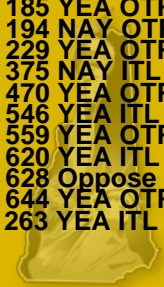




NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBERTY ALLIANCE

GOLD STANDARD

HB 185 YEA OTP/A
 HB 194 NAY OTP/A
 HB 229 YEA OTP
 HB 375 NAY ITL
 HB 470 YEA OTP/A
 HB 546 YEA ITL
 HB 559 YEA OTP/A
 HB 620 YEA ITL
 HB 628 Oppose
 HB 644 YEA OTP/A
 SB 263 YEA ITL



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HOUSE SESSION - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2024

HB 185, relative to the determination of parental rights and responsibilities based on shared parenting and shared access to the child's records.

HB 185

Children and Family Law: OTP/A 9-7

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill provides that it is a state policy to support approximately equal parenting time between a child and parent when courts are determining a permanent order concerning parental rights and responsibilities, unless such an arrangement is clearly detrimental to the child.

- While the bill as amended is only a small change compared to the existing RSA which only suggested "frequent and continuing contact", the change to approximately equal time ensures that both parents start on an equal footing in court when it comes to parental rights.
- According to a report from the US Census bureau, in 2018 about 4 of every 5 (79.9%) of the 12.9 million custodial parents were mothers (www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-269.pdf), and while not every instance is the result of a court proceeding, this bill would set a presumption for courts that equal parenting time for each parent is in the best interest of the child.
- Kentucky passed a similar measure in 2017 (www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2019/08/30/kentuckys-joint-custody-law-leads-decline-family-court-cases/2158216001) and found that a drop in family court disputes followed. In addition, according to a meta analysis, kids who share time between both parents' homes approximately equally have better outcomes related to academic achievement and physical and mental health (momsforsharedparenting.org/shared-parenting-research).
- While only a modest step in the right direction, the result is consistent with better outcomes for children and their parents as well as taxpayers who may be less likely to carry the costs of an expanding family court system.

YEA OTP/A

HB 470, relative to fentanyl test strips and other drug checking equipment.

HB 470

Criminal Justice and Public Safety: OTP/A 12-8

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill, with the proposed committee amendment, legalizes test strips and drug checking equipment used to inform individuals of whether a substance contains another another synthetic opioid, a different controlled substance, or an undisclosed chemical compound or contaminant.

- This bill as written allows individuals and harm reduction agencies to possess test strips provided by the market without having to have the legislature act for each new test, as long as the tests are not intended for use with the manufacture or sale of controlled substances for illegal sales.
- While it's true that no test can be 100% accurate, it should not be the role of the state to prohibit individuals from possessing test equipment.
- The bill also allows people testing their drugs to possess and transport a "nominal amount" of a controlled substance for the purposes of drug checking activity.

YEA OTP/A

HB 628, requiring certain non-public schools or education service providers that accept public funds to perform background checks on all employees and volunteers.

HB 628

Education: Without Recommendation

ANTI-LIBERTY: This bill imposes state-mandated background checks on private businesses.

- Parents who opt to participate in various education choice programs already have the option to select providers who perform background checks. There is no need to mandate such checks in state law.

Oppose

HB 559, establishing a state retirement plan group for new state employee members of the retirement system.

HB 559

Executive Departments and Administration: Without Recommendation

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill, with the associated amendment, creates a new Group III within the NH Retirement System comprised of newly-hired state employees in Group I, changing the plan from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan.

**YEA
OTP/A**

- Defined benefit plans have largely been replaced in the private sector by defined contribution plans, meaning that under the current system, employees of the state are being provided with a benefit that is unavailable to those who are paying for the plan.
- Defined contribution plans are more honest, as defined benefit plans are a long-term promise to provide a benefit that the state may be unable to meet given the fiscal and demographic changes in the economy. Further, a majority of state employees do not work for the state long enough to qualify for the existing benefit, meaning that these workers are subsidizing the benefits for the employees who remain.

HB 644, relative to regulating barbers, cosmetologists, and estheticians.

HB 644

Executive Departments and Administration: OTP/A 12-7

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill, with the proposed committee amendment, would make it legal to offer "blow-dry styling, makeup application, and eyebrow threading" without having to have a New Hampshire cosmetology license.

**YEA
OTP/A**

- Occupational licenses, particularly for low-risk activities such as blow-dry styling, are not meant to protect consumers. They do however entrench established players in the industry by burdening those trying to create new small businesses. They also unnecessarily grow government and thereby discourage competition and innovation.
- Relaxed occupational licensing laws will enhance entrepreneurial enterprise creation, spur growth, and strengthen the free market's ability to judge value.

