



# MAJORITY REPORT

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## *From the desk of the Majority Leader...*

It's time to step back and take a deep breath following an extremely hectic, yet productive, week on the floor of the House last week. I would like to personally thank those members of our caucus who supported the Majority Office on several key bills, as well as your patience in what were very long session days.

There were a number of bills that fell under the umbrella of the "Republican Legislative Priorities" for which we asked, and received, your support. We certainly would not have been able to kill an attempt to establish a beverage fee (i.e. tax), to be paid by beverage manufacturers and distributors, without the support of our membership. It was gratifying to see the Caucus come together, especially on legislation that dealt with issues important to the Republican Party as

outlined, not only the party platform, but in our own goals and initiatives. Cutting taxes, such as the bill to decrease the rate of the tobacco tax—while a noble idea—cannot be accomplished midway through a budget cycle without also offering a method of making up for any lost funds. In the case of the tobacco tax, we were talking about an estimated \$43M per year. While we should always be looking for ways to cut taxes and limit spending, we should also be wary of those who attempt to cut taxes while *increasing* spending, in an effort to build a case for a broad-based tax in New Hampshire.

Managing the state's Rainy Day Fund, in a fiscally responsible manner, is extremely critical to the economic stability of New Hampshire. That is why it was so important for us to pass **HB1370** this week, transferring surplus money into the Revenue Stabilization account—despite attempts from the other side of the aisle to spend a large

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**The following bill was pulled for *reconsideration* on February 22nd.  
We ask you to support the original committee report:**

### **Ways & Means ITL, 16-4**

**HB 1651**

**VOTE NO ON  
RECONSIDERATION**

Relative to repealing the statewide enhanced education tax.

- This bill received a full debate on the floor of the House on Thurs., Feb 16 and the committee report was supported overwhelmingly in a voice vote.
- The state funds a low and moderate income property tax relief program, which would be eliminated by this legislation. This program currently makes \$5M available annually to those taxpayers.
- Any elimination of the statewide enhanced education tax should be thoroughly studied because this tax plays an important role in the calculation of grants to NH communities.
- Repealing the statewide enhanced education tax at this time could expose the legislature to the possible charge of defiance or disregard of the court's ruling.



**Desk** (continued from page one)

portion of the surplus on programs that have already been addressed in the current budget.

If we continue to work together as Republicans on issues germane to our party platform, we will continue the successes that we experienced this week. In the end, these successes will translate to victory at the polls in November, which in turn will result bringing more Republicans into our caucus in the fall.

I hope to see you all at our next Republican caucus on Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 12:30PM, just prior to our next session. Also, please remember our Majority Office social following the session on March 7th!

**Education**  
ITL, 10-6

**HB 1178**

**Vote yes to ITL**  
**HB 1178**

Relative to the definition of an adequate education.

- To change the definition to include all points mentioned in the bill would increase the amount of monies the state must pay to fund an education—forcing us to adopt a new funding mechanism.
- The current curriculum, as adopted by the State Board of Education, includes adequate definitions and standards of what is required of NH students.
- The implementation date is in 60 days, which does **not** leave local school boards the time necessary to make changes to existing curricula, raising significant 28-A concerns.

**Ways & Means**  
ITL, 13-6

**HB 1515-A**

**Vote yes to ITL**  
**HB 1515-A**

Increasing the tobacco tax and dedicating certain tobacco tax revenues to the tobacco use prevention fund.

- The tobacco tax was already raised by 54% last session.
- The Tobacco Tax Prevention Program receives \$1.6M in federal funds.
- Now is **not** the time to be tinkering with the state's 4th largest tax source.

**Fish & Game**  
OTP, 9-1

**HB 1269**

**Vote yes to OTP**  
**HB 1269**

Relative to the taking of red deer or elk.

- According to committee leadership, this is a “house cleaning” bill that had passed the House and Senate in 1998 as **HB 1145**.
- HB 1145 became **RSA 427:38**, which states: “Livestock shall mean all cattle, goats, sheep, swine, or other equidae, as well as.....**elk**, fallow deer, **red deer** and reindeer.
- The Fish & Game committee should have removed Red Deer and Elk from the **RSA (207:11 paragraph 35)**, which classified them as wildlife—**HB 1269** corrects the conflict between the two RSA's.