State House Watch End of The Year Review 2020

What happened?

The 2020 legislative session involved some unprecedented actions as legislators adapted their work to accommodate the demands and restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic.

Concerns about COVID-19 caused the NH legislature to shut down on March 16, and it took a while for both bodies to figure out how they were going to conduct their business remotely as well as in person with proper physical distancing.

Crossover—the deadline for bills to pass from one chamber to the other—was set for March 26, but the House and Senate hadn’t restarted their meetings yet, and committees hadn’t completed work on all of their bills. So, Crossover didn’t happen this year.

In April, committees reconvened to complete their work, holding hearings by phone and Zoom. The public was able to offer input during hearings.

Committees were not able to complete hearings for all bills, so they set priorities, with special attention to proposals which would help people, businesses and communities respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Hundreds of bills were consolidated into omnibus bills according to particular themes such as voting rights, housing, worker protections. Some bills moved forward as separate bills, such as HB 712 which would create family & medical leave insurance, and HB 731 which would raise the minimum wage. (Sadly, the governor has now vetoed both of these bills.)

On June 11, the full House gathered for a session day at the Whittemore Center at UNH. The minority party claimed that they had not been sufficiently consulted about the new timeline and processes, and they refused to support a rule change that would have made it possible to do regular business with new deadlines. This meant that every single bill required a 2/3 supermajority vote to even be brought up for consideration.

Only one bill passed, which was HB 1717, a bill that was a late entry, not having gone through the usual process of being introduced, having a public hearing, and a committee report. The bill was intended to loosen restrictions on filling refillable beer containers (known as growlers) in restaurants.

Republican House members even refused to vote on the Consent Calendar, which is the list of bills for which the committee recommendations were deemed non-controversial by committee members from both parties. According to Speaker Steve Shurtleff, the minority party successfully blocked 36 House bills from advancing to the Senate, and 200 Senate bills from crossing over to the House.
Any bill that was on the Consent Calendar is categorized in the bill docket as “placed on laid on table consent list and laid on table.” Any House bill that was unable to cross over is listed in the docket as “miscellaneous.”

At the final House session, held at UNH on June 30, Representatives voted on the Senate bills that had not been allowed to cross over. They were placed on a vacate calendar, and the calendar was then laid on the table. Like many things that took place this session, this hadn’t been done before. It was a way of not leaving the bills in committee to die, which seemed a bad precedent. It also gave the House Clerk’s staff a way to process those bills, and print reports for state agencies.

The full Senate met in the House chambers on June 16 and June 29 to finalize their work.

They approved a total of 25 omnibus and other bills, amending House bills so that only concurrence would be required at the final House session on June 30. Concurrence votes would require only a simple majority for approval, not the 2/3 super majority required to operate outside of the established deadlines.

This year the legislature passed 61 bills, compared to 385 passed in 2018, the last non-budget year.

In all, a relatively small number of bills were voted on in these unusual circumstances, and hundreds were left on the table in various forms. What follows is our attempt to report on the status of bills we were tracking this year.

**Before we jump in, a review of terms....**

Each bill is hyperlinked to the “docket” on the General Court webpage. From that site you can find the bill’s text, a report on the path it took from introduction to its ultimate fate, and links to reports on any roll call votes that took place. There’s even a link to docket abbreviations if some of the jargon is confusing.

A bill originating in the House has the prefix HB before the numbers, and a bill originating in the Senate has SB as the prefix. There are four kinds of resolutions. A joint resolution (HJR) is one that has the force of law and must pass both the House and Senate and be signed by the governor. A concurrent resolution (HCR) is approved by both bodies, but not signed by the governor, and doesn’t have the effect of a law. Generally, concurrent resolutions put the legislature on the record of approving or disapproving of some aspect of state or national policy. A simple resolution is considered only within the body from which it originates and does not have the force of law; something along the lines of “we resolve that today is kazoo day at the House.” A Constitutional Amendment-Concurrent Resolution (CACR) is an amendment to the state constitution. Each body must approve the CACR by a three-fifths vote, and then it may be put on the ballot at the next state election.
For each bill we have indicated whether votes were cast by voice, by roll call, or by “division.” A voice vote means the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate determined whether “yea” or “nay” was in the majority on any motion based on the voices of the lawmakers; there is no record of who voted which way. A division vote in the House means that a precise vote count was taken, but that the votes of individual members were not recorded. If a roll call was taken, however, you can look up how each member voted (or if they did not vote at all). Be careful in reading these because it can be confusing. For example, a “yea” vote on an ITL (“inexpedient to legislate”) motion is a vote to kill a bill, not a vote in favor of the bill. A vote on a motion to table is not necessarily an indication of how that member would vote if the bill were to come up for an actual vote.

If we have reported a numerical vote, you can assume it was by roll call unless we specified it was a “division.” You can look up roll calls in a number of ways if you want to find out how particular members voted. For one thing, each member has their own page where you can click on <voting record> and see all recorded votes. Alternatively, you can go to the docket for any bill and click on <RC> if it shows up in the docket. Or, you can click on the voting record page where you can search your way through roll calls on any House or Senate votes by year and bill number (going back to 1999!).

In most cases the final step for a bill to become law is for it to be signed by the governor if it has passed both the House and Senate with the same language. At this time, many of the successful bills are somewhere in the pipeline between the General Court and the governor’s desk. When it reaches him, he will either sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without his signature, or veto it. If this report indicates the bill is still awaiting action, we advise that you look up its status, which may have changed. And you can keep track of Governor Sununu’s vetoes via NHPR’s veto tracker.

The Representatives and Senators will come back in the fall for a “veto override day” session, where all of the vetoed bills will come up for additional votes. If a two-thirds majority in both chambers votes to override, the bill becomes law. If the vote falls short of two-thirds in either chamber, the veto is sustained.

The House and Senate will publish new calendars every two weeks in the summer when the legislature is not in session. You can find them on the General Court website in the resources section or use the drop-down House and Senate menus at the top of the page.

And lastly, a reminder about State House lingo:

OTP – “Ought to Pass,” the recommendation for approving a bill or an amendment.
OTP/A – Ought to Pass with Amendment.
ITL – “Inexpedient to Legislate,” the recommendation for defeating a bill or an amendment.
“ITL” can also be used as a verb.
IS – Interim Study
**Children and Families**

**HB 385** Relative to making a maternity room available on State House grounds. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**SB 698** Relative to the Interstate Compact on Child Placement. This bill enacts the 2009 edition of the Interstate Compact on Child Placement, contingent upon its enactment in 34 other states. The entirety of the compact is found in the bill. In March, the Senate voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 30 it was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.

