

House Republican Alliance Recommendation Sheet



"Trust but Verify"

The purpose of the House Republican Alliance is to preserve and strengthen the traditional principles and values of the Republican Party through the NH House of Representatives and throughout the state of NH, including fiscal restraint, personal freedom and responsibility, small government, free enterprise and strong families. We offer the following recommendations based on those principles, the Republican Party Platform and the NH and Federal Constitutions.

Thursday, February 20, 2025
Regular Calendar

Science, Technology and Energy

HB169, relative to a quorum of the public utilities commission. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP/A 0249h Vote: 10-7**

HRA Analysis: The bill requires 2/3 of the Commission engagement on all actions. A 2/3 vote is already required for binding orders. Requiring 2 commissioners to conduct a hearing would substantially impede progress; much business is conducted by independently reviewing information and documents.

Principle: Platform: "always limit spending and growth of government"

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB504, relative to the state energy policy. **Maj. OTP/A 0215h; Min. ITL Vote: 10-8**

HRA Analysis: The bill modifies the state Energy Policy to emphasize the importance of removing barriers to innovation in order to procure affordable, reliable and secure energy resources.

Principle: Platform: "Work to reduce energy costs...."

HRA Recommendation: Support OTPA

HB508, relative to decreasing assessment rates for entities providing VoIP and IP-enabled services, as well as certain local exchange carriers and their affiliates. **OTP Vote: 18-0**

HRA Analysis: This bill reduces the regulatory assessment on land line phone service commensurate with their substantially deregulated regulatory profile. A drafting error is corrected in FLAM 0269h.

Principle: Platform: "Minimize business regulations, permits, licenses & paperwork"

HRA Recommendation: Support FLAM 0269h; Support OTPA

HB682, relative to the office of offshore wind industry, the offshore and port development commission, and the office of energy innovation. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 9-6**

HRA Analysis: This bill removes the office of offshore wind industry development name from the office of energy innovation. It repeals the offshore wind industry workforce training center committee and the offshore and port development commission and consolidates the grid modernization advisory council and the hydrogen advisory council into the office of energy innovation. It leaves NH able to monitor offshore wind activities but not actively advocate for it.

Principle: Platform: "Work to reduce energy costs"

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

Transportation

HB260, creating a commemorative license plate celebrating the 250th anniversary of Bunker Hill. **OTP/A 0139h Vote: 12-4**

HRA Analysis:

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

HB287, requiring police departments to provide fire departments with certain motorist personal and insurance information following a motor vehicle incident. **ITL Vote: 9-7**

HRA Analysis: this bill adds fire departments to those the police are required to share personal information after an accident.

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

HB368, prohibiting smoking and e-cigarettes in motor vehicles when a passenger is under 16 years of age. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 9-7**

HRA Analysis: this bill is impossible to enforce and restricts legal adult behavior

Principle: Platform: "We believe in free people..." US Constitution 4th Am: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

Ways and Means

HB255, increasing the percentage of revenue deposited in the education trust fund from the business profits tax. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 16-4**

HRA Analysis: Percent BPT to ED Fund increases from 41% to 59%. General Fund revenue will decrease and Education Trust Fund revenue will increase by an indeterminable amount; however total BPT revenue collected does not change

Principle: Platform: "Promote local control of education policy and funding in order to create the best-managed school systems."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB318, relative to the percentage of revenue from the business enterprise tax deposited in the education trust fund. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 16-4**

HRA Analysis: Percent BET to ED Fund increases from 41% to 59%. General Fund revenue will decrease and Education Trust Fund revenue will increase by an indeterminable amount; however total BET revenue collected does not change

Principle: Platform: "Promote local control of education policy and funding in order to create the best-managed school systems."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB502, relative to complete corporate reporting for unitary businesses under the business profits tax and revenues from the state education property tax. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 11-9**

HRA Analysis: The Department of Revenue Administration stated that they did not have the manpower, knowledge of foreign accounting systems, or language skills to visit and review the worldwide accounting of the corporations that pay taxes in New Hampshire, but are part of a larger corporate structure.

Principle: Platform: "limit spending and growth of government."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

Regular Calendar

Children and Family Law

HB243, relative to the penalty for false reports of suspected abuse and neglect made to the division for children, youth, and families. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 10-6**

HRA Analysis: This bill makes knowingly making a false report a misdemeanor. This is analogous to the perjury penalty for making a false police report.

