



## GREATER MANCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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#### Looking back:

The good news first; **HB143** Relative to the apportionment of damages, mentioned recently in this column as the most anti-business bill introduced this year, was vetoed by the Governor. A broad coalition of business and community interests along with Attorney General Kelly Ayotte had sent a strong message to Governor Lynch. That message must stay vibrant as an effort will be made by the proponents of the bill to overturn the veto when the legislature meets next.

Some of the most unappealing bills for the business community were in fact killed. The best part of this turn of events is that any subject matter which is killed in the first session of the biennium may not be brought up again during the second year. **HB81** which would have required employers to pay 3 hours wages to any employee who was called in to work was one of these. Also killed was **HB137**, relative to food safety. If passed this bill would have required food service establishments to assign at least one full time employee to be a certified food protection manager.

Among the bills which passed that have been mentioned in this column from time to time was **SB140**, which was originally intended to allow PSNH to build new generating facilities. This bill was amended and its passage is intended to ease the siting process for small independent renewable generating facilities as well as to call attention to the need for greater transmission capabilities in the northern part of the State where several renewable generators are seeking to build. Also mentioned was **HB790**, which will require insurance companies to provide coverage for dependents up till age 26 and additionally establishes a joint legislative oversight committee on insurance expansion initiatives.

Many of the most far reaching and controversial pieces of legislation were retained in committee for more in depth study between now and November. Several of these will, if passed, mandate insurance coverage for things such as bariatric surgery for diabetics, coverage for midwives services in home births, and hormone treatment drugs for transsexuals. One bill seeks to extend medical and surgical benefits to domestic partners. These bills and many like them have the potential to raise insurance rates in NH, and legislators will be taking a closer look in an effort to determine what the real impact will be on the insured public and the business community.

In the last Capitol Insight we mentioned **HB 927** which has been signed by Governor Lynch creating a definition of an adequate education and providing for a committee of

legislators to cost out that education as defined. As that committee starts its work, the House Ways and Means Committee will hold several meetings to pour through the revenue raising initiatives that they have retained. It has been estimated that as much as \$400,000.000 will need to be raised to comply with the definition established by **HB 927**. The bill on the top of the list in Ways and Means is **HB 925** which holds within it a myriad of new and increased taxes, including:

- I. Taxes property which is not primary residential real estate at twice the rate of primary residential real estate under the local property tax.
- II. Establishes a luxury sales and use tax on motor vehicles costing \$30,000 or more and any item costing \$10,000 or more.
- III. Establishes a tax on entertainment admissions charges
- IV. Establishes a tax on gaming winnings
- V. Expands the definition of tobacco products subject to the tobacco tax
- VI. Changes the method of calculating the beer tax to a method based on price rather than volume
- VII. Establishes a tax on estates exceeding \$3,000,000
- VIII. Establishes a payroll tax on businesses with payrolls exceeding \$10,000 per week
- IX. Changes the rate of the statewide enhanced education tax
- X. Dedicates revenues from the taxes established in this bill to the education trust fund.

Last, but by far not least, the Ways and Means Committee will take a thorough look at the gambling proposals which have been brought before them this year and retained. HB 520 and HB 627 would each legalize slot machine gaming. In this regard the Committee will gather testimony, conduct a statewide poll, and review the reports of several studies that have been done here and in other states.

#### **Looking forward:**

We will see the results of the work by all the committees in the House and the Senate on these and many other retained bills. (There are 210 retained bills in the House alone). These bills must be reported out of committee by November 16 and acted on by the full body in one of the first three legislative days of 2008.

If that's not enough to keep us on our toes in Concord, the first day for filing new legislation for the 2008 session is September 10, 2007.

Liz Murphy  
Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group

#### **CHAMBER INSIGHT:**

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Chamber Insight 7-13-07

With the 2007 Legislative wrapped up its now time to look to the 2008 session and the important issues likely to face the business community...

But first, the GMCC would like to extend its thanks to those Chamber members who responded to the various Capitol Insight articles and Legislative Action Alert pertaining to HB 143. Your involvement played an important role in the Governor's veto of HB 143. The Chamber would also like to thank Governor Lynch for his careful consideration, study, and ultimate veto of HB 143. The GMCC is sure the veto of HB 143 will prove to be wise decision that will protect New Hampshire's business friendly environment.

In the last issue of *Capitol Insight* we asked for your thoughts on the important public policy issues facing New Hampshire. In case you missed it they were...

- The threat of new or increased taxes.
- The increase of the cost of doing business due to new or expanded regulatory procedures.
- The rising cost of healthcare.
- The decay of state infrastructure (roads, highways, bridges, waste water systems)
- The need for multi-modal transportation (rail, expanded public transportation)
- Energy
- The shrinking of a qualified, educated, and trained workforce. More specifically, the loss of New Hampshire's "young professionals."
- Education Funding
- Other issues?

If you haven't had the opportunity to yet, please send an email to [michaels@manchester-chamber.org](mailto:michaels@manchester-chamber.org) with your rankings and thoughts on these important issues. The Chamber's Government Affairs Committee will use your thoughts and opinions in developing the Chamber's 2008 legislative agenda.

While it's too early to identify specific issues, the 2008 session will almost certainly include several issues of great interest to the business community. The looming issue of education funding will undoubtedly be debated again and dominate the attention of legislators. Additionally, the possibility of new or increased taxes will likely be higher than in recent history. In fact, the House Ways & Means has established several subcommittees to meet over the summer to discuss the feasibility of a variety of new taxes included a sales tax, income tax, and increased business taxes. The Chamber plans to proactively monitor this issue and will continue to oppose the creation of any new or the increase of any current taxes.

In closing, the Chamber would like to extend its thanks to Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green and the Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group for once again underwriting and contributing to *Capitol Insight*. Enjoy your summer and as always please feel free to contact the Chamber with any government related questions.

Michael Skelton  
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#### EYE ON POLITICS:

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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)

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