**SB 730** Establishing the Granite State paid family leave plan. This is Governor Sununu’s family leave plan, which would leverage the purchasing power of the state when acting as a purchaser on behalf of state employees. The plan provides wage replacement for qualified leave for permanent state employees. Workers would be eligible for six weeks of leave that would cover the birth of a child, adoption, or the need to care for a spouse, child, or parent. It would not provide wage replacement for a worker who was dealing with his/her own illness. It would create a business tax incentive to make this advantageously priced family and medical leave insurance available to public and private employers in the state, on a voluntary basis. Voted IS by a roll call vote of 14-10.

**HB 712** Relative to a family and medical leave insurance program. The bill provided up to 12 weeks of family or medical leave insurance in any benefit year. A half-percent payroll deduction on all private employees would have paid for the mandatory program. The bill was vetoed by the governor on July 10.

This bill was similar to **SB 1**, which passed in 2019, and was also vetoed by the governor, who went on to auction a copy of the signed veto at a Republican Party fundraiser. Both the state flag and the US flags that flew over the State House that day were also auctioned off.

**HB 1516** Raising the minimum age for marriage. This would raise the minimum age for marriage from 16 to 18 years of age. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 207-132. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1601** Removing the exception for married minors from the definition of sexual assault. There are exceptions carved out for minors married to adults to protect the adults from sexual assault charges. The bill was not voted on in time for it to cross over.

**HB 1615** Requiring criminal background checks for persons brought into a library to interact with minors in library-sponsored events. We suspect this was retaliation against Drag Queen Story Hour events. It was voted ITL by a voice vote.
HB 1162 An omnibus child services bill. Some highlights: It expands the categories of individuals eligible to adopt and clarifies adoption and parenting laws for unmarried couples who share parenting. It also clarifies the law regarding insurance benefits for early intervention services and directs the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to administer family-centered early supports and services programs for children with developmental delays, including children under the age of three who have prenatal substance exposure. A minor diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance or other behavioral health issues who is committed to DHHS for the remainder of their minority will be referred to a care management entity to develop a care plan intended to reduce the period of commitment.

Civil Rights

HB 1577 Relative to initiating amendments and corrections to birth records. This bill provides a procedure for an individual to obtain a new birth certificate to reflect a sex designation other than that which was assigned at birth. Voted OTP/A by the House in March, by a roll call vote of 194-109. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate, and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1644 Relative to information required on marriage licenses. This bill prohibits a state, county, or municipal agency from requiring that an individual disclose their race or religion on an agency form, application, or other document. Tabled by a voice vote.

Commerce

HB 1419 Relative to New Hampshire banks offering small dollar loans and credit building products. This bill would require New Hampshire banks offer small dollar loans and credit building products to consumers. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1589 Requiring businesses in the state to take cash for monetary transactions. This would require sellers to accept cash as payment for goods and services offered for sale at retail and makes the refusal to accept cash payments a violation of the Consumer Protection Act. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1680 Relative to the collection of personal information by businesses. Voted IS by a voice vote.

Criminal Justice

HB 201 Increasing penalties for buyers under the law regarding trafficking in persons. This bill would increase the penalty from a class B to a class A felony for a person who pays, agrees to pay, or offers to pay to engage in sexual contact with a human trafficking victim under age 18, or to observe a sexually explicit performance involving a minor. This bill was vacated from committee and laid on the table by a voice vote.
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**SB 311** Relative to annulment of criminal records. This bill eliminates the petitioning fee for any person whose case has resulted in a finding of not guilty, was dismissed or not prosecuted, may petition for annulment of the arrest record, court record or both, at any time, without payment of a fee. The bill was enrolled on June 30 and awaits action by the governor.

**SB 468** Relative to prohibited sexual contact involving persons in a position of authority. This bill amends the circumstances that constitute sexual contact by a person in a position of authority for the purpose of sexual assault. Tabled by a voice vote.

**SB 470** Relative to the reporting of law enforcement misconduct to the police standards and training council. Did not cross over. June 16 the bill was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

**SB 572** Relative to prohibited sexual contact involving persons in a position of authority. This bill amends the circumstances that constitute sexual contact by a person in a position of authority for the purpose of sexual assault. Voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0 in March. On June 30, it was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1112** Requiring programs for female parolees. This bill was amended to form a study committee to address the educational, employment, housing, and other needs of formerly incarcerated women. Voted OTP/A by the House on a voice vote. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1141** Establishing the crime of unsolicited disclosure of an intimate image. This would make sending a photo, film, video, or other reproduction of intimate body parts or sexual conduct by an electronic device a violation for the first offense, and a misdemeanor for a subsequent offence. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1174** Requiring screening for all law enforcement officers for psychological stability and substance use disorders prior to assuming their duties as certified officers. Voted OTP/A by a voice vote in March. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and laid on the table by a voice vote. This became part of the omnibus bill HB 1645.

**HB 1175** Increasing the penalty for certain invasions of privacy. This increases the penalty for nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images, from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class B felony. Voted OTP/A by a voice vote in the House in March. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate then tabled by a voice vote.
HB 1199 Relative to telephone costs for county prisoners. This bill requires that the fee charged by a county department of corrections for prisoners’ use of the telephone service does not exceed the county’s cost for providing the service. Voted IS by a voice vote.

HB 1217 Requiring police officers to report misconduct. This would require law enforcement officers to report misconduct by other law enforcement officers. In March the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote. It became part of the omnibus bill HB 1645.

HB 1257 Establishing a committee to study the opportunities for citizen involvement in attorney general investigations of officer-involved shootings. In March the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, this bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1269 Relative to posthumous exonerations and annulments. This bill grants a posthumous exoneration and annulment of the convictions of Willard Uphaus and Eunice “Goody” Cole. In March, the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1272 Prohibiting prison privatization. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote. It became part of the omnibus bill, HB 1645.

HB 1283 Relative to prohibiting the online disclosure of personally identifiable information. This bill provides that the release of another’s personally identifiable information without their consent and with the intent to harass or intimidate, shall constitute criminal harassment. Voted IS by a voice vote.