Principle: Platform: "Ensure due process rights of those accused of child abuse or neglect"; "We believe that the children's best interest is to have a substantial relationship with each parent and the government should only interfere with that relationship with just cause."

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

HB56, requiring a background check and mandatory waiting period during certain firearm transfers. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 8-7**

HRA Analysis: The bill mandates a waiting period before the purchase of a firearm violating the Constitutions

Principle: NH Const. [Art.] 2-a. [The Bearing of Arms.] All persons have the right to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves, their families, their property and the state.

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB75, legalizing cannabis for persons 21 years of age or older. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 9-7**

HRA Analysis: Bill decriminalizes marijuana for those over 21.

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

HB207, relative to repealing the prohibition on the possession or sale of blackjacks, slung shots, and metallic knuckles except by or to minors. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 8-7**

HRA Analysis: The bill removes the prohibition to possess or sell antique tools (used for game management) and self-defense items. The punishment is misdemeanor, however there is no victim by just possession.

Principle: NH Const. Art. 18 "All penalties ought to be proportioned to the nature of the offense...."

Art. 2-A "All persons have the right to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves, their families, their property and the state."

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

HB257, establishing the crime of criminal neglect of a child. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 11-5**

HRA Analysis: This bill establishes the crime of criminal neglect of a child. Class A felony, if the neglect resulted in the child's death or a class B felony, if the neglect resulted in a serious bodily injury to the child.

Principle: NH Const. Art. 18 "All penalties ought to be proportioned to the nature of the offense...."

Platform: Ensure due process rights of those accused of child abuse or neglect

HRA Recommendation: Support FLAM 0503h to remove "emotional harm"

Support OTP/A

HB352, prohibiting possession of a firearm at a polling place. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 8-7**

HRA Analysis: The bill prevents possession of a firearm at a polling place and those who violate face jail time.

Principle: NH Const. [Art.] 2-a. [The Bearing of Arms.] All persons have the right to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves, their families, their property and the state.

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB381, exempting firearms and firearm accessories manufactured for in-state use only from the National Firearm Act. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 8-7**

HRA Analysis: legislation provides a tailored opportunity for the courts to narrow Wickard v. Filburn (1942), that dramatically increased the regulatory power of the federal government.

Principle: US Const Amdmt 10: "powers not given to the federal government are reserved to the states or the people."

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

HB778, authorizing the director of the police standards and training council to detail law enforcement training specialists employed by the council for law enforcement and crowd control services. **OTP/A 0329h Vote: 16-0**

HRA Analysis:

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

Education Funding

HB494, relative to the math learning communities program, and making an appropriation therefor. **OTP/A 0172h Vote: 18-0**

HRA Analysis: This level funds a particular math curriculum that seems to be achieving good results.

Principle: Platform: "Emphasize knowledge attainment and academic achievement"; "Justify expenditures against measurable benefits"

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

HB716, making an appropriation for the dual and concurrent enrollment program. **OTP/A 0168h Vote: 18-0**

HRA Analysis: Level funds a program to allow high school students to take community college classes, thus getting a head start on college.

Principle: Platform: "Emphasize knowledge attainment and academic achievement"; "Justify expenditures against measurable benefits"

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

Education Policy and Administration

HB76, relative to tracking special education complaints. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 10-8**

HRA Analysis: This bill requires the department of education to establish and maintain a tracking system for all state complaints related to special education services, and issue an annual report summarizing the complaint data.

Principle: Platform: "Promote accountability and transparency in education"

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

Election Law

HB107, relative to political advertising printed in newspapers, periodicals, or billboards. **Maj. OTP; Min. ITL Vote: 10-7**

HRA Analysis: This bill removes the requirement from RSA 664:16 for political advertising in newspapers, periodicals or billboards to state "Political Advertising" at the top or bottom. This information is duplicative as RSA 664:14 requires you identify at the beginning or the end of the advertisement, a paid for by statement including a name and address. This duplication is an unnecessary burden on businesses such as newspapers, one of which was prosecuted for forgetting to put this statement.

Principle: Platform: "Minimize business regulations"

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP

HB327, relative to filing for office and witnessing affidavits. **OTP/A 0237h Vote: 17-0**

HRA Analysis: this bill allows candidates for State Representative to file their candidacy either at their local town clerk's office, as is current law, or at the Secretary of State's office.

