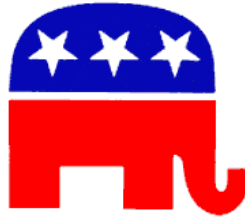


Republican Report

“Useless laws weaken the necessary laws”

—Montesquieu



Volume 3, Issue 5

February 13, 2009

A message from the Republican Leader.....

After several weeks of speculation, we finally had the opportunity to see what Governor Lynch would bring forth in his budget address and, quite frankly, there are still many questions still to be answered. The people of NH elected Gov. Lynch by an overwhelming majority and he will have to answer to them for the many cuts, tax increases, and job losses that he has proposed.

As we have been saying all along, we as Republicans are ready to work hand-in-hand with the governor and the Democrats in the legislature to craft a budget, but we do have a number of concerns that need to be addressed. The one thing that the business community has been telling us is, “please don’t hit us again with more taxes and mandates—don’t put additional burdens on NH business.” And yet, through his proposed increase in the Rooms and Meals tax, the tobacco tax and increased tolls, he is trying once again to balance the budget on the backs of our business community.

In his budget, Gov. Lynch has also added to the growing *tax burden* facing the people of this state—\$126M into the General Fund and \$32.8M into the highway fund over the next two years. How much longer can we balance the state budget on the backs of the people who can afford it the least?

I believe that while some of his proposals are taking us in the right direction, questions remain as to how quickly we can accomplish some of the consolidation that he has proposed. Exactly when will we realize the savings? The budget crisis is now....not five years from now. If the governor is going to flat-fund cities and towns, that means cutting \$123M in other places. What does that do to the local property taxes? It sounds like he is buying off the school districts while clobbering the municipal, town and city budgets.

We are already beginning to work on the governor’s figures and proposals and, where necessary, we will be ready to bring forth our own suggestions. I have in-

Republican Caucuses

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 3:30 p.m.

—Representatives Hall

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 8:45 a.m.

—Rooms 305-07, LOB

structed our Republicans on Finance, led by Policy Leader Neal Kurk and Committee Whip, Doug Scamman—who have many years of budgetary experience—to come up with some ideas that we can incorporate into our own Republican budget. We can no longer be the party of “no,” we need to be ready to offer solutions to problems where the Democrats have failed.

The House Finance committee will once again take the state budget “on-the-road,” holding public hearings in three different communities during the month of March. Members of the Ways and Means committee will also be sitting in on the hearings. The public is encouraged and invited to attend the hearings. I would also encourage House members in those areas: Whitefield, Claremont and Salem, to let their constituents know about the hearings so that we have a strong Republican presence. I would also encourage our members to write *letters to the editor* to the newspapers not only within those communities but also state-wide, letting the public know about the hearings and asking them to bring their concerns before the committee. Our office is ready to help you write and/or disseminate these letters. It is also important for you to attend the hearings when they appear in your area. There are a couple of geographic areas in the state that have been left off the “road trip” and perhaps a few letters or emails to the Finance Chairman encouraging her to schedule additional hearings would be in order.

Once again we have listed a number of bills in this week’s report that we took a position on in committee, either in support or in opposition. Along with the bills we

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House Finance/Ways & Means

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS

SALEM, Monday, March 9, at 6 p.m.

Media Center at Salem High School, 44 Geremonty Drive.

CLAREMONT, Thursday, March 12, at 6 p.m.

River Valley Community College, One College Drive.

WHITEFIELD, Monday, March 16, at 6 p.m.

White Mountains Regional High School Auditorium, 127 Regional Road.

—Message

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mentioned in the last Republican Report and in our hand-outs at caucus last week, (CACR 4, HB 440, HB 51), there are a few bills coming up this week in the House where we will ask you to support the leadership position. **CACR 2** out of Education is a leadership sponsored constitutional amendment that will direct state aid to communities that need it most, lower the oversight by the courts to a level of “reasonableness” versus “strict scrutiny,” and is the same language that the governor supported last year.

In his budget address this week, the governor reaffirmed his support of a constitutional amendment which would let the people decide how to best pay for education. We support a constitutional amendment for this reason and would ask you to support us in overturning the very narrow ITL by the Education committee.

The next bill we will fight for is **HB 521**, relative to funding the free and reduced lunch program. In last year’s adequacy plan, the Democrats stacked the deck against the taxpayers by continuing their support of double or triple dipping for education aid. In fact, their language allowed for students who sit in the same classroom as those who receive free & reduced aid to get this payment. This bill would roll back part of those payments to communities who are collecting that money for kids who do not need the service. In this tough economic situation, we have been and will likely continue to be charged with coming up with alternatives to Governor Lynch’s budget; this is one alternative that will save the state several million dollars and we believe it is one of the more responsible alternatives to some of the governor’s suggestions. Please vote to overturn the report of ITL on **HB 521**.

Another bill will be taking a position on is **HB 265** from Election Law. This legislation establishes a new age affidavit for registering to vote, which will call for absolutely no verification of a person’s age. It further leads to more bureaucracy by creating yet another affidavit with which to burden our election officials on Election Day. We believe that while no voter fraud is reported to exist, if

there is any, this bill will certainly make it much easier. Please support the minority report of ITL.

The following legislation is also coming up on the floor of the House this week we would ask you to please listen carefully to the debates, especially considering their passage may have consequences for our state further on down the road.

•**HB 119**, establishing a commission to consider the feasibility of adopting the Atlantic Daylight Savings Plan.