HB 1354 Prohibiting the wearing of a mask while participating in a public demonstration. Sweet irony – this bill harkens back to a whole different world. It was voted ITL, in February, by a voice vote.

HB 1542 Relative to post-arrest photo distribution by law enforcement officers. This would prohibit law enforcement from distributing post-arrest photos (aka mug shots) of suspects unless the suspect is a fugitive from justice. Voted OTP/A by voice vote in the House, in March. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1555 Establishing a committee to study increasing wages, educational opportunities, and the corresponding impact on recidivism among prisoners in a state correctional facility who work at or under the supervision of such facility. This began as a bill requiring prisoners to be paid the applicable minimum wage. (We preferred the original.) It was vacated from committee and laid on the table by a voice vote.

HB 1586 Relative to the statute of limitations for sexual assault. This would permit prosecution for aggravated felonious sexual assaults at any time, regardless of when the alleged offense occurred. Voted IS by a roll call vote of 200-123.
HB 1601 Removing the exception for married minors from the definition of sexual assault. The bill was unable to cross over.

HB 1625 Reducing the penalty for certain first offense drug possession charges. Reduces the penalty from a mandatory minimum term of 25 years to an extended term of imprisonment which may include a maximum term of not more than life imprisonment. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1641 Reducing the penalty for certain controlled drugs. This reduces the criminal penalty for possession, transportation, or use of certain controlled drugs. Was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1660 Establishing a protective order for vulnerable adults. This would enable vulnerable adults to seek permanent and temporary relief from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. As amended, this bill very specifically does not include removing firearms from a defendant. The bill has been enrolled and awaits action by the governor.

HB 1613 Allowing prisoners serving life sentences to be eligible for parole after 25 years. This would not apply to a prisoner convicted of capital murder, or a prisoner convicted of murder while serving a sentence in a correctional facility. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1645 This omnibus bill began as a measure to lengthen the time needed for a person convicted of domestic violence to obtain an annulment. The Senate added a number of provisions from other bills, including prohibition of for-profit incarceration in most circumstances, a requirement that police report misconduct by other officers, a ban on use of chokeholds by police, and required screening for all law enforcement officers for psychological stability prior to assuming their duties as certified officers. On June 16, the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 23-1. On June 30, the House concurred, by a roll call vote of 255-74. The governor signed the bill into law on July 16.

Education

SB 427 Establishing the New Hampshire youth climate and conservation council. We liked this idea. Placed on the laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 480 Relative to participation in school sports programs for female student athletes. This bill prohibits public schools from permitting a male student to participate in a student sport designated for females. The bill included options for intrusive anatomical searches and chromosomal testing. It never made it out of committee, and on June 16 it was placed on the laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 515 Relative to a discrimination prevention policy in schools. This would establish requirements for school district discrimination prevention policies. Placed on laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.
SB 556 Relative to violence in schools. This bill requires school safety programs to contain a plan for responding to violent acts committed by students against employees, volunteers, and visitors. It also requires the joint loss management committee to address protocols for employees to follow and provides for reporting acts of violence. In March the Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. In June it was vacated and tabled by a voice vote in the House.

SB 583 Relative to the addition of climate and environmental sciences to the criteria for an adequate education. This would add them in. Vacated and laid on the table by a voice vote.

SB 624 Establishing a school marshal’s program. This would permit a school to establish an armed school marshal program and requires the police standards and training council to develop a curriculum for training school marshals. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 677 Relative to discipline of students, addressing students’ behavioral needs, and making an appropriation therefor. This bill was introduced in 2019. It modifies the policy for discipline and expulsion from school, and requires the Bureau of Student Wellness, Department of Education to aid school districts in addressing students’ behavioral health needs. A year was spent working on this bill, which was a COVID casualty. In March the House voted OTP/A by a division vote of 259-90. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 727 Relative to Holocaust and genocide studies legislation and establishing a commission to study genocide education. This bill requires Holocaust and genocide prevention education to be included in the criteria for an adequate education. In March the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0. On June 30 it was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 747 Authorizing the Department of Education to accept and expend certain federal funds for the purpose of increasing, expanding, or replicating the number of charter schools in the state. Placed on the laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1127 Relative to school lunch payments. This requires school boards that provide free or reduced cost meals to refrain from actions that would stigmatize students. Voted OTP/A in March, by a voice vote. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1148 Relative to the display of the national motto in schools. This bill permits school boards to provide copies of the national motto of the United States (In God We Trust) for display in each school building in the district. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 182-131.

HB 1163 Requiring schools to update documents and software to include the option of identifying a student as non-binary. Voted IS by a voice vote.

HB 1251 Relative to participation in school sports programs for female student-athletes. This bill prohibits public schools from permitting a male student to participate in a sport designed for females. If disputed, the student may prove she is female by presenting a signed physician’s statement indicating the student’s sex, based on the student’s internal and external
reproductive anatomy, the student’s naturally occurring levels of testosterone, and an analysis of the student’s chromosomes. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 184-131.

**HB 1268** Establishing a committee to study student loan forgiveness on the basis of volunteer work, including service in the legislature. Voted ITL by a division vote of 225-47.

**HB 1306** Relative to the recitation of the Lord’s prayer in public elementary schools. This would repeal the provision permitting school districts to authorize the recitation of the Lord’s prayer in public elementary schools. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 196-128. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1334** Relative to religious activities of teachers and students in public schools. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 197-125.

**HB 1337** Permitting parents or guardians to opt out of armed assailant drills in a child’s school. Tabled by a division vote of 156-119.

**HB 1500** Relative to a student loan bill of rights and a student loan ombudsman. This bill requires the Commissioner of the Banking Department to designate a student loan ombudsman within the department. It also establishes a student loan servicer license. The House voted OTP/A in March, by a roll call vote of 197-128. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate, and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1522** Requiring colleges and universities to report allegations of sexual assault to local law enforcement. This would apply to all public and private institutions of higher learning. Voted OTP/A by a voice vote in the House, in March. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1698** Relative to equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities and making an appropriation therefor. The House never voted on this bill, and it was unable to cross over.

**HB 1691** Relative to kindergarten adequate education grants. This bill restores the full-day kindergarten start up grant that was implemented three years ago. Voted OTP by a division vote of 263-64 and referred to Finance. The bill didn’t make it out of Finance in time for crossover.

