

Republican Review

A Publication of the New Hampshire House Majority Office

Majority Leader Comments on Employment Report

CONCORD - House Majority Leader Dick Hinch (R-Merrimack) offered the following comments relative to the monthly employment report released by the Department of Employment Security on May 17th. The report states that the unemployment rate in New Hampshire remained unchanged at 2.6%, continuing to be among the lowest in the nation.

“We are pleased that New Hampshire’s economy continues to perform at a level that creates sustained economic opportunities. Our goal continues to be the retainment of these jobs in New Hampshire and attracting new businesses and new jobs to our state,” said Hinch. “Over 100,000 of our residents still have to commute out-of-state for their jobs. We need to foster a competitive economic environment to bring those jobs here. We need look for new economic opportunities in the North County and other areas that haven’t seen an upturn,” added Hinch, “We believe the Republican business tax relief we passed last year, despite the governor’s veto, builds on our low tax advantage and keep us competitive. Our Republican budget also increased funding for our university and community college system, which we hope will contribute to our ability to have an educated and skilled workforce for the 21st century jobs we hope to attract.”

Two More Business Tax Reform Bills Move Forward

CONCORD - In addition to the business tax relief included in the Republican state budget passed last year by overriding the governor’s veto, the legislature has been working on other bills to help the state take steps in the right direction on other areas of business tax law.

This week, a joint committee of conference on SB293 and HB668 met to work out the final details of the two bills dealing with the same subject matter: raising the cap on deductions for capital purchases.

Often referred to as the “section 179” bills, referencing the federal tax code provisions the bills hope to reflect at the state level, the committee settled on the House language raising the cap to \$100,000, a 4x increase from the current \$25,000 level.

The second area of reform was addressed in SB342, which the Union Leader describes, “change[s] how closely held companies such as sole proprietorships or limited liability companies are taxed when they receive an infusion of cash, such as an initial public offering or investment capital.” This legislation hopes to alleviate the potentially crippling tax burden for growing companies.

The committee of conference on SB342 also adopted the House version of the bill.

These two new provisions along with the first business tax rate cuts in 20 years add to the pro-business resume of this Republican legislature.

The governor has indicated she will sign both bills.

REMINDER:

Candidate filing period is June 1st - 10th

House candidates must file at their town or city clerk’s office during normal business hours.

NOTICES:

The next House session will be Wednesday, June 1, at 10:00 a.m., at which time it is anticipated that the House will complete action on committee of conference reports and other pending legislative business before breaking for the summer.

There will be a Republican caucus at Wednesday, June 1, at 9:00 a.m. in Representatives Hall.

State offices will be closed on Monday, May 30th, in observance of Memorial Day.

From the Speaker’s message in House Calendar 33:

Late this week it was brought to our attention that two House Bills which created study committees, HB 378 and HB 1148, passed both chambers with a reporting deadline of November 1, 2017. Unfortunately, study committees created in this session have to be concluded in this session because one legislature cannot bind the hands of the next, including in terms of what topics to study. The legislation, which will be read on the floor by the Clerk next Wednesday, changes the reporting deadline to November 1, 2016. Reps. Hinch and Shurtleff will ask for a rules suspension to allow for this housekeeping provision.

THE HOME STRETCH: COMMITTEES OF CONFERENCE CONCLUDE WORK

The committee of conference period has concluded. The deadline for conferees to sign off on reports was Thursday at 4:00pm. The outcome of the committees of conference can be viewed on the General Court website here: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/committee_of_conference/default.aspx.

For committees that filed a report, the report is viewable online. For committees that did not file a report, the bill is dead based on the impasse. Each of the reports have a blurb in the House Calendar dated May 27th. The PDF of the calendar is available here: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/caljournals/calendars/2016/HC_33.pdf. The reports are the product of negotiations with the Senate to determine the final version of each piece of legislation, when House and Senate versions differed.

On Wednesday June 1st, the House will convene for the purpose of acting on these committee of conference reports. Members will have a chance to vote up or down on each individual report. Reports cannot be amended on the floor.

The House Majority Office will have a "white sheet" for Republican members on Wednesday that will outline each report before the House, with relevant background information and summaries. The leadership recommendation for all committee of conference reports will be to support adopting all reports.

The following is a modified list of "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding committees of conference that was originally sent to House Republican members on Friday May 20th. For the benefit of our non-House-member readers we thought it might be a helpful review of this part of the legislative process.

What did the House act on during the session on Thursday, May 19th?

The House voted on a number House bills that came back from the Senate with amendments. There were several possible recommendations and outcomes.

- 1. Concur - A motion to concur with the Senate amounts to agreeing to adopt their version of the bill with their amendments. The bills that received a majority vote on a motion to concur will move forward as passed by the Senate.*
- 2. Non-Concur, Request Committee of Conference - A motion to non-concur and request a committee of conference amounts to opening up a negotiation between the House and Senate on what part (or parts) of the House and Senate versions of the bill should move forward.*
- 3. Non-Concur - A motion to flat-out non-concur means the House disagrees completely with the Senate version, and no version of the bill will move forward.*

The recommendations that came before the House were made by committee chairmen after consultation with their policy committees.

Votes for a committee of conference do not necessarily reflect sentiment on the content of the bill. For instance, if a member disagreed with the Senate amendments and preferred the House version, that member could support a motion to non-concur and request a committee of conference in order to fight for the House position rather than let the bill die if a non-concur (w/ no committee of conference) were to be adopted.

Important to note is that if one body requests a committee of conference, the other body must agree, or "accede" to that request. If they do not, the bill also dies. This happened to a few bills on Thursday.

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Who is appointed to committees of conference?

When a committee requests that the bill be sent to a Committee of Conference, the Chairman of the policy committee who originally handled the bill will recommend members for appointment. If the bill went to more than one committee, the members may come from the different committees as determined by the Speaker. The Speaker shall make the final decision of Conference committee members, and the committee choices are generally limited to those who support the House position.

What is the process moving forward for those bills in committees of conference?

The first named member of the body where the bill originated chairs the committee of conference and schedules meetings. The House and Senate conferees negotiate the contents of the final version of the bills via amendment. When the final version is agreed upon, the conferees sign off on the committee of conference report.

Can the committees of conference make major modifications to bills?

The Committee of Conference may not change the title of the bill. The Committee also may not add amendments that are not germane to the subject matter of the bill or contain subject matter that has been indefinitely postponed. A non-germane amendment is one in which the subject matter is not contained in either the House or Senate version of the bill. [House Rule 49 (g).]

Committee of conference meetings are public, but they are not public hearings. The sponsor of a bill that is in Committee of Conference shall, upon request, be provided an opportunity to be heard.

What happens if the conferees do not agree?

A unanimous vote of both the House and Senate Conferees, voting separately, is necessary for an agreed upon report to be sent to the House and Senate. If the House and Senate cannot agree on the content of the final version of the bill, they can choose to not sign off on the report. If there is no report, the bill dies. If a conferee is in disagreement with the rest of the committee, the Speaker or Senate President can replace that member.

What happens to the committee of conference reports once they are signed off on by the conferees?

The first-named House member on all bills in Committee of Conference must prepare an analysis of the report. This "blurb" should contain a complete explanation of all changes made to the bill since it was passed by the House and must be submitted to the House Clerk for printing in the calendar.

The House will vote on reports on Senate bills first, as will the Senate with House bills. If the committee of conference report receives a majority vote, it will be sent to the other body for a vote. If the report passes both bodies, it will move forward. If either body fails to pass a report, the bill dies.