



## GREATER MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SPONSORED BY:



ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green



POWERED BY:



SPONSOR INSIGHT

EYE ON POLITICS

EDITORIAL TEAM

CHAMBER INSIGHT

### SPONSOR INSIGHT:

The Legislature has officially reached its midpoint of the 2007 Session, known as "Crossover Day." Yesterday was the deadline for bills introduced into the House to "crossover" to the Senate, and for Senate bills to "crossover" to the House.

Among the major bills considered this past week was the **State operating budget** for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. The House passed it on to the Senate on a vote of 208-158. It increases spending by 16 percent over the current budget. To pay for the increased spending, it raises the tobacco tax by 45 cents a pack to \$1.25, increases the real estate transfer tax by 30 cents each for sellers and buyers to \$7.80 per \$1000 of sale price, and increases vehicle registration fees by \$6 for cars and light trucks.

Included in the budget bill is the **State support for education**. Manchester and area communities would see mixed results as compared to what they would get under the current funding formula. Manchester would get \$49.4 million under the new formula, compared to the \$47 million the City got this year, and \$49 million that the current formula would provide. Bedford would get \$3 million, compared to \$2.9 million this year, and \$2.4 million under the current law. Hooksett would get \$2.7 million, compared to \$2.3 million this year, and \$2.8 under the current law. Goffstown would get \$6.4 million, compared to \$5 million this year, and \$6.8 under the current law.

On a vote of 15-9, the State Senate passed the Governor's proposed **amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution** that would enable the State to target education to the communities that need it most. A majority of democrats and republicans believe that a constitutional amendment that targets education will be required to avoid the need for a broad-based tax. The debate centers on the exact wording of the amendment. Expect this issue to continue to be hotly debated in the House. Both the House and Senate must approve the amendment by a three-fifths margin of the entire membership of each body. Constitutional amendments do not require the signature of the Governor, but are passed directly to the voters for ratification at the next general election (in 2008). Voter approval must be by a two-thirds majority.

Next Tuesday, the House Commerce Committee will hear SB 42, which would **ban smoking in restaurants and cocktail lounges**. The Senate passed the bill back in February on a vote of 17-7. The House passed a similar bill last year on a vote of 189-156.

Meanwhile, yesterday the Senate passed SB 262, which would establish a committee to study the possibility of prohibiting smoking: in guest rooms, halls, ballrooms, dining rooms,

and conference rooms of hotels, motels and resorts; at outdoor events of 50 people or more; at outdoor venues with persons under the age 18 attending or expected to attend; within 50 feet of any State building; anywhere outdoors with a person under the age of 18; in enclosed places owned and operated by social, fraternal, or religious organizations; in dormitories; in resident rooms in public housing facilities, and a variety of other places. The Committee would be directed to report its findings and recommendations for future legislation by November 1, 2007.

On a vote of 231-118, the House passed on to the Senate legislation to require **health insurers to include dependents up to age 26** in family coverage policies. While this bill would expand the pool of insured people in the family market, some are concerned about the impact this may have on future costs of this type of coverage. The bill now goes to the Senate, which already passed a similar bill earlier this Session.

Henry Veilleux  
Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group

### CHAMBER INSIGHT:

---

#### 2007 Legislative Dinner Recap

On Monday April 9<sup>th</sup> the Chamber held its Annual Legislative Dinner at the Bedford Village Inn. Joining nearly 40 elected officials from the Greater Manchester region were over 100 Chamber members, including several members of the Chamber's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Attendees were treated to entertaining program featuring a moderated discussion between the new party chairs of the State Democratic and Republican Parties, Mr. Ray Buckley and Mr. Fergus Cullen. But first, Government Affairs Committee Chair Sean Owen addressed the crowd and provided an update on the work and status of the GAC committee this session. Owen recapped the Chamber's 4 main strategic objectives of Rail, Beautification and Safety, Convention Center, and Riverfront Development. He noted that of those four objectives, Commuter Rail has been the primary focus of the GAC and thus far the outlook is good with HB 311 and SB 75 progressing well. Owen closed by thanking the GAC for their hard work and dedication and asking for input from not just chamber members and the business community but also from our region's elected officials.

Next, Chamber President Robin Comstock moderated the panel discussion between Mr. Buckley and Mr. Cullen. Each party chair gave opening remarks summarizing where their party stands and their priorities going forward. Buckley and Cullen were next asked to respond to a series of questions formulated through the Chamber's committee structure. In responding to how the business community can contribute to producing good legislation, both Buckley and Cullen agreed that participation is critical. Both urged interested citizens and businesses to contact their legislators on issues of interest. Going forward, both also agreed that the business community can play a critical role in helping educate and inform the legislature on complex and new issues impacting the business community. Not surprisingly, Mr. Buckley and Mr. Cullen disagreed on several points as well. Each identified issues in which the opposing party has in their view made policy mistakes in the current or past legislative sessions. The discussion, however, ended on another issue of mutual agreement, the New Hampshire Primary. Both Buckley and Cullen stressed the need for cooperation and communication between the two parties in protecting the Primary. Both pledged the full resources of each party and to continue meeting on the subject in the coming months.

In sum, an informative and enjoyable and time was had by all! The Chamber would like to thank Anthem and PSNH for serving as sponsors. If you have feedback regarding the event, please email the chamber at [michaels@manchester-chamber.org](mailto:michaels@manchester-chamber.org).

Michael Skelton  
Director of Economic Development and Advocacy  
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce  
[michaels@manchester-chamber.org](mailto:michaels@manchester-chamber.org)

#### EYE ON POLITICS:

---

NH State Legislature [www.state.nh.us](http://www.state.nh.us)

The Union Leader [www.theunionleader.com/primaryindex.html](http://www.theunionleader.com/primaryindex.html)

NH Primary Info [www.nhprimary.com](http://www.nhprimary.com)

#### EDITORIAL TEAM:

---

##### **Brad Cook**

Sheehan, Phinney, Bass, + Green, P.A.  
1000 Elm Street  
Manchester , New Hampshire 03101  
[bcook@sheehan.com](mailto:bcook@sheehan.com)  
800-625-SPBG

##### **Valerie Acres**

Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group  
2 Eagle Square  
Concord , New Hampshire 03301  
[vacres@sheehan.com](mailto:vacres@sheehan.com)  
603-228-2370

##### **Bruce Berke**

Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group  
2 Eagle Square  
Concord , New Hampshire 03301  
[bberke@sheehan.com](mailto:bberke@sheehan.com)  
603-228-2370

##### **Henry Veilleux**

Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group  
2 Eagle Square  
Concord , New Hampshire 03301  
[hveilleux@sheehan.com](mailto:hveilleux@sheehan.com)  
603-228-2370

##### **Liz Murphy**

Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group  
2 Eagle Square  
Concord , New Hampshire 03301  
[lmurphy@sheehan.com](mailto:lmurphy@sheehan.com)

603-228-2370

**Michael Skelton**

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

889 Elm Street , Third Floor

Manchester , New Hampshire 03101

[michaels@manchester-chamber.org](mailto:michaels@manchester-chamber.org)

603-666-6600 ext. 107