**HB 1240** An omnibus bill, that includes a special marriage officiant’s license, with a portion of the fee going to the fund for domestic violence programs; modifies requirements for renewal of pharmacy licenses, and expands the professions in the allied health governing boards which grant temporary licensure to licenses from other states. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0. The House concurred. The bill was signed by the governor on July 20, 2020.
HB 1558  An omnibus bill relating to students, schools, and some unrelated issues. This bill includes a modification of policy for discipline and expulsions from school. It changes the formula for an adequate education grant to a school district operating a full-day kindergarten program. It requires the Department of Education to collaborate with the Brain Injury Association of NH to develop a return to learning policy and plan for students with concussions and brain injuries. On June 16, the Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 30, the House concurred, by a roll call vote of 201-129. The bill awaits action by the governor.

Elections and Voting

HCR 8 Celebrating August 26, 2020 as the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees that the right to vote shall not be denied on the basis of sex. This House continuing resolution passed by a voice vote.

SB 7 Establishing the secure modern registration act (SMART Act). This would require that a person automatically apply to register to vote any time the person applies for a driver’s license, or a nondriver photo ID, or records a change to a license or nondriver ID with the Department of Safety, unless they opt out. The bill has been enrolled and awaits action by the governor.

SB 8 Establishing an independent redistricting commission. Was never voted on by the House and was unable to cross over.

SB 304 Establishing a committee to study public funding of certain state election campaigns. The bill was vacated and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 506 Relative to allowing employees time to vote in biennial general elections. This bill would require employers (if practical) to allow an employee up to three hours away from work to vote. The bill was vacated from committee, and laid on the table, by a voice vote.

SB 537 Proclaiming January 24 as Granny D Day. This day would honor Doris “Granny D” Haddock of Dublin, for her commitment to civic responsibility and campaign finance reform. Vacated and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 586 Relative to certain expenditures by candidates and candidate committees. This bill requires candidates and candidate committees to retain back-up receipts for expenditures over $1000 made to either themselves or family members. Voted OTP/A by a Senate roll call vote of 19-5. It was introduced in the House on June 30 and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 631 Authorizing online voter registration. This would task the Secretary of State with creating and maintaining an online portal allowing a person to complete a voter registration online. This would include security safeguards. In March the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. On June 30, the bill was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.
**SB 695** Relative to sharing voter registration information. In March the Senate voted OTP by a roll call vote of 14-10. On June 30, the bill was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote. This was included in the omnibus bill HB 1672.

**SB 751** Relative to addresses used by domestic violence victims to register to vote. This bill allows victims of domestic violence to register to vote without a town or city clerk entering their home address into the voter database. On June 16, the bill was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

**SB 761** Relative to accountability of the community college system of New Hampshire. This bill would limit the rate of budget growth in the community college system of NH, and prohibits salary and benefit increases in any year in which there is a layoff in any institution within the community college system. This bill did not cross over, and on June 16 it was placed on the laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1279** Relative to the terms resident, inhabitant, residence, and residency. This bill amends the general statutory definitions of “resident or inhabitant” and “residence or residency” to include an intent to maintain a principal place of physical presence for the indefinite future. In March, the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 189-133. On June 16, this bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1296** Requiring certain candidates for municipal office to comply with certain campaign finance laws. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**HB 1395** Establishing a committee to study ballot access and ways to improve civic engagement in New Hampshire. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**HB 1415** Establishing a committee to study campaign finance disclosure laws and anonymous contributions, receipts, and expenditures. One of those laws would be the Montana Disclosure Act, which requires that groups that engage in last minute political advertising in elections must identify themselves. It was upheld in 2019 by the US Supreme Court. In March the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, this bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1525** Relative to the definition of a political advocacy organization. This bill modified the definition of a political advocacy organization for purposes of political expenditure and contribution laws. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 198-124. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1643** Relative to permissible campaign contributions by business organizations and labor unions and relative to funding source disclosure for political advertising. Voted IS by a voice vote.
**HB 1651** Relative to prisoners’ voting rights. This would amend the absentee voter application form and absentee voting affidavits to allow prisoners to vote absentee. In March, the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1653** Relative to domicile, residency, voter registration, and investigation of voter letters. This bill modifies the definition of domicile for voting purposes, modifies forms and procedures for voter registration, and removes the requirement that the Secretary of State conduct post-election voter registration inquiries. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 191-121. On June 16 the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1665** Establishing an independent redistricting commission. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 203-121. The Senate voted OTP by a roll call vote of 15-9. The bill has been enrolled and awaits action by the governor.

**HB 1668** Relative to early voting for persons with disabilities. This would permit people with disabilities to vote within the 30 days immediately preceding an election. The Secretary of State would determine the process and the procedure used to verify voter checklists, cast ballots, storage of ballots, and deliverance of results. Voted IS by a voice vote.

**HB 1672** Relative to absentee voting. This Senate-amended omnibus bill would allow voters to vote by absentee ballot, with no excuses. The House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 194-132. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. The House concurred with the Senate amendment. The governor vetoed the bill on July 13, claiming it would weaken our electoral system. Read his veto statement [here](#).

**Energy and Environment (In that order)**

**SB 13** Relative to limited electrical energy producers and net energy metering. This bill, as amended, increases the electric generating capacity of customer-generators who may participate in net energy metering and modifies the transition of tariffs applicable to certain customer-generators. The bill also clarifies the definition of eligible customer-generator for purposes of the utility property tax. The bill was vacated and laid on the table.

**SB 122** Relative to expenditures from the energy efficiency fund. The bill ends the diversion of RGGI energy efficiency fund to rebates for residential customers, and instead allocates such funds toward energy efficiency programs. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 212-140. The Senate concurred. The governor vetoed this bill on July 17. You can read his veto message [here](#).

**SB 124** Relative to the minimum electric renewable portfolio standards. The aim of the RPS is to encourage steady growth of the state’s production of electricity from renewable energy sources. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. The House voted OTP/A by a roll
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call vote of 214-141. The governor vetoed this bill on July 24. You can read his veto message here.

