



MAJORITY REPORT

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

On February 1, the House will be asked to vote on yet another education funding bill when HB 650-FN-L comes to the floor. The **Education Committee** has voted **14-5** that it is **Inexpedient to Legislate (ITL)**. The Majority Office supports the committee for several very sound reasons.

During the last session, following many hours of work and lengthy debate, the House arrived at an education funding bill (**HB 616**) that resulted in a new education formula for our municipalities. The legislation that we passed, by an overwhelming 3 to 1 margin, set forth criteria whereby municipalities would receive local tax capacity aid, targeted per pupil aid, and statewide enhanced education tax capacity aid for pupils in the public schools. We determined that the most equitable method to provide educational opportunity to our children was to target aid to those communities with low property values.

That funding mechanism took effect on July 1, 2005—barely seven months ago. Certainly, **NOW** is **NOT** the time to be changing the education funding and distribution formula on our cities

**Vote yes to ITL
HB 650-FN-L**



HB 650-FN-L

Revising education funding and distribution and establishing needs-based matching grants. It came out of the **Education Committee ITL, 14-5**. We urge you to support the committee report because:

- Contrary to what those in the minority are claiming: **this is not merely a technical correction to HB 616!**
- This bill adds a whole new targeting factor, using different criteria, on top of the five factors passed in **HB 616**, by nearly a 3 to 1 margin in the House last session.
- NH towns need time to adjust to the new formula, giving them stability and predictability.
- The Majority Office is not supporting additional education funding bills for the current biennium.

and towns—even before current law has been given a chance to work. Our municipalities need time to adjust to this formula. “Tinkering” with the education funding formula every time someone comes up with the “latest and greatest” idea, without giving current law a chance to work, is not the fiscally sound way to fund education in New Hampshire.

In the last few days, I am sure you have heard from those, who would like to see a new funding mechanism enacted, claim that this is nothing more than a *technical correction* to **HB 616-FN-L**.

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—Desk (continued from page one)

Nothing could be further from the truth. Much time and effort was spent in the last session to enact the current education funding plan—it’s time now to let that plan do its work. The Speaker has also made it clear, from day-one, that he will not support additional funding bills for the current biennium.

I ask you to vote for the stability and predictability that the current law affords our cities and towns by voting yes and supporting the committee report of **ITL on HB 650-FN-L**.

We will also have an opportunity to stand behind one of our major goals and objectives by voting to **support the Finance Committee report of OTP on HB 1370**, which transfers surplus monies into the Rainy Day Fund. Having a well-financed Rainy Day Fund is critical to the State in maintaining a strong bond rating. It will also provide us with the flexibility in addressing increased demands on the operating budget in times of unexpected needs, such as the recent heating crisis and the flooding in the southwestern part of the state. In both of these cases, the funding, of course, will come out of the current budget—not the surplus dealt with in HB 1370.

We will have a Republican caucus at 9:00 a.m. on both Wednesday and Thursday, prior to each House session. I encourage our members to make an effort to attend each caucus in preparation for the day’s vote. Finally, please remember that all legislators and legislative officers are required to complete and file the annual “Financial Disclosure Form” with the Legislative Ethics Committee no later than January 31, 2006.

HB 1370

Transferring certain surplus monies to the revenue stabilization account (Rainy Day Fund).

Finance Committee, OTP, 13-5. We support the committee report because.

- In following our own **goals and objectives**, we need to “be fiscally responsible in managing any budget surplus by first addressing the Rainy Day Fund.”
- Having a viable Rainy Day Fund is sound economic policy that will help us to maintain a strong bond rating, which in turn, will save the state and its taxpayers.
- It provides the state with the flexibility it needs to address increased demands on the operating budget in times of unexpected needs.
- If we do not have reserves ready in case of emergencies, there will be those who will attempt to enact new taxes.

HB 1222

Relative to unlawful voting. **Election Law, OTP, 11-6.** The Majority Office supports the committee report because:

- HB 1222 establishes a Class B felony for any person to vote in more than one state in the same election, eliminating certain voter fraud.
- One of the major Republican Goals & Objectives is “to ensure the integrity of the voting process,” and HB 1222 helps to maintain that integrity.
- The bill allows for the election official to mark a person as having voted in that election to serve as evidence that the person did vote, without shifting any burden of proof from the state.
- The Attorney General’s office testified in favor of this legislation.