

AFSC-NH State House Watch, January 4, 2013

2013 Issue 1

Thanks for your end-of-year donations to AFSC and your ongoing support!

This was the week Maggie Hassan was sworn in as New Hampshire's 81st governor and the NH House of Representatives adopted changes to its rules.

As expected, the House voted to reverse the policy of the previous session by banning "deadly weapons" from Representatives Hall and the House Gallery. The final [196 to 153 vote](#), largely along party lines, followed two-and-a half hours of debate, one amendment which eliminated a reference to "adjacent areas," several failed amendments, and a failed motion to table.

This vote is symbolic on two levels. First, it represents an ideological shift in the House leadership and membership. Second, it represents a desire for restraint on gun violence in the wake of the Newtown, CT shootings. Whether the legislature will take additional steps to reduce the threat of gun violence remains to be seen. One measure to watch will be a bill from Rep. Steve Shurtleff to reverse the "Stand Your Ground" law adopted two years ago. Another proposed bill, from Representative Cynthia Sweeney, would require training prior to purchases of firearms.

The language of these and [797 more proposed bills](#) has not yet been released. House members have until January 11 to approve the wording of bills they are sponsoring.

The House also voted to eliminate the Redress of Grievances Committee and the Committee on Constitutional Review and Statutory Recodification, both of which had been ideological tools of the previous House leadership.

Speaker Terie Norelli assigned seats for Representatives in a manner that has Democrats and Republicans scattered throughout the Hall instead of seated on separate sides. While there is no "aisle," we can expect to continue to see references to "both sides of the aisle" as a metaphor for bi-partisanship. (The headline of this morning's [Union Leader article](#) on Governor Maggie Hassan's inauguration was "Hassan's speech praised on both sides of aisle.")

Speaking of which, Governor Hassan was formally sworn in yesterday by Linda Stewart Dalianis. Governor Hassan then swore in the Executive Councilors and delivered her [inaugural address](#). She re-stated campaign themes such as the importance of strengthening our education system and revitalizing the economy to "create good middle class jobs." She also gave a shout-out to those who have provided care for her son Ben, and proudly spoke about the adoption of marriage equality and the welcoming of new immigrants as indicators of the state's inclusive spirit.

The Governor used the word "innovative" (or "innovate") eighteen times. We wait expectantly for innovative proposals to address the state's structural deficit without adoption of a general sales or income tax, which she again pledged to veto.

Otherwise, [House](#) and [Senate](#) committees are holding organizational meetings and scheduling briefings with budget analysts, policy specialists, and representatives of state departments over

the next two weeks. No hearings on proposed legislation have yet been announced. The Governor has [announced](#) the completion of her staff and is presumably hard at work on her budget proposal, to be released next month.

State House Watch Goes on the Air Monday, January 7

Maggie Fogarty and Arnie Alpert will take to the airwaves on Monday, January 7 for the first “AFSC State House Watch” radio show, broadcast from 5 to 6 pm on [WNHN](#), a non-profit, low-power FM station in Concord. If you are close to Concord, you can hear it at 94.7 FM. If you are further away, you can [listen live](#) over the internet or download [podcasts](#) at your convenience. Burt Cohen, a Portsmouth radio personality and former State Senator, will be our first guest.

Meanwhile in Washington

It has probably not escaped your notice that the US Congress agreed to raise some taxes, extend some tax breaks, and postpone discussion of “sequestration,” i.e. mandated cuts in federal spending. With two new US Representatives, this is a great time for New Hampshire residents to contact members of Congress and give them your opinion on how they should approach the next round of deliberations. We suggest you ask them to pass a budget that reflects the values and priorities of the people who put them in office -- you, your family, friends, neighbors, and communities.

Here’s how they can do that:

- Preserve the programs that protect human security in the long-term—programs that fund human needs, protect the environment, invest in renewable energy, and peacefully engage with the rest of the world.
- Make deep cuts to our bloated Pentagon budget.
- Raise revenues by making sure that the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share.
- Invest in meaningful, community-centered job creation.

Click [here](#) to contact Representative Carol Shea-Porter.

Click [here](#) to contact Representative Ann McLane Kuster.

Click [here](#) to contact Senator Kelly Ayotte.

Click [here](#) to contact Senator Jeanne Shaheen.

(Click [here](#) for a recent blog post by Arnie on the theme, “fix the economy and the debt will take care of itself.”)

Events Coming Up...

“**MLK: A Call to Conscience**,” is a film about Dr. King’s historic “Beyond Vietnam” speech delivered at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967 plus interviews conducted by Tavis Smiley. It, and a recording of the speech, will be shown Monday, January 13 at Temple Beth Jacob in Concord at 7 pm. Click [here](#) for more details and to download a flyer.

The 2013 **“All New Hampshire Friends Gathering”** will take place at Wesley United Methodist Church in Concord, from 9 am to 3 pm, on Saturday, January 19. The theme this year will be Quakers, Prisons, and Prison Ministry. All Friends and friends of the Friends are welcome. Click [here](#) for more details.

Woullard Lett will lead a discussion of Michelle Alexander’s book, ***The New Jim Crow***, on Sunday, January 20, from 11:45 am to 3 pm (potluck lunch included). Brenda Lett will lead a multi-evening discussion of this important book on three consecutive Thursday evenings, January 17, 24, and 31 from 7 to 9 pm. All these discussions take place at the Manchester Unitarian Universalist Church. Please [pre-register](#).

The 31st annual **Martin Luther King Day Community Celebration** is Monday, January 21, from 2 to 5 pm at St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Manchester. This year the NH Sisters of Mercy will receive the Martin Luther King Award and Selina Taylor will be presented the second Vanessa Washington-Johnson Bloeman Award. Richard Haynes will be the guest speaker. Visit the Martin Luther King Coalition’s [web page](#) for more information.

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AFSC’s *New Hampshire State House Watch* newsletter is published to bring you information about matters being discussed in Concord including housing, the death penalty, immigration, marriage equality, and labor rights. We also follow the state budget and tax system, voting rights, corrections policy, and more. The AFSC is a Quaker organization supported by people of many faiths who care about peace, social justice, humanitarian service, and nonviolent change. Arnie Alpert and Maggie Fogarty staff the New Hampshire Program and publish the newsletter.

Your donations make our work possible. Click the “DONATE NOW” button on [our web page](#) to send a secure donation to support the work of the AFSC’s New Hampshire Program. Thanks!