**SB 159** Relative to net energy metering limits for customer-generators. This bill raises the size limit on renewable customer-generators eligible for net metering rates, from 1 MW to 5 MW. It would also allow customer-generators to sell their excess energy back to the grid (making money in the process); allow businesses, towns, school districts, and other large electric consumers to produce their own power, thereby reducing energy bills; and allows municipalities to lower their tax rates by developing large renewable energy projects on municipally-owned land. The bill was vetoed by the governor in February. The Senate voted successfully in March to override the veto, but the House has not yet voted. A veto override day will be coming up for the House in the fall.

**HB 466** Relative to the capacity of electricity customer-generators for eligibility for net metering. The bill, as amended, increases the apportionment for net energy metering provisions from electrical facilities with total generating capacity of 100 kilowatts to 125 kilowatts. The House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 131-121. The Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. The House concurred with the Senate amendment. The governor vetoed the bill on July 17. Read his veto statement here.

**SB 668** Establishing an offshore wind commission, establishing an office of offshore wind industry development in the Department of Business and Economic Affairs, and making an appropriation therefor. The bill missed crossover and was placed on the laid on the table consent list and was tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 715** Relative to electrical energy storage. As amended, this bill requires the public utilities commission to investigate ways to enable energy storage projects to receive compensation for avoided transmission and distribution costs. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 214-133. The Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. The House concurred with the Senate amendment. The bill was signed into law by the governor on July 14 and goes into effect in 60 days.

**HB 1116** Relative to the definition of “eligible facility” as it pertains to renewable generation to provide fuel diversity. This bill removes municipal solid waste facilities from the eligible facilities under the provisions for fuel diversity for renewable energy transmission. In March the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1146** Relative to the duties of the site evaluation committee. This would require high pressure gas pipelines and liquified natural gas tanks to be subject to site evaluation committee criteria. It also requires that the quality of the environment and the economic interests of the area be protected. Voted ITL by a voice vote.
HB 1218 Relative to net energy metering limits for customer generators and the purchase of output of limited electrical energy producers. This bill didn’t cross over.

HB 1225 Allowing increased net energy metering limits for municipal hydroelectric facilities. This would increase the capacity of municipal hydroelectric facilities which participate in net energy metering to 5 megawatts. Tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1229 Requiring proposed natural gas facilities to include decommissioning costs. This would apply to natural gas liquification plants, gas storage facilities, gas pressurizing stations, and gas pipelines. Tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1261 Relative to the energy consumption reduction goal. This would change the focus of New Hampshire’s energy consumption reduction goal to greenhouse gas emissions, rather than fossil fuels. Tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1317 Relative to funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects by residential, commercial, and industrial ratepayers. This bill modifies the distribution of auction proceeds under the RGGI program and allocates the funds among residential, commercial, and industrial energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1342 Establishing a program for installation of heat pumps for low-income housing. This program would install high performance air source heat pumps in certain construction, funded in whole or part by public funds. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1355 Establishing a committee to study energy efficiency programs. Passed the House and was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

HB 1364 Relative to payments to the Public Utilities Commission in lieu of meeting renewable portfolio standards for biomass. Voted ITL by a division vote of 212-121.

HB 1365 Repealing the energy efficiency and sustainable energy board. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1366 Relative to the computation of renewable energy credits. This bill would revise the methodology used for the Public Utilities Commission to estimate renewable energy credits for certain sources that are net metered. In March, the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1370 Relative to baseload renewable generation credits for biomass energy facilities. This would require electric distribution companies to purchase baseload renewable generation credits from eligible biomass facilities. Voted IS by a voice vote.
HB 1402 Establishing procedures for municipal host customer-generators of electrical energy. This establishes an exemption under net energy metering for group net metered facilities that are owned or operated by a municipality to offset municipal electricity requirements. Voted IS by a roll call vote of 188-148.

HB 1430 Establishing a commission to study attainment of a clean-energy electric grid by 2030. In March the House voted OTP/A by a division vote of 169-100. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1480 Relative to the use of system benefits charge. This bill would remove the authority for a portion of system benefits charges collected for energy efficiency to be expended on low-income energy efficiency programs. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 201-130.

HB 1481 Relative to the net metering cap for customer-generators. This bill allows an electric utility customer generator with a capacity of over one megawatt to net meter generation of 125 percent of its average monthly demand. Tabled by a division vote of 222-65.

HB 1478 Repealing the law on preservation and use of renewable generation to provide fuel diversity. This bill repeals RSA 362-H, which requires electric distribution companies to purchase the net energy output of any eligible biomass or municipal waste facility located in its service territory. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1496 Relative to the regional greenhouse gas initiative cap and trade program for controlling carbon dioxide emissions. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 180-101. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1515 Relative to group host net energy metering. This would require the payment adjustment to group host net energy metering systems to over 25 kilowatts. It also modifies the Public Utilities Commission reporting requirement for certain net energy metering information. In March, the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1664 Establishing greenhouse gas emission reduction goals for the state and establishing a climate action plan. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 197-123. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

*** Environment ***

SB 79 Relative to required reporting on waste reduction. The bill is intended to collect municipal data on the weight of solid waste collected annually, and the amounts diverted to composting, reuse, and recycling, in order to help communities manage solid waste more effectively. After crossover, the bill was voted OTP/A by a voice vote in the Senate. In the House it was referred to the Municipal and County Government Committee. It missed the crossover deadline.
HB 102 Relative to municipal ordinances regarding the use of plastics. The bill enables municipalities to regulate the distribution of single-use plastic bags and paper bags to consumers through local ordinances. The bill was vacated from committee and laid on the table by a voice vote.

*Note: In March, as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Sununu issued a ban on reusable shopping bags, claiming they put workers at risk. That ban is still in place.

SB 287 Setting the maximum contaminant levels for certain perfluorochemicals in drinking water. It would require the Department of Environmental Services to report annually to various legislative committees if those limits should change in order to protect human health. The bill was vacated and laid on the table.

HB 559 Relative to point of sale bags. This establishes a fee for using plastic bags at the point of sale. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 205-158. On June 16, the Senate vacated it from committee and tabled it by a voice vote.

