



Legislative Update  
For the week ending January 25, 2008

**3% MEALS & ROOMS TAX REIMBURSEMENT:** This Tuesday, January 29, the House Ways & Means Committee will hear on [HB 1369](#), which would reduce the percentage amount our industry may retain as compensation for collecting the meals and rooms tax from 3% to 1.5%, up to a maximum of \$100 per month. It would decrease the total compensation provided to our industry from \$6.5 million to \$1.9 million, which is a loss of \$4.6 million. If enacted, it would take effect on July 1, 2008. NHLRA Government Affairs Committee Chairperson Nancy Henderson will testify in opposition to the bill on behalf of the association. **NHLRA urges members to contact House Ways & Means Committee members before the January 29 hearing to urge them to defeat the bill.** [Click here](#) for talking points and contact info of committee members.

**MISUSE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS:** The House Judiciary Committee has voted 12-5 to recommend that the House kill [HB 1534](#). The bill would allow any person whose social security number has been fraudulently used by another for identification purposes to sue the person who misused the number; any person who supplied or aided in obtaining the false social security documentation; and an employer who should have known the documentation was false. The full House will vote on the bill sometime in February.

**HAPPY HOURS AND LIQUOR ADVERTISING:** On Thursday, February 7 at 11:00 a.m. the House Commerce Committee will hear [HB 1197](#), which would eliminate the current restrictions on advertising "happy hours." Under current law, no liquor licensee can run advertising that references a "happy hour." The licensee may, however, post a happy hour schedule within the premises, not in any view of the public way. This bill would enable liquor licensees to advertise happy hours in any manner they deem appropriate. Meanwhile, at 11:30 am the Commerce Committee will hear [HB 1237](#), which would establish a committee to study liquor advertising.

**SMOKING IN RESTAURANTS AND BARS:** On Thursday, February 14 the House Commerce Committee will hear two bills to change the new restaurant smoking ban. At 1:15 pm they will hear [HB 1421](#), which would allow smoking in restaurants where more than 50 percent of their income is derived from the sale of cigars. At 1:45 the committee will hear [HB 1457](#), which would allow smoking in bars where 60 percent of the income is derived from tobacco and tobacco-related products.

**EXPANDED GAMBLING:** On Tuesday, February 19 at 8:30 am, the Senate Ways & Means Committee will hear two proposals to expand gambling in New Hampshire. [SB 330](#) would allow video slot machines at the State's racetracks in Salem, Belmont, Hinsdale, and Seabrook. Meanwhile, [SB 306](#) would allow video slots at horse racetracks; hotels with at least 140 rentable

rooms in Coos County; and at grand hotels with at least 195 rentable rooms and an 18-hole golf course in Coos County. In addition, this past Wednesday, the House voted 190-110 to send HB 886 to further study. This bill would have established a North Country Gaming Area where up to 3 casinos would be allowed to operate.

**ALLOWING LIQUOR AND WINE MANUFACTURERS AND SALES REPRESENTATIVES TO HAVE INTERESTS IN RESTAURANTS:** On Tuesday, February 7 at 10:00 a.m. the House Commerce Committee will hear [HB 1177](#), which would eliminate the prohibition on liquor and wine manufacturers, liquor and wine vendors, and liquor and wine representatives having an interest in the business of a holder of an on-premise liquor license.

**PROHIBITING THE START OF SCHOOL UNTIL AFTER LABOR DAY:** On Tuesday, February 12 at 2:00 pm, the House Education Committee will hear [HB 1489](#), which would prohibit the start of public school until after Labor Day.

For more information on these or other governmental matters, feel free to contact NHLRA's lobbyist, [Henry Veilleux](#) of Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group at 603-228-2370. You may also visit website of the [New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association](#) or contact [Michelline Dufort](#) at 603-228-9585.