



MAJORITY REPORT

Volume 1 Issue 9

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From the desk of the Majority Leader



In January the Republican membership assisted the Majority Office in setting up our goals and objectives for the current session.

This was done through a week-long series of information gathering sessions held at the Upham Walker house.

When the sessions were completed, we were able to compile a list of five major goals and objectives (*see pg. 3*) that would guide us through the legislative session. We take these goals and objectives very seriously when deciding which position to take on legislation that falls into one of those five categories. Over the past week we have taken positions on certain legislation because it was in conflict with these goals and objectives. In fact, in some cases, we felt it necessary to oppose the committee report.

Thanks to the support many of you provided this past week, we were able to stand strong on our goals and objectives. For example, together, we took an important first step to modernize the Medicaid program of health care for the indigent elderly and disabled when we voted to pass **HB-691-FN-L** to the House Finance committee.

One of our goals was to review, and possibly revise, SB110. In passing **HB 611-FN**, we stayed true to this commitment. Thanks to the hard work done by Republicans on the Commerce committee, we are now sending a bill on to the Senate that establishes a small group insurance mechanism and creates a composite band of case characteristics that will be used to establish premiums. The amendment to the bill also extends the responsibility of the SB 110 oversight committee to monitoring the effects of small group health insurance reform.

Another of the Majority Office goals is to “provide an economic climate and infrastructure that will attract businesses to the State.” For this reason, we opposed **HB-137-FN**, relative to unemployment benefit eligibility. Not only would this bill have had a negative impact on economic development in New Hampshire, but it also carried a price tag of over \$10M to the State.

Speaker Scamman made Education Funding a priority of this session and, through the hard work of the Education committee, we passed a consensus, compromise bill that merged specific provisions from three of the ten education bills into a logical, consistent whole. Next step will be a public hearing this Monday (*see below*.)

On Wednesday of next week, we face several pieces of legislation that conflict with our goals and objectives and we ask for your support.

—continued on page 4

We Urge You To Attend the Following Hearings Before the FINANCE Committee on Monday, April 4th, in Room 201-211 of the LOB

**9:00 A.M.—Capital Budget
10:00 A.M.—GraniteCare
1:00 P.M.—Education Funding**

Wednesday, April 6th
9:15 A.M.-Republican Caucus
10:00 A.M.-House Session



LABOR, INDUSTRIAL AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

HB 665-FN-LOCAL

Relative to raising the minimum wage in NH. It came out

of **LABOR, INDUSTRIAL & REHABILITATIVE SERVICES OTP,**

11-2. We **OPPOSE** the committee because:

- This bill ends up hurting the very people it was designed to help the most.
- Any increase in wages should be controlled by the “free market,” — not government.
- Current law ties the State minimum wage to the Federal level.
- Minimum wage should be determined through negotiation between employer and employee.
- An increase in the minimum wage would have an impact on other salaries, thus creating a possible negative impact on the economic climate of the State and its ability to attract new businesses.

PLEASE VOTE NO ON OTP AND THEN VOTE YES ON ITL

RESOURCES, RECREATION & DEVELOPMENT

HB 419

Relative to the Mount Sunapee ski area boundary and lease terms. It came out

of **RESOURCES, RECREATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ITL,**

12-9. We **SUPPORT** the committee because:

- It is the role of the Governor & Executive Council to execute lease making authority, NOT the legislature.
- The bill would suspend action on proposed expansion of the Mt. Sunapee State Park Lease. The lease has already been negotiated for the current 20 years and it is not customary to change a lease mid-way through a contract.
- This would send the wrong message to any business that signs a contract with the State.
- DRED is the expert and should rightly possess oversight authority of the lease with Mt. Sunapee

PLEASE VOTE YES ON ITL



Check out the Majority Office website at: www.nhousegop.com

The calendar of events is updated on a daily basis on the website...You will also be able to check out current weather in Concord, road conditions and the latest Majority Report.

Majority Leadership

Majority Leader Mike O’Neil—271-3378
Majority Whip Pam Price—271-3356

Legislative Aides

Lynne Merrill —271-3663
Jim Rivers—271-6277
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Please vote to SUPPORT these committee reports on Wednesday, April 6th!