SB 591 Establishing a statewide solid waste disposal reduction goal. The bill sets the goal of reducing solid waste in landfills and incinerators by 25% by 2030 and 45% by 2050. In March, the Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 30, it was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 629 Establishing the solid waste reduction management fund and establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge. The bill missed crossover and was placed on the laid on the table consent list and was tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1194 Establishing a surcharge for certain single use plastics. A merchant may charge $0.05 per single-use plastic cup or plastic bag and keep the surcharge. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1274 Requiring bottled drinking water sold to the public to meet the same maximum contaminant levels established for drinking water. In March the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1319 Prohibiting the siting of new landfills or expansions of existing landfills near state parks, national parks, or United States Department of Agriculture forest land. In March, the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 189-123. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1422 Establishing a moratorium on the issuance of permits for new landfills or the expansion of existing landfills for the purpose of studying the creation of municipal waste districts. Voted IS by a roll call vote of 260-56.
HB 1444 Requiring the adoption of innovative vehicle emissions standards pursuant to Section 177 of the federal Clean Air Act. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 179-109. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1446 Establishing a committee to study the labeling of products containing PFAS. In March the House voted OTP by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1472 Restricting the distribution of plastic straws. This prohibits food service businesses from providing a single-use plastic straw unless specifically requested by a customer. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 197-135. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1508 Relative to paper receipts. This bill would limit the use of paper receipts. If a customer did not want a receipt, none would be printed. Voted IS by a voice vote.

HB 1564 Prohibiting the use of polystyrene foam. This would prohibit food service establishments from using polystyrene foam cups or take out containers. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 194-129. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1661 Relative to the exemption from property taxes for water and air pollution control facilities. This bill provides that no electric generating plant that uses fossil fuels or generates high level radioactive waste shall be eligible for the property tax exemption for water and air pollution control facilities. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 203-127.

HB 1676 Requiring the monitoring of certain radioactive air pollutants. In March, the bill passed the House by a roll call vote of 162-118. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

Gambling

HB 1646 Relative to historic racing. This bill would authorize the lottery commission to license gaming devices for historic horse racing or simulcast dog racing. There would be 16 licenses issued, for a total of 1,000 terminals. Game operators will collect 12% as commission, of which 75% will remain with the licensee, and the remaining 25% split between the charitable organization (35%) and the Lottery Commission (65%). This work-around is known as a “mini-casino” bill. Tabled by a roll call vote of 155-121.

Guns

SB 469 Relative to shooting ranges. This bill would repeal and reenact the statute governing shooting ranges and subjects an owner or operator of a shooting range to civil and criminal
liability for violation of noise ordinances or damage to persons or property caused by the operation of a shooting range. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 24-0.

HB 687 Relative to extreme risk protection orders. The bill would allow family, household members, or law enforcement to petition for a court order to temporarily restrict access to firearms by individuals who pose an immediate risk to themselves or others. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 201-176. The Senate voted OTP by a roll call vote of 14-10. The enrolled bill awaits action by the governor.

SB 719 Relative to lost or stolen firearms. This bill requires that the loss or theft of a firearm be reported to the law enforcement agency in the municipality where the loss or theft occurred. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1101 Imposing a waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm. The bill establishes a three-day waiting period. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1143 Repealing limited liability for manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition. This would repeal RSA 508:21 which protects manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms from civil suits. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 170-126. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1285 Relative to possession of firearms on school property. This prohibits carrying a firearm on school property. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 182-141. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1349 Establishing a committee to study firearms incidents involving children with access to unsecured firearms. Voted OTP in March by a roll call vote of 205-128. On June 16 it was introduced to the Senate, and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1350 Requiring a locking safety device be provided for commercial firearms sales and transfers. This bill would prohibit the sale or transfer of a firearm unless accompanied by an approved safety device. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 169-153.

HB 1374 Relative to voluntarily surrendered firearms. This bill repeals the statute that forbids any state agency from operating a “voluntary surrender and destroy program,” and requires that any voluntarily surrendered firearms be used by the agency or sold at public auction. The goal is to curtail the collection of murder weapons sold as trophy items. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 181-141. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1379 Requiring a background check for commercial firearms sales. Commercial firearms sales in NH would be processed through a licensed firearms dealer who would conduct a
background check and create a record of each sale. Passed the House and was referred to Senate Judiciary.

HB 1608 Prohibiting the manufacture, sale, transfer, and possession of large capacity ammunition feeding devices. In March, this bill was voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 150-145. On June 16 it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

Health

HB 250 This bill began life addressing a specific dental procedure. It was amended by the Senate with the language of SB 784, establishing a dental benefit under the state Medicaid program, which had gotten stuck in crossover limbo. This bill requires the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services to solicit information and to contract with dental managed care organizations to provide dental care to persons under the Medicaid managed care program. On June 16, the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 19-5. On June 30, the House concurred, by a roll call vote of 205-121. The bill awaits action by the governor.

SB 466 Relative to the patient’s bill of rights. This bill stipulates that no patient shall be denied care on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin, source of income, source of payment, or profession. Voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 30 it was vacated and tabled by a voice vote. Provisions in this bill were included in the omnibus bill HB 1639.

SB 507 Relative to prescription medication for treatment or prevention of communicable disease. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote. Provisions in this bill were included in the omnibus bill HB 1639.

SB 685 Establishing a wholesale prescription drug importation program. This would establish a program to import prescription drugs from Canada on behalf of the state. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote. Provisions of this bill were included in the omnibus prescription drug bill HB 1280.

SB 688 Prohibiting price gouging in the sale of prescription drugs. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0. On June 30 it was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote. Provisions of this bill were included in the omnibus bill HB 1280.

SB 718 Relative to the New Hampshire state health improvement plan and making an appropriation therefor. The Senate voted OTP/A and referred the bill to Finance. On June 16, it was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

SB 754 Establishing a dental benefit under the state Medicaid program. In March the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0 and referred it to Finance. On June 16 it was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.
HB 1638 Relative to the administration of the SNAP incentive programs. This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to implement and administer SNAP health incentive programs, enabling beneficiaries of SNAP to receive a dollar-for-dollar match of up to $20 per day for fresh fruits and vegetables. The bill was not able to cross over.

HB 1239 Relative to eligibility for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1246 Relative to reporting of health care associated infections, establishing a COVID-19 nursing home and long-term care fund, relative to an independent COVID-19 nursing home and long-term care review, needs assessment, and recommendations, authorizing pharmacists to administer a COVID-19 vaccine, and relative to the reimbursement of costs of training nursing assistants. Passed the House in February, was amended and passed by the Senate on June 16. The House concurred with the Senate version on June 30. The governor vetoed this bill on July 17. You can read his veto message here.

HB 1281 Requiring insurance coverage for epinephrine auto-injectors. This bill was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote. The language of the bill was inserted into the omnibus bill HB 1280.

