

Republican Review

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The Republican Majority in Concord is Providing Results for New Hampshire

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By Rep. Sherman A. Packard, Speaker Pro Tem

The New Hampshire House of Representatives has just concluded the first half of our second year session in the 2015-2016 term. The people of New Hampshire should be proud of the work our volunteer, citizen legislature is doing on behalf of our constituents. Republican majorities in the House and Senate are producing thoughtful, responsible legislation while ensuring that bills that threaten New Hampshire’s economy or the personal freedoms of our citizens are stopped in their tracks.

We’ve been able to pass a budget that meets the needs of our state with no new taxes. We’ve been able to provide business tax reforms to help spur economic growth. We’ve been able to stop bills that would strip rights away from law abiding gun owners, or end the education opportunity tax credit. We’ve passed reforms to protect the integrity of our elections. And we’ve done all of it, and more, with the help of the votes of a majority of Republicans in the House.

On Friday, March 25th, the Concord Monitor published an op-ed in which the partisan loyalty of some House members was called into question by sprinkling in a few cherry picked sets of data that suggested there is some concerted effort to deny the will of the voters. That can’t be farther from the truth.

Members of the New Hampshire House are elected to represent constituents in their district, and vote in a manner that they believe is in their communities’ best interests. The thoughts, concerns and input from citizens should be what drives the outcome of legislation, and not necessarily the desire to achieve a high rating on a legislative scorecard from a special interest group that represents just a small percentage of the electorate.

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Historic Document on Permanent Display Outside Speaker’s Office

After years of being missing, an historic document first presented to the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 1885 by Stilson Hutchins of Laconia has found a permanent home in the State House. Speaker Shawn Jasper, himself a lifelong student of history, unveiled the document last year in Representatives Hall. After its initial and temporary placement in the back of the House Chamber, the artifact was sent off to preservationists to ensure the frame structure and materials were suitable for long term public display. This week the now polished and



preserved document was hung outside room 311 of the state house.

On July 4, 1876, the Centennial of American Independence, a document signed by President Ulysses S. Grant was created by order of a special Act of Congress to honor the historic milestone.

It was titled, “*The Administration of the 4th, 1876.*” It was then signed by the Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, and members of the United States Congress. Only New Hampshire native and Vice President Henry Wilson’s name is missing because he had recently died while in office. On August 26, 1885, Representative Hutchins, who would one day publish what is now the Manchester Union Leader, presented a framed copy of this document to the New Hampshire House.

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Additionally, the structure of the House of Representatives gives a high amount of deference to the work, study, and recommendations from our standing policy committees. These committees, who each deal with a specific policy area, work tirelessly and put in countless hours listening to public testimony, hearing from experts and stakeholders, and doing research in order to make the best recommendation possible on each bill that comes before them, so their House colleagues can make an informed decision based on the committees' work.

As it turns out, with Republicans in the majority of House, the makeup of these policy committees also consist of a majority of Republicans. The majority of the time, the votes of a majority of Republicans on the committees are the driving force behind those recommendations. And as it turns out, the majority of the time, a majority of Republicans agree with and support the recommendations of the committees by casting a vote in favor of their recommendations.

There are some critics out there who live in a world of spreadsheets and data and will try to imply that based on a small set of data, there is some sort of conspiracy, that the will of the people is not being represented in Concord. In reality, the only set of data that matters is on Election Day, where voters decide whether or not their representatives in Concord (or Washington) represent their interests. Are they carrying out the will of the people of their district? Do they represent the values of their constituents? Do they vote in a manner that benefits the people that elected them? If the answer to any of these questions is, "No," than it should come as no surprise when change occurs.

Republicans learned a valuable lesson in 2012. After 2 years of hyper-partisanship in Concord, Republicans lost a record amount of seats in the legislature, relegating us to a term in the minority. It's fair to say that many of us who served at that time, and who are elected to serve currently, want to use this time in the majority to return to a representative legislature; a legislature that recognizes the broad spectrum of opinions of the people we represent, and understands that strict adherence to a philosophy determined by any group or organization aspiring for ideological purity, has a history of leading us to defeat.

There are many factors that will determine the outcome of legislative races in 2016, and we have no doubt there will be some contested primaries. There will be scorecards and report-card-like publications from who-knows-where grading legislators on sometimes trivial votes. There will be accusations of who is the purest of the pure of their political party. But let's face it: we are elected to represent all the people in our district, not just those who share our views on a small set of issues. If we want to continue to be a legislature of the people we need to return to being representative of them, and not necessarily representative of a homogenous partisan edict.

As our conservative former Republican Governor Meldrim Thomson quipped frequently, it's time to put, "people above politics."