•**HB 103**, relative to paying discharged and laid off employees in full at the time of discharge.

•**HB 383**, relative to passenger restraints.

(Mandatory seatbelts)

There is also one constitutional amendment that we urge take a close look at. Of course, we support idea of returning to local control espoused in this legislation.

•**CACR 8**, Providing that the recognition of local control of education in the NH constitution is reestablished.

We will hold a caucus on Tuesday afternoon in Reps’ Hall. I realize that some of you may have committee work at that time, and I believe that your work in committee is of paramount importance and should come first. But I invite you to join us once your committee is done for the day. At these Tuesday afternoon sessions I also plan to bring in fellow members who have expertise in certain areas (i.e. education, the retirement fund, budget and etc.) to speak to the caucus and answer questions. This will help us all better understand some of these major issues before us. We will also caucus on Wednesday at 8:45 a.m for an hour and we will focus on important issues coming before us that day. I appreciate the hard work that you have already put forth this session and I know that, working together, we can accomplish some goals this session. See you on Tuesday.



Legislative Update

It has been our intention from the very beginning to oppose only bills that will have a profound social or economic cost to the citizens of New Hampshire—and we have tried to be consistent in that opposition. Occasionally, a Republican is the prime sponsor of a bill that we have to oppose for one of those reasons. While it has been our intention from the start to let our fellow Republicans know when we will in fact be opposing their legislation, some have fallen through the cracks and for that we apologize. In the future, we will make every possible effort to inform those Republicans we may sometimes disagree with and make them aware of our position. Listed here are bills that leadership signed-in, testified and taken a position on in committee this week:

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

- HB 520**—establishing a commission to study the death penalty in New Hampshire. (Opposed)
- HB 512**—establishing a temporary moratorium on executions and establishing a commission to study the death penalty in NH. (Opposed)
- HB 557**—requiring the attorney general to request a life sentence instead of the death penalty in certain circumstances. (Opposed)
- HB 556**—repealing the death penalty. (Opposed)

Education

- HB 509**—requiring parental consent for psychological evaluations by school districts. (**Supported**)
- HB 368**—relative to annual goals in a home education program. (Opposed)
- HB 367**—relative to procedures for evaluation of home schooled students. (Opposed)

Election Law

- HB 470**—relative to order of names on ballots. (Opposed)
- HB 669**—relative to registering to vote. (Opposed)
- HB 513**—relative to the prohibition on voting in more than one state. (Opposed)
- HB 548**—requiring municipalities to have dedicated post office boxes for receipt of absentee ballots. (Opposed)
- HB 614**—relative to domicile of students for voting purposes. (Opposed)

Environment and Agriculture

- HB 675**—requiring a refundable deposit on beverage containers. (Opposed)

Executive Departments and Administration

- HB 289**—relative to requiring financial and business management experience for membership on the board of trustees of the New Hampshire Retirement System. (**Supported**)
- HB 685**—relative to medical benefits payment by the retirement system for certain vested deferred Group I members. (Opposed)
- HB 591**—relative to the maximum initial retirement benefit for retirees in the New Hampshire Retirement System. (**Supported**)

Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs

- HB 658**—relative to housing assistance for recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). (Opposed)



Judiciary

- HB 572**—making pretrial screening panels optional for parties to a medical injury action. (Opposed)
HB 203—eliminating the requirement that the trial judge present unanimous findings of the screening panel to the jury in medical injury actions. (Opposed)
HB 197—relative to apportionment of damages. (Opposed)
HB 201—requiring the agreement of 10 jurors on issues of liability or damages for jury verdicts in trials of civil actions. (Opposed)
HB 274—requiring parental notification before abortions may be performed on unemancipated minors. (**Supported**)
HB 531—relative to parental notification prior to abortions being performed on minors. (**Supported**)

Labor, Industrial & Rehabilitative Services

- HB 46**—relative to dispute resolution within the context of public employee dispute resolution. (Opposed)
HB 305—relative to public employees' right to strike. (Opposed)

Local and Regulated Revenues

- HB 487**—allowing municipalities to adopt a property tax exemption for compliance with green building standards. (Opposed)
HB 309—enabling towns and cities to establish a local revenue option as an alternative to property taxation for the funding of local government costs. (Opposed)

Public Works and Highways

- HB 657**—relative to the responsibility of the state for the infrastructure of state roads that run through certain towns. (Opposed)

Transportation

- HB 629**—revising certain motor vehicle laws. (Opposed to the fee increases in this large bill)
HB 465—relative to driver's license fees. (Opposed)
HB 683—relative to the disposition of motor vehicle fines, relative to fines for speed limit violations, and requiring the department of safety to inform drivers of changes to the motor vehicle laws. (Opposed)

Ways and Means

- HB 540**—relative to fees for motor vehicle records. (Opposed)
HB 562—establishing a job creation tax credit for the town of Greenville. (Opposed)
HB 583—establishing an income tax to adequately fund public education and relative to employment of teachers. (Opposed)
HB 597—revising the property tax relief program in order to cap education tax payments at one percent of adjusted gross income. (Opposed)
HB 656—relative to collection of the education property tax and establishing a program to rebate certain excessive property tax payments of eligible taxpayers. (Opposed)
HB 691—relative to the New Hampshire estate tax. (Opposed)
HB 543—establishing an inheritance tax on property tax on property received by collateral heirs. (Opposed)

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