HB 1513 Requiring the commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services to study the conversion of the Medicaid program to block grant funding and making an appropriation therefor. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1548 Establishing a secure psychiatric unit facility advisory council. The council would assist the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services in the constructing of a new, secure psychiatric facility. In March, the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1633 Relative to insurance coverage for tick-borne illness. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 219-104. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote. This was folded into the omnibus bill HB 1639.

HB 1659 Relative to patient directed care and a patient’s rights with regard to end-of-life decisions. This bill would allow a mentally competent person who is 18 years of age or older, and who has been diagnosed with a terminal disease, to request a prescription for medication to enable the patient to control the time, place, and manner of his or her death. Voted IS by a voice vote.

HB 1679 This bill makes an appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of meals on wheels. This bill was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote. The funding that was used for Meals on Wheels came from the federal CARES Act money distributed to NH to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The House voted OTP/A in February. On June 16, the Senate decided by a voice vote to vacate it from committee and lay it on the table.
HB 1166  This Senate-amended omnibus bill deals with some COVID related health and worker issues: Individuals quarantined by medical professionals or under government direction shall not be disqualified from unemployment benefits if their employer has instructed them to come back to work after quarantine is over. Individuals cannot be disqualified for benefits on the basis of being unavailable for work if they are in quarantine for COVID-19 as directed by a medical provider. Extends the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act for certain COVID-19 protections. Requires employers to provide certain sanitation conditions relating to COVID-19. Waives cost-sharing for testing for COVID-19 under accident and health insurance policies. Employers will provide paid time off for COVID-19 testing upon the request of an employee. On June 16, the Senate passed the bill in sections. On July 30, the House concurred by a roll call vote of 178-154. On July 17, the governor vetoed the bill. Read his veto statement here.

HB 1639 relative to health care. This is another Senate-amended omnibus bill. Some of the highlights from the 40 page amendment: Requires insurance coverage for long-term antibiotic therapy for tick-borne illness. Adds physician assistants to the law governing advance directives. Establishes an opioid abatement trust fund. Authorizes pharmacists to administer a COVID-19 vaccine if one is available. Clarifies the deposits to be made into the New Hampshire granite advantage health care trust fund. Requires the superintendent of a county correctional facility to provide a prisoner with medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders where medically appropriate. Clarifies the patients' bill of rights. On June 16, the Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 30, the House concurred with the Senate amendment, by a roll call vote of 201-121. The enrolled bill awaits action by the governor.

HB 1280 Relative to copayments for insulin, establishing a wholesale drug importation program, establishing a New Hampshire prescription drug affordability board, establishing the prescription drug competitive marketplace, relative to the pricing of generic drugs, relative to prior authorization for prescription drug coverage, and requiring insurance coverage for epinephrine auto-injectors. The original House bill was intended to cap the amount of insulin copays. It was voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 223-121. The Senate amended it into an omnibus bill and voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 24-0. The House concurred, and the governor signed it into law on July 16.

Housing

SB 536  Establishing a committee to study the Housing Appeals Board. The bill did not make it to crossover. On June 30, it was vacated and tabled by a voice vote, in the House.

SB 721 Relative to court review of planning board decisions and making an appropriation therefor. This bill eliminates the housing appeals board. ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1120 Establishing a committee to study the establishment of water testing requirements for residential rental property. In March the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16 the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.
HB 1207 Requiring landlords to notify prospective tenants of the use of pesticides or other toxins in the premises. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1511 Relative to actions against tenants. This bill makes procedural changes to actions against tenants concerning evictions and judgments. This was a bad bill for tenants, and it was voted ITL by a voice vote.

HB 1539 Relative to the relocation of children with elevated lead levels. This would establish procedures for the relocation. In March the House voted OTP/A by a vote of 185-112. On June 16 the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1629 Relative to training and procedures for zoning and planning boards. This would mandate specific training requirements for members of a zoning board of adjustment or planning board, with emphasis on innovative land use and inclusionary zoning for developing housing units for low and moderate income people. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 276-60. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1632 Relative to financial investments and incentives for affordable housing development. The bill was unable to cross over.

HB 1247 Relative to mortgage defaults and nonpayment of rent during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak state of emergency. The original House bill required landlords to give 90 day notice for rent increases of more than 5%. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 188-108. As amended by the Senate, the bill creates an option for mortgage borrowers to request forbearance from mortgage defaults, and prevents landlords from taking possessory actions for nonpayment of rent or charging fees for nonpayment of rent during the COVID-19 outbreak state of emergency. As amended, there is still protection for tenancy rights for rooming house residents, enabling tenants to get help from local welfare before getting an eviction notice, and a six-month right to pay back rent if a tenant was unable to keep up during the state of emergency. The Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. The House concurred. The governor vetoed the bill on July 10. Read his veto statement here.

Immigration

HB 1493 Establishing a committee to study the effects of deportation of primary earners on United States citizen family members. In March the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 172-107. On June 16, it was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1700 Relative to the licensure of nonresident aliens temporarily residing in New Hampshire. This bill permits nonresident aliens living in NH on a temporary basis to obtain a driver license upon completion of an application for asylum status to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.
Legislature

HB 1303 Establishing a commission to study expanding public testimony opportunities to remote locations statewide. This could enable people living in the northern part of the state to be able to testify on bills, without the expense and logistical challenges they currently experience by having to drive to Concord. Voted ITL by an early-in-the-pandemic voice vote.

HB 1486 Establishing a committee to study information technology in the legislative process. This committee would be looking at the potential for using technology for public hearings, session days, committee meetings, and communications. In early pandemic March, the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1694 Relative to recusal by members of the general court for conflicts of interest. This bill requires a legislator to recuse himself/herself from participation in a legislative activity when the legislator or the legislator’s household member has a conflict of interest in an official legislative activity. In March it was voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16 it was introduced to the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

Privacy

SB 732 Prohibiting the sharing of location data. This bill prohibits the sharing of location data by a mobile application developer, telecommunications carrier, or other persons. This bill did not make it to crossover and was placed on the laid on table consent list and was tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1417 Prohibiting the use or collection of biometric data. This would prohibit government agencies, private entities or individuals from collecting or disclosing biometric data. Biometric data includes fingerprints, palm prints, face recognition, DNA, and iris or retina recognition. In March, the House voted OTP/A by a voice vote. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1642 Prohibiting the state or a state official from using a facial surveillance system. This prohibits the use of face surveillance and facial recognition systems. The bill was voted OTP/A in the House and referred to Judiciary where it was voted ITL in committee by a vote of 12-7.

