



January 24, 2025

Your State House

Concord, New Hampshire



To my constituents in Allenstown, Dunbarton, Epsom, & Hooksett,

This week, my committee continued hearings on our bills. My HB 216 would end the arbitrary limit of one year's time on workers comp that can apply towards one's pension service. No opposition, and the pensions system's cost estimate was *extremely* conservative: 10% of all members to gain 6 months additional service credit! Since one only gets more than a year of workers' comp time if *severely* injured on the job, I would guess it would be no more than one percent. Since this bill is going to Finance next, we voted 13-0 to recommend it, with the warning that the given cost estimate was high (but still unknown.)

My HB 134, updating the state electrical code, was supported by the electricians and not opposed by anyone; we voted 13-0 to recommend it.

HB 267, on animal chiropractors, which we'd heard last week, was also unanimously recommended to pass, as was my HB 85, on temporary licenses for student respiratory therapists. This one had a minor amendment to use the same terminology throughout the statute.

HB 428, prohibiting municipal amendments to the state building code, was more controversial. The building code review board wanted some added language to address administrative amendments, and the municipal association was worried about the loss of local control. Home builders and other contractors were in favor, since local amendments are hard to identify and often unevenly enforced. This bill went to subcommittee to work out these issues.

My HB 244, recodifying municipal enforcement of the state building code, was a request of the building code review board (BCRB) to consolidate all enforcement terminology in one statutory location. So the bill repealed sections of town and city powers, various zoning statutes, and building inspection authority, then combined them all under the state building code. Again, no opposition, but it went to subcommittee to comb through the references.

HB96, updating the state energy code (part of the building code) to the 2021 version, was more controversial. We had the supporters, including several green energy enthusiasts, and opponents, including both the home builders and other contractors. The BCRB wasn't formally opposed, but the chair mentioned that this update had failed their recommendation last year, and nothing has changed. The BCRB is in fact starting to evaluate the 2024 codes, including the energy code, as part of their regular review cycle. So the bill went to subcommittee to discuss.

HB 144, on the practice of dental hygiene, simply added a requirement that hygienists be trained before administering anesthesia. This has been the practice, but an audit caught the fact that no statute actually required it. It was recommended to pass on a 12-0 vote.

HB 145 added a criminal background check for dietitians and adopted the new interstate licensure compact for them. Quite a few dietitians spoke in favor of the compact; the criminal records check was explained as necessary to join the compact. The state police officer in charge of background checks testified that they are currently processing background checks in a timely manner, but the FBI insists on reviewing any new request for their criminal records and commonly takes months to do so. On that issue, the bill went to subcommittee.



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My HB 214, which is mostly statutory cleanup for recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners, ran into the same issue. Recreational therapists had required background checks while they were part of the allied health board, but this bill had new language to require it again. Respiratory care had a new criminal records check, a request of the OPLC, as they are instituting them for all health care professions with direct patient contact. I'm not actually sure I agree with that, but will tweak the language for the recreational therapists, at least, to suit the FBI's preference.

HB 227 would eliminate an exemption to licensure for psychotherapy practiced by state or local governments. Seems obvious, but it went to subcommittee to get some data on the actual usage of this exemption.

HB 236 would grant an specific title for retired CPAs; I'm not sure it needs to be in law, but the national organization has been pushing for it because they have also imposed many legal restriction on the use of the term "CPA." They want it, and most of the committee was willing to indulge them. The vote was 11-1, with me being the only holdout.

Finally, we finished with over two hours on HB 349, granting optometrists the authority to perform three laser procedures (and only these specific procedures.) As expected, the ophthalmologists came out in force to oppose it, and the opticians were in favor. It was very interesting that the two sides had very different data on the type of training optometrists got in these procedures... Off to subcommittee!

I was interested to note that the optometrist scope of practice is spelled out in statute, while other professions have it defined by the board. We

wouldn't dare tell a doctor (or a physician assistant or massage therapist, either) what was allowed and what wasn't.

Bills are still being released to committees, but it still seems to be a light workload for ED&A. Of course, if the governor chooses to put a lot of organizational (or pension system, as I've heard) changes into her budget, we may get a lot of HB2 as we did last budget. (HB2 is the statutory changes required to accomplish the budget – numbers alone are in HB1.)



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