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

Fish and Game and Marine Resources

HB61, creating a committee to study the laws relative to oyster harvesting. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 10-5**

HRA Analysis:

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs

HB53, permitting qualifying patients and designated caregivers to cultivate cannabis for therapeutic use. **OTP/A 0272h Vote: 13-4**

HRA Analysis: The bill allows pre-qualified people who have medical marijuana cards to cultivate their use cannabis

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

Judiciary

HB66, relative to material subject to disclosure under the right to know law. **Maj. OTP/A 0110h; Min. ITL Vote: 13-4**

HRA Analysis: This bill makes three changes to the right to know law.

1. Replaces undefined term "citizen" with the word "person," so that anyone can make a right to know request regardless of where they live.
2. Enables requestors to request records be provided electronically, which the governmental body must honor if it keeps the records in the format requested and the request is not unduly burdensome.
3. Specifically provides that covered records include preliminary drafts of reports and other documents that are circulated to a quorum of the body.

Principle: Platform: "it is our responsibility to hold the government accountable:

NH Constitution: Part First, Art. 8 "All power residing originally in, and being derived from, the people, all the magistrates and officers of government are their substitutes and agents, and at all times accountable to them. Government, therefore, should be open, accessible, accountable and responsive. To that end, the public's right of access to governmental proceedings and records shall not be unreasonably restricted...."

HRA Recommendation: Support OTP/A

HB80, allowing a public body member's presence at a meeting by electronic or other means of communication only if physical presence is unavoidable and providing that physical presence is necessary for voting. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP/A 0312h Vote: 13-4**

HRA Analysis: This bill contains two changes to the right to know law. 1. Continues the practice of allowing remote participation by a member of a public body, but requires a higher hurdle needed for such remote attendance- "unavoidable" instead of "not being reasonably practical." 2. Only permit voting by those public body members physically in attendance. Testimony indicated the potential for problems with this second part in the case of very small public bodies with only 3 members- if one is in person, one is absent, and one is on remote, only the in person member could vote, leaving decisions to only one person. The amendment removes the second change, and only provides the first change.

Principle: No platform or constitutional issues identified

HRA Recommendation: No Recommendation

HB111, extending the position of right-to-know ombudsman for 2 years. **OTP/A 0170h Vote: 15-2**

HRA Analysis: This bill extends the right-to-know ombudsman (RKO) position for two years. The RKO is an independent executive branch state agency which provides an alternative to the Superior Court for right to know (RTK)/ RSA 91-A disputes. The amendment exempts an individual who assists a petitioner and doesn't receive any compensation for such, from being considered as engaging in the unauthorized practice of law. It also prohibits the RKO from awarding attorney fees, as there was concern governmental bodies were using attorneys and motioning for the awarding of attorney fees from citizens to discourage citizens from filing.

Principle: Platform: "it is our responsibility to hold the government accountable:

NH Constitution: Part First, Art. 8 "All power residing originally in, and being derived from, the people, all the magistrates and officers of government are their substitutes and agents, and at all times accountable to them. Government, therefore, should be open, accessible, accountable and responsive. To that end, the public's right of access to governmental proceedings and records shall not be unreasonably restricted...."

HRA Recommendation: Support Amendment 0170h; Support OTP/A

Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Services

HB282, increasing the maximum benefits for first responders critically injured in the line of duty. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 11-9**

HRA Analysis: This bill addresses first responder claims for additional compensation beyond what is covered by insurance. The fund was established in recognition of the unique injuries that such employees might suffer. This money is under the control of Governor and Council to fund claims as they are made. Currently capped at \$500,000 per bienium, the bill raises the limit to \$1 million. Testimony was that the total disbursement of the fund has never exceeded \$350,000.

Principle: Platform: "Limit the growth of state spending."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB299, relative to the award of attorneys' fees and costs in workers' compensation claims. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 11-9**

HRA Analysis: This bill would extend the awarding inclusion of attorneys' fees in a workers' comp. claim to earlier in the process. It would have the effect of encouraging injured workers to engage a lawyer sooner, as those costs would not reduce a settlement. This would likely increase the costs for workers' comp. coverage.

Principle: Platform: "Minimize business regulations ... to allow lower business taxes"

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL

HB586, establishing an employee assistance program for small town first responders and making an appropriation therefor. **Maj. ITL; Min. OTP Vote: 11-9**

HRA Analysis: Provides access to the Employee Assistance Program to towns with small or volunteer first-responder organizations. This bill would add an estimated \$100K to \$500K annually to Health and Human Services expenditures.

Principle: Platform: "Keep state government lean to allow lower business taxes."

HRA Recommendation: Support ITL