



Legislative Update
For the week ending April 4, 2008

The NHLRA is pleased that our members and partner organizations find the information in our weekly Legislative Updates useful and a guide to current legislative matters that affect our industry. When recipients chose to share this information, we find it helpful in allowing us to reach more individuals regularly. For those groups that do forward our updates to their constituents, please identify and accredit the NHLRA so we may be able to best serve those who would like more information, details and possible follow ups.

STANDARD WELLNESS PLANS FOR SMALL EMPLOYERS: On Thursday, April 10 at 1:00 pm the House Commerce Committee will hear Governor Lynch's proposal to require health insurers to offer small employers a standard wellness plan that emphasizes prevention, management of chronic conditions and the use of best practices. Small employers are currently defined as employers with 1 to 50 employees. [SB 540](#) will also limit the rates that insurers could charge for such plans. While the goal of this legislation is to reduce health insurance premiums for small employers, critics worry that the rate caps could force insurers to shift costs from small employers to other segments of the employer marketplace.

LIQUOR LEGISLATION: Several liquor-related bills that have already passed the House are now awaiting hearing dates in the Senate Commerce Committee. These bills include [HB 432](#), which would establish a new tavern license; [HB 1197](#), which would eliminate restrictions on "happy hour" advertising; and [HB 1242](#), which would clarify that musicians are not to be considered "employees" of an establishment and therefore not prohibited from consuming alcohol while working. None of these bills will be heard next week. [HB 432](#) must be heard and voted upon by the Senate Commerce Committee by May 1, while [HB 1197](#) and [HB 1242](#) must be heard and voted upon by the Committee by May 15.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR PART-TIME WORKERS: On Tuesday, April 8 at 11:30 am the House Labor Committee will vote on [SB 502](#), which would enable workers who are laid off and only seeking part-time work to collect unemployment benefits. Under current law, only people who are searching for full-time work can collect unemployment benefits. [SB 502](#) states that any claim for unemployment benefits by someone only seeking part-time work shall be based on wages earned in part-time. This provision may be problematic for the department and employers, as employers do not currently report wages as being earned in a full-time or part-time capacity. The format in which employers report wages to the Department of Employment Security may have to be expanded in order for the Department to implement this provision. This bill could increase the unemployment tax rate of businesses that tend to employ part-time workers.

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.

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