



Legislative Update
For the week ending February 1, 2008

THE COST OF AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION: After more than 6 months of speculation on how much more money it will cost the State to fund an adequate education, a committee charged with determining such cost has come out with a report that says the cost is pretty much what the State is spending now. Six months ago pundits were saying that it will cost the State around \$400 million more dollars to fund an adequate education. The State currently provides \$897 million to communities to help pay for education. The costing committee's figure of an adequate education is \$900 million. This certainly will take a lot of wind out of the sails for expanded gambling.

3% MEALS & ROOMS TAX REIMBURSEMENT: This past Tuesday the House Ways & Means Committee heard [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 did a great job testify in opposition to the bill on behalf of the association. **NHLRA urges members to contact House Ways & Means Committee members NOW 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 15-3 to recommend that the House send [HB 1534](#) to interim study. 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 this Wednesday, February 6.

BOTTLE BILL: The House Environment Committee has voted unanimously to recommend that the House should kill legislation to establish a 5-cent refundable deposit on beverage containers. Often referred to as a "bottle bill," [HB 1621](#) is modeled after refundable deposit programs in other New England states. The Committee is giving the green light, however, to another piece of legislation that would establish a 1-cent beverage container fee to be paid by a beverage manufacturer, wholesaler, or wholesale distributor upon the first sale of a beverage in this state. Taxable beverages would include carbonated drinks, fruit juices, and bottled water. Milk, wine and liquor would not be taxed. The funds raised from this fee would go towards improving recycling in the state. The full House will vote on the bill next Wednesday, February 6.

SCHOOL FUNDING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: On Tuesday, February 12 the Senate Judiciary Committee will hear the different constitutional amendments to allow the state to target school funding. NHLRA supports a targeted aid constitutional amendment.

SINGLE LIQUOR COMMISSIONER: On Tuesday, February 5 at 9:40 am and on Thursday, February 7 at 9:00 am, a subcommittee of the House Executive Departments & Administration Committee will have work sessions on [HB 1552](#), which would replace the 3-member Liquor Commission with a single Liquor Commissioner.

DO NOT MAIL REGISTRY: The House Commerce Committee has voted 14-1 to recommend killing [HB 1506](#), which would establish a “do-not-mail” registry, similar to the current “do-not-call” list. Under [HB 1506](#), businesses could not send a direct mail piece to anyone who has not visited the establishment within the last three months and who has notified the Justice department that they do not wish to receive solicitations in the mail. The penalty for doing so would be a fine of up to \$500. Businesses would have to check the list in the Department of Justice every month and cross reference it with their own mailing list. The full House will vote on the bill this Wednesday, February 6.

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.

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.