HB 546, relative to the school building aid program.

HB 546

Finance: ITL 13-12

ANTI-LIBERTY: This bill would increase the amount of state aid for building of schools by \$30 million per year and mandate a minimum of \$50 million per year in state aid.

YEA ITL

- The NH public school student population has been shrinking for many years and is down more than 10,000 students since 2018 as parents find better options for educating their children and demographic shifts occur in the state. Unchecked spending will increase already high property taxes and will further burden the NH economy. Schools should be more, not less, accountable in order to rein in spending.
- With state building aid, local districts will fund more extravagant schools than they would if they had to pay the full cost themselves.

HB 620, (New Title) establishing a division of early learning in the department of education and relative to a pre-kindergarten pilot program.

HB 620

Finance: ITL 13-12

ANTI-LIBERTY: This bill establishes an executive branch department of early childhood education and creates a new taxpayer-funded pre-kindergarten program.

YEA ITL

- Though this bill only seeks to create a pilot program, the intended outcome is to establish a constituency for a new taxpayer-funded program that will grow in scope and costs in the coming years.
- While the statement of findings makes a claim of the long-term benefits of such programs, randomized studies of similar programs demonstrate that any of the perceived benefits are inconsistent and/or short-lived and vanish by first grade: *"However, the benefits of access to Head Start at age four are largely absent by 1st grade for the program population as a whole."* (files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED507847.pdf).

SB 263, extending the New Hampshire granite advantage health care program and reestablishing the commission to evaluate the effectiveness and future of the New Hampshire granite advantage health care program.

Finance: ITL 13-12

ANTI-LIBERTY: This bill would eliminate the sunset provision on NH Medicaid Expansion.

- This bill makes Medicaid Expansion permanent. Medicaid Expansion provides able-bodied, childless adults in NH who are above the poverty line with free healthcare.
- Federal money always comes with strings attached, and it is not free. The national debt, which is nearly \$34 trillion, is arguably the largest threat to national security.
- The federal government will not keep its promises. Federal money will dry up and the financial transfer mechanism will break because hospitals and insurance companies will be unable to transfer the entire cost onto paying customers. This will place the costs squarely on the state's General Fund, which will only be able to support it through a new broad-based tax, such as a sales or income tax, thereby destroying what remains of the New Hampshire Advantage. While there are protections in the existing law, one only need to look at the public hearing, where stakeholders showed up in support of this bill to recognize that the longer we run this 'temporary' program, the greater the constituency will be to keep it running even as it eventually grows to consume additional state funding.
- A free market approach to health care should be the main priority of the legislature. This is the only way to sustainably lower costs and increase access for the majority of Granite Staters.

YEA ITL

HB 194, requiring the director of the division of archives and records management to compile and maintain a list of public monuments.

HB 194

Resources, Recreation and Development: OTP/A 13-7

ANTI-LIBERTY: This bill requires the director of the Division of Historical Resources to periodically compile and publish a survey of all monuments in the state.

- While this is a seemingly innocuous bill, it does provide the pretext for growing spending in the state to perform an activity that is better served by private individuals and hobbyists.
- To the extent that such a list provides some value, it is well within the reasonable purview of the director of the Division of Historical Resources to consider creating such a list without a time interval mandated by law.

NAY OTP/A

HB 229, relative to requiring an official declaration of war for the activation of the New Hampshire national guard.

HB 229

State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs: Without Recommendation

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill limits the activation of the New Hampshire National Guard for active duty combat to only those times where the United States Congress has passed an official action pursuant to Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

- This bill helps to ensure that the state upholds the U.S. Constitution by requiring Congress to formally declare war before deploying National Guard units for overseas combat missions. This measure reinforces the separation of powers and prevents the executive branch from bypassing Congress in matters of war.
- By keeping National Guard units within NH, the bill helps ensure that these resources are available for state emergencies, such as natural disasters. This allows New Hampshire to better protect our residents and respond to local crises more effectively.

YEA OTP

HB 375, relative to the licensure of nonresident aliens temporarily residing in New Hampshire.

HB 375

Transportation: ITL 11-8

PRO-LIBERTY: This bill permits nonresident aliens living in New Hampshire on a temporary basis to obtain a driver's license upon completion of an application for asylum status to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

- The state should not be placing barriers on the right to travel.
- Denying individuals who are living legally in the state the right to a driver's license makes it more difficult for them to positively contribute to whatever household they are a member of and increases the need for public services.

NAY ITL