Miscellaneous Omnibus

HB 1245 Adopting omnibus legislation concerning state agencies. This is a House bill, amended by the Senate into an omnibus bill that is 71 pages long, and hard to categorize because so much is in it. Some highlights:

Establishes earned time credit reductions for prisoners who participate in correctional
industries or other programs. Establishes a penalty for criminal trespass to include any state correctional facility, transitional housing unit, and parking area operated by the department of corrections.

Establishes an offshore wind commission. Establishes an offshore wind industry development office in the department of business and economic affairs. Includes both land-based and offshore wind programs relative to renewable energy. Increases the age for sales and possession of tobacco products. It passed (in sections) in the Senate, and the House concurred by a roll call vote of 190-127. The enrolled bill awaits action by the governor.

**Taxes**

**CACR 17** Relating to taxation. Providing that a new state broad-based tax may only be enacted to reduce property taxes. This would be an amendment to the NH Constitution. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**SB 474** Relative to the income tax on interest and dividends. This bill would change the name of the interest and dividends tax to the “income tax” on interest and dividends. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**SB 475** Enabling municipalities to adopt a property tax credit for densely built workforce housing. The bill didn’t make the crossover deadline and was placed on the laid on table consent list and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1474** Relative to deductions from the business profits tax for investment in federal Opportunity Zones in New Hampshire. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**HB 1492** Establishing a tax on the retail sale of certain electronic devices to fund education. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 320-11.

**War**

**HR 10** Urging the return of armed service members from the Middle East. The resolution calls for bringing home US armed service personnel from operations in the Middle East and an end to military actions and occupations of these countries. Tabled by a voice vote.

**Workers**

**HB 731** Relative to the minimum hourly rate. This bill would increase the state minimum wage from $7.25 to $10.00 in January 2021. In 2023 there would be an increase to $12. Tipped employees would be paid a base wage of $4.00, with the employer making up the difference to guarantee the $12 rate. At $10 NH would still be behind the minimum wage in all other New England states. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 212-155. The Senate voted OTP/A
by a roll call vote of 14-10. The House concurred. The governor vetoed the bill on July 24, 2020. You can read his veto message here.

**SB 410** Relative to the state minimum hourly rate. This bill would increase the minimum wage from $7.25 to $10 per hour in 2021 and $12 in 2023. It was vacated and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 363** Including the legislature as a public employer under the public employee labor relations act and relative to the duties of the joint committee on legislative facilities. This bill provides non-partisan employees of the General Court the opportunity to organize and engage in collective bargaining if they choose to do so. The bill was vacated from committee and laid on the table by a voice vote.

**HB 253** Relative to criminal records checks in the employee application process. This bill would prohibit employers from inquiring about or conducting a criminal background check on a prospective employee prior to an interview, unless required by state or federal law. The House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 213-142. The Senate voted OTP/A by a voice vote. The House concurred, and the enrolled bill awaits action by the governor.

**HB 1168** An Act commemorating the first labor strike in the United States by women. This bill proclaims a yearly Dover Mill Girls Recognition Day, in honor of the first labor strike in the US by women, which took place on December 30, 1828 in Dover. It was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1543** Relative to employee drug testing. This bill would prohibit an employer from using a failed drug test for cannabis as grounds for termination or denying a promotion to any employee. Voted ITL by a voice vote.

**SB 618** Requiring employers to provide access to a sufficient space for nursing mothers and reasonable break time. This space would be for nursing mothers to express milk during working hours. Placed on the laid on the table consent list and laid on the table by a voice vote.

**HB 1221** Relative to privacy for an employee’s personal financial and credit information. This would prevent an employer from using personal financial and credit history in employment decisions. In March it was voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 210-139. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

**HB 1322** Prohibiting university system funds from being spent to oppose the formation of unions and collective bargaining units. This prevents the university system from using university funds to discourage employees from becoming a member of any group or organization, or from exercising their right of association by joining a labor union. In March, the House voted OTP by a roll call vote of 207-137. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.
SB 651 Prohibiting collective bargaining agreements that require employees to join or contribute to a labor union. The sponsors wish this to be known as “The New Hampshire Right to Work Act.” We at State House Watch have always correctly changed that title to: “the right to work for less.” ITL by a roll call vote of 14-9.

HB 1144 Requiring certain data to be filed with the Department of Labor. This refers to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission data about wage fairness. In March the House voted OTP/A by a division vote of 179-98. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1171 Relative to the application of federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards to public employees. In March the House voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 179-106. On June 16, the bill was introduced in the Senate and tabled by a voice vote. The provisions of this bill were included in the omnibus bill HB 1494.

SB 603 Relative to financial assistance for biomass and forest product workers. This bill authorizes the Department of Employment Security to use funds for skills training and job matching for employees in the biomass and related forest product industries who have been laid off. In March the Senate voted OTP by a roll call vote of 13-11. On June 30, the bill was introduced in the House and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1494 This is a Senate-amended omnibus bill concerning workers. One of the most important provisions: It establishes an occupational safety and health advisory board to advise the Labor Commissioner on the adoption and enforcement of occupational safety and health standards for public employees. It requires public employers to provide workers with at least the level of protection provided under the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act, contingent upon federal approval of a state plan. The bill also expands death benefits for public employees to include public works employees. On June 16, the Senate voted OTP/A by a roll call vote of 14-10. On June 30, the House concurred, by a roll call vote of 202-127. The bill was enrolled on June 30 and awaits action by the governor.

Bills We Watched For Enjoyment

HB 1371 Proclaiming March 2 Reading in New Hampshire Day. We approved of this bill, because after all, without reading there would be no State House Watch. Unfortunately, it was already March 13 when it crossed over to the Senate, and the legislature shut down three days later. It was vacated from committee and tabled by a voice vote.

HB 1441 Relative to the perambulation of town lines. Current statute stipulates that every seven years, the selectmen perambulate (walk) the lines between adjoining towns, and check on boundary markers. This bill would allow selectmen to perambulate as often as they felt necessary, and to also use satellite images instead. Voted ITL by a roll call vote of 271-74.