

**New Hampshire School Boards Association  
Legislative Bulletin  
May 25, 2007**

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***Current House Bills (HB) or Senate Bills (SB) you need to know:***

**SB 88 – Public employee terms of employment, bargaining units, and continuation of pay plans**

The House Labor Committee will vote on this bill next Tuesday. A sub-committee has recommended minor revisions in a proposed amendment, but still reduces the minimum number of employees for a bargaining unit, requires the continuation of any pay plan when the contract expires (statutory evergreen clause), and adds “matters directly related to safety considerations” as items to be bargained.

**ACTION ITEM**

It is extremely important to CONTINUE sharing your opposition to SB 88 with your local representatives, as well as members of the Labor Committee ( <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/billstatus/commdetails.asp?txtcommcode=H11> ), and urge defeat of this bill. The proposed changes tip the balance of negotiations and unilaterally implement pay raises without local voter approval. The legislature already created a study committee on dispute resolution that specifically addresses the issue of evergreen clauses.

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**HB 653 & HB 876– NH State Retirement System**

Yesterday the Senate approved HB 653 addressing needed long-term reform measures for the retirement system (Entry Age Normal funding methodology and stopping the siphoning of money away from the pension fund to the special account), and also including a one-time COLA for current retirees. The version approved by the Senate differs from that of the House, setting the stage for a likely Conference Committee to address differences. Issues still to be resolved include future COLAs for retirees as well as benefits such as the medical subsidy. It is likely a Commission established in HB 876, charged with studying the financial status of the retirement system and potential challenges in the future, will address these matters.

**ACTION ITEM**

Please contact your senator and thank them for approving HB 653 and recognizing needed reforms for the fiscal integrity of NHRS. Good actuarial accounting supports the change to the Entry Age Normal methodology, providing a more accurate assessment of liabilities, and is linked to gain sharing and the need to keep money in the pension fund until an 85% funding ratio is achieved and investment returns exceed 10.5%.

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**CACR 18 – State funding of public education**

The House Finance Committee will vote on this proposed constitutional amendment next Tuesday. Numerous amendments have been offered and reviewed by the committee. Most proposals seek to allow targeting of aid with no state aid to certain communities. Proposed language also allows the legislature to be “reasonable” in determining funding needs, thus changing the Court’s standard of review from one of strict scrutiny to simply a rational basis.

**ACTION ITEM**

Please continue to voice your opposition to this bill with both your local representatives and members of the House Finance Committee (see <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/committeedetails.aspx?code=H34> ). CACR 18, as well as other proposals, seeks to fund a partial amount of adequacy and/or ignore a fundamental commitment to all children, allowing the state to say it has no obligation to certain children in our state. Funding only a partial amount of adequacy does not meet the spirit of the Claremont decisions, which have made clear the state’s commitment to all children and it’s “obligation to underwrite the cost of an adequate education for each educable child.” NHSBA resolutions numbers 4,5,6,7,&10 ([http://www.nhsba.org/about\\_resolutions.asp](http://www.nhsba.org/about_resolutions.asp) ) all address this issue, calling for full funding of all state education aid formulas and developing a distribution formula consistent with the spirit of the Claremont decisions.

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**HB 927 – Defining an Adequate Education**

The Senate Education Committee will reconvene the hearing on this bill next Tuesday. The House version includes

educational programs contained in the school approval standards (English/language arts and reading, mathematics, science, social studies, art, world languages, health, physical education and technology), also including half-day kindergarten through twelfth grade. There are requirements for maintaining, updating, improving and refining curriculum frameworks for each area of education identified in the approval standards. There is also acknowledgement that students' educational needs, and the resources required to provide the opportunity to meet those needs, varies from student to student and school to school: the resources needed to provide an adequate education will also vary, requiring more resources in districts with greater challenges. It is likely that one or more amendments will be offered, possibly addressing further clarification of resources needed for providing an adequate education.

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#### **HB 914 – Cooperative School Districts**

The Senate approved this bill yesterday, with minor revisions, establishing a committee to study issues related to cooperative school districts. The committee will study procedures for amending articles of agreement and the procedure for withdrawal from a cooperative district, including the disposition of property and other assets.

**Please review the ACTION ITEMS above and contact your local representatives, senators, and committee members TODAY to voice your concerns regarding legislative proposals. Remember that you, through NHSBA, are the only locally elected officials that “speak” exclusively for public education in NH.**

For the complete text of any bill, go to <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/billstatus/quickbill.html> and enter the bill number, e.g. HB678, SB78 or CACR18 (no spaces!), and make sure the Session Year is 2007.

For more information on specific legislation, please call Dean Michener, NHSBA Director of Governmental Affairs at 603-228-2061, or email: [deanm@nhsba.org](mailto:deanm@nhsba.org).