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: MAJORITY OFFICE OPEN HOUSE FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

On April 7th, the House Majority Office will hold an open house for people interested in running for and serving in the state legislature. This will be open to any Republican who would like to learn more about the day-to-day responsibilities of a state representative, the history and traditions of the New Hampshire House, and will include tours and brief presentations from House and Party leadership. Once again, this year we are looking forward to also include members of the NH Federation of Republican Women.

In 2014, nearly 100 candidates and activists descended on Concord for a similar event.

Current House members and Republican Party activists are encouraged to forward event information to members of their community who have expressed interest in serving in the legislature.

The tentative schedule of events for April 7th will begin with coffee and registration period beginning at 8:30 a.m., followed by brief remarks from House Republican leadership team, and Republican Party officials. Attendees will be assigned a mentor who will guide small groups to observe committee hearings/meetings. An official State House tour will follow, before a complimentary lunch. After lunch more informational sessions will be held along with a Q&A session.

The filing period for candidates is June 1 through June 10.

OPEN HOUSE

APRIL 7th, 2016

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Program begins at 9:00 a.m.

RSVP is required:

603-271-3665 or

info@nhhousegop.com

Registration for the event will close Monday April 4th at 5pm to ensure we have enough room, materials, and nourishment for all attendees.

Legislative Food Drive March 14 – April 7

A Legislative Food Drive to collect non-perishable food items for the N.H. Food Bank will take place between March 14th and April 7th. During this time, there will be large donation boxes in Rooms 121-122 of the State House and at the front desk of the Legislative Office Building. Food items will be distributed to New Hampshire families and neighbors most in need, so your generosity and support are greatly appreciated to assist the Food Bank in their ongoing efforts.

JLCAR Votes to Send Bobcat Issue to Legislative Policy Committees

On Friday, the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR) met to review a proposed rule change from the Fish & Game department that would allow hunting of bobcats. At the conclusion a period of public testimony, Sen. Feltes moved that the rule be rejected based on the fact that the hunt could affect the endangered population of lynx, a federally protected species commonly mistaken for bobcats. With the motion before the committee, Chair Carol McGuire said the following:

“Therefore since we have a motion to preliminarily reject [the rule change] on the basis that it violates federal law due to the possible taking of lynx, and that the finances do not meet the public interest, we will send this to the Fish & Game committees to review the policy.”

Vote on the motion was 12-1, with Sen. Reagan opposed.

“What happens now is Fish & Game committees of both the House and the Senate have 30 days to hold a meeting to review the rule and decide whether or not it meets public policy in their interpretation. They’re involved with the policy.”

“The Fish & Game department has 45 days to take the rule and either withdraw it, amend it, or send it back with explanations on why our interpretations are wrong.”

The deadline for House committees to issue their opinion on the matter will be May 1st. The Fish & Game department has until May 16th to respond.

REMINDER: TEMPORARY COMMITTEE REPLACEMENT POLICY

If you plan to be away for a week or more, you may be eligible to be temporarily replaced on your policy committee for executive sessions. You must be absent from both committee and House session in order to be eligible. Please notify your committee chair of your absence, and length of absence. Your chair will work with the Majority Office to find a member who can fill your seat for executive sessions for that period. Ensuring all Republican seats are filled will ensure that committee votes reflect the true partisan makeup of the committee.

Rep. Spillane Recognized for Efforts to Help Veterans Enjoy Outdoors

Rep. James Spillane (R-Deerfield) received widespread and deserved [media coverage](#) earlier this week for his efforts at establishing a foundation that helps low income veterans obtain hunting and fishing licenses. The New Hampshire Veteran Sportsman Foundation is accepting donations online and will use proceeds to ensure that veterans in need can still enjoy outdoor activities that have license fees.

You can donate online at <http://nhvsf.com/>

Senate Passes HB 1696 With Severability, Work Requirement Language Unchanged

The State Senate passed HB1696 on Thursday, unchanged from what the House passed on March 9th. The 16-8 vote in favor of the bill now sends the bill to the governor’s desk for signature.

The first section of the bill still contains the provision that, “Newly eligible adults who are unemployed shall be eligible to receive benefits under RSA 126-A:5 XXIV-XXV, if the commissioner finds that the individual is engaging in at least 30 hours per week of one or a combination of the following activities,” which includes categories ranging from regular private sector employment, to enrollment job training programs.

April 6th Session Preview

- **Republican Caucus 9:00am**
- **Session Begins at 10:00am**
- **Tartan Day Celebration**
- 23 Consent Calendar, 9 Regular Calendar Bills
- SB 464-FN-A, establishing a statewide drug offender grant program and making appropriations therefor, and relative to transferring certain revenues to the revenue stabilization reserve account.
- SB 320, relative to non-academic surveys administered by a public school to its students.
- SB 446, relative to requirements of the state building code