURBINE MORATORIUM

HB580 failed on the House floor Wednesday in a roll call vote of 194-148.

The bill would have placed a moratorium on wind turbine plants and new electric transmission line projects, including Northern Pass, until the state issues a comprehensive energy plan that is due out later this year.

HOUSE PASSES BOAT FEE HIKE

On Wednesday the House passed HB292, a bill that adds a registration fee for all commercial, private, and pleasure vessels.

Originally, the bill would have required boats registered out of state to buy a decal to aid in milfoil control. Republicans were against this bill because an amendment was added that changed the bill to apply in-state boats only and increase the fee by \$2.

HB292 passed 164-127 and now move on to the House Ways & Means committee.

February 5th Session Outlook

What's coming up next week in the NH House?

- HB1172- relative to mandatory ignition interlock device installation
- HB1237- prohibiting residency restrictions for registered sex offenders
- HB1255- making students whose name appears on a voter checklist eligible for in-state tuition
- HB1573- discontinuing regional planning commissions and requiring the election of municipal planning board members
- HB1375- permitting a municipal law enforcement agency to collect unwanted/illegal firearms
- HB1475- expanding the research & development tax credit against business profits tax to be a reinvestment tax credit
- HB1509- including nonprofit charitable enterprises in the business enterprise tax and lowering the rate of the tax

This week, Democrats attempted to bring forward 2 different amendments to HB1589, the Universal Firearms Background Check bill, without a hearing. Thankfully, those of us who are opposed to any infringement on our Second Amendment rights were heard, and an amendment was discussed publically at a subcommittee work session Thursday. The subcommittee voted 2-1 to recommend the amendment to the full committee. Rep. Don Flanders (R-Laconia) held strong in opposition as the only Republican on the subcommittee.

Don't be fooled by Rep. Butler's amendment to HB1589, which waters down some of the egregious language in original bill. It is still a foot in the door to continue to chip away at our rights. It is an unnecessary measure that attempts to address a problem that we don't have in New Hampshire and potentially make criminals out of otherwise law abiding gun owners.

I hope you'll join me in opposing any attempt to amend or pass HB1589 in any form.

Gene G. Chandler

Obama, National Dems Dictate NH Dems' Legislative Agenda *(Continued...)*

Prevailing wage for government contracts

Nationally, President Obama, in the first of potentially many executive actions tied to his State of the Union address, will unilaterally increase the minimum wage by 39% for workers under new federal contracts to \$10.10 an hour, from \$7.25.

In New Hampshire, Rep. Jeff Goley (D-Manchester) has filed a bill (HB1592) that would "require certain workers employed in the construction of public works in the state of New Hampshire to be paid the prevailing minimum hourly wage and benefits."

While this is not as expansive as the President's edict, it is a foot in the door that could expand to other government contractors and cost taxpayers more money.

Paycheck equity

Nationally, another theme of President Obama's SOTU address was pay equality. He claimed women "make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong, and in 2014, it's an embarrassment. Women deserve equal pay for equal work." What he failed to mention was that figure he referenced is overall earnings, and is not when pay is compared for the same work / same job.

In New Hampshire, Democrat Leaders in the House and Senate have filed bills in both bodies on this issue, SB207 and HB1188.

What NH Democrats fail to mention is that employment discrimination based on sex is already illegal in New Hampshire. The statute providing for equal pay dates back to 1947, and was last amended in 2000. In short, these bills seem to help highlight the Obama agenda, but don't highlight that there's actually a problem not already addressed by current NH law.

Medicaid Expansion

Nationally, the success of the ACA/Obamacare depends heavily on state's willingness to opt-in to what could be budget busting expansion of Medicaid eligibility (a/k/a Medicaid Expansion).

In New Hampshire, we've seen no less than 3 attempts to ram Medicaid legislation through. First, House Democrats attempted to expand Medicaid as part of the State budget. Republicans in the House and Senate rejected that idea. The Governor called a special session in November to rush through a bill to expand Medicaid. That attempt failed in the Senate. Lastly, House Democrats unveiled a surprise amendment in early January that attached Medicaid expansion legislation to an unrelated bill (HB544).

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