



NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE



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House Democrats Vote to Allow Governor to Be a Legislature of One

The New Hampshire House Republican Alliance denounced Wednesday's vote by House Democrats to uphold Governor John Lynch's veto of House Bill 354, which aimed to help the people, through their legislature, to hold state agencies more accountable.

Executive agencies have often circumvented the will of the people by promulgating laws through regulations where the legislature has chosen not to adopt those laws. A recent example was when an agency decided to require the registration of swim floats on lakes after the legislature twice declined to impose that burden on its citizens.

"Just as we are outraged when judges disregard their proper role of interpreting laws and legislate from the bench, we are disappointed that Governor Lynch, with the help of House Democrats, wants to legislate through administrative rules," said Representative Robert Mead (R-Mont Vernon).

This past spring House Bill 354, which was sponsored by Representative Betsy Patten and a bipartisan group of co-sponsors, was recommended for passage by the House Executive Departments and Administration Committee on a 19-0 vote and thereafter unanimously passed the House. The bill would have allowed current legislative policy committees to vote for joint resolutions forbidding final agency rules. It also would have made some needed changes to the adoption procedure for rules and extended a study committee on improving the rulemaking process. Governor Lynch nonetheless rejected this reform and claimed that the bill would have unintended consequences. In fact, the only consequence that is unintended is the Governor's lack of intention of losing the power to direct agencies to announce laws when those laws cannot pass through the legislature.

"There should be a healthy equilibrium between the legislative and executive branches of government. That is what the founding fathers meant when they created a system of checks and balances. I find it disturbing that Governor Lynch has chosen to ignore the will of the voters whose voice is the legislative branch and is consolidating power into his own office," said Representative D.J. Bettencourt (R-Salem)

Despite the prior unanimity in the House on the issue, after Governor Lynch, through his veto, turned the issue into a partisan fight, each House Democrats, except one, ignored his or her prior vote on House Bill 354 and, in lockstep fashion, lined up behind the Governor. The final vote was 203-131 in favor of overriding the veto. This vote was unfortunately short of the required two-thirds majority needed to send it over to the Senate, thus leaving the people of New Hampshire exposed to laws announced by unfettered executive directive rather than laws approved by its legislature. It is clear that we need either more Republicans in the House or a Republican in the corner office if representative government in New Hampshire is to be secure.

The NHHRA is comprised of members of the NH House of Representatives striving for legislative support for bills supporting the NH and U.S. Constitutions and NH Republican party platform. For more information, please log onto <http://www.nhouserepublicanalliance.org> ###