TRANSPORTATION

HB 513

Relative to motor vehicle inspection stations. It came out of **TRANSPORTATION OTP, WITH AMENDMENT, 9-0.**

We **SUPPORT** the committee because:

- Inspection stations may not charge more than \$15 for the EPA OBD II test.
- If a vehicle fails the OBD test and passes all other requirements, it will receive a temporary waiver that permits operation for 60 days.
- If a vehicle fails the OBD test and the owner does not make the required repairs, the owner may not sell the vehicle without informing the buyer of the failure.

WAYS & MEANS

HB 94-FN-A

Requiring a discount to wholesalers on cash purchases of tobacco tax stamps. It came out of

WAYS & MEANS ITL, 10-6. We **SUPPORT** the committee because:

- If passed, the bill would decrease state unrestricted general fund revenue by \$1.35M in FY06 and each year thereafter.
- The education trust fund will be decreased by over \$500,000 in FY06 and each year thereafter.
- The amendment would provide a one cent discount to distributors effective 7/1/06, but the business involved has already adjusted its pricing models to accommodate the loss.

*When dealing with legislation,
please remember our*

Goals & Objectives

- √ Solve the Education funding problem by creating a formula that is fair and equitable, while eliminating donor towns and repealing the statewide property tax.
- √ Create a balanced budget that is fiscally sound, with realistic revenue and expenditure projections, and with no new or increased taxes.

- √ Provide better access to quality health care and prescription drugs at affordable prices; Medicaid reform; review and possibly revise SB110; and tort reform.
- √ Protect the integrity of the voter system
- √ Work to provide an economic climate and infrastructure that will attract businesses to the State.



—DESK (continued from page 1)

HB 665-FN-Local, which would raise the minimum wage for hourly employees by a dollar over two years, could have a devastating effect on our economy. In short, this bill ends up hurting the people that it was designed to help the most. An increase might put unskilled and disabled workers out of a job.

The minimum wage reduces employment, and given its current level to other wages, a further increase likely would generate a substantial reduction in the employment opportunities of the least skilled. The real concern to business owners of raising the minimum wage is the effect it will have on other salaries. Our current law ties our State minimum wage to the Federal level. Should the US Congress decide to raise the minimum wage, NH's rate will rise accordingly. The legislature should let the free market establish wage increases. This bill has come out of the Labor committee OTP with amendment, 11-5. We ask you to vote **NO on OTP** and then vote YES on ITL.

On Wednesday we will also be asked to vote on HB 419, relative to the Mount Sunapee ski area boundary and lease terms. The Resources, Recreation and Development committee voted ITL, 12-9, and we support their decision for a number of reasons. The 1997 legislature authorized a lease of ski operations at Mt. Sunapee to a private operator and gave oversight of the lease to the Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Governor and Council. We don't believe that it is the charge of this legislature

to change the lease mid-way through the 20 year agreement. This would send the wrong message to any business that signs a contract with the State. This bill would suspend any action on the expansion of the Mt. Sunapee State Park Lease until a study committee files a report on November 1, 2006. We ask you to support the committee and vote **YES on ITL** for HB 419.

We also ask your support of two other pieces of legislation. The Transportation committee voted OTP, 9-0 on HB 513, relative to motor vehicle inspection stations and OBDII, and we support their decision. We feel that the consumer is protected under the changes the committee recommended based on the contract that the state has entered into. For example, no station may charge more than \$15 for the EPA OBD II test. Owners are also issued a waiver that permits operation for 60 days, in order to make required repairs. Please vote **YES on OTP** for HB 513.

Finally, Ways and Means has sent us a bill that would give a discount to wholesalers on cash purchases of tobacco tax stamps. The committee voted ITL, 10-6 and we ask you to support the Majority report. If passed, the bill would decrease the state unrestricted general fund revenue by \$1.35M in FY06 and each year thereafter. The restricted education trust fund revenue would be decreased by more than \$500,000 a year. The amendment would provide a one cent discount to distributors effective 7/1/06, but the business involved has already adjusted its pricing models to accommodate the loss. Here, we are faced with a piece of legislation that conflicts with our goal of creating a balanced budget that is fiscally sound with realistic expenditure projections. We ask you to support the committee and vote **YES on ITL**.

It is extremely important that all Republicans attend our caucus at 9:15 A.M. on Wednesday so the Majority Office can keep you informed on issues facing us on session day. As always, if you have any questions with regard to Majority Office positions, please contact me or Majority Whip Pam Price.



*The Annual
Majority Office
Chile Cook-Off
is coming soon!*

Please contact Teresa Preston
in the Majority office at
271-3654

if you'd like to enter your chili!