

GREATER NASHUA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# THE CHAMBER

## THE "BOTTOM LINE" LEGISLATIVE REPORT

A Weekly Report From the Chamber on Issues Affecting You in the State Capital

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Issue #6

### TIME FOR A BREAK - CATCH OUR BREATH

As the Senators and Representatives enjoy this weeks mid winter break, we are taking stock of legislation that is still standing and what has gone to rest after the frantic first 6 weeks of legislative battle.

**Labor.** You can still stay late and go in early to work. **HB 1139**, requiring the passage of at least 10 hours before any employee may be required to work again, has been killed by the House Labor Committee. Our guess is the full House will also decide not to weigh in on how much sleep one needs. Defeating this bill was a top priority of the Chamber as it would have wide ranging implications for all of our members.

**HB 1138**, which has been amended to require employers to pay for a minimum of 3 hours in wages - up from 2 - to an employee called into work. The House Labor Committee vote was 8-7, so expect a vigorous floor fight on this one after the vacation week. The Chamber will continue to advocate for a 2 hour minimum as the law currently proscribes.

**Breach of Personal Information.** All of the various bills dealing with security breaches have been consolidated into HB 1660. This legislation received significant scrutiny during sub-committee and went to the floor of House much improved. It allows businesses the flexibility to notify their customers of a breach in a variety of ways which will not place too great a financial burden on the business. Unfortunately, a floor amendment changed the length of time that a business has to begin notification and determine the significance of a security breach from 15 days down to 3 days. The Chamber's position on this legislation is that, many times determining that a breach has occurred and what the extent of it has been, can take a lot of time and that 15 business days is far better than 3.

**More Money For Some.** With business taxes, among others, generating millions more revenue than expected the legislature is considering ways to spend this money. The House as already voted to appropriate 30.5 million dollars to the Rainy Day fund and is considering spending up to another 30-35 million on various projects either not funded adequately in the '05 budget session or for special needs that have arisen. Some of this money is proposed to go to:

- Home Heating Fuel Assistance - \$10 million;
- LCHIP(Land and Conservation Heritage Investment Program) - \$5 million;
- Fuel cost increases - \$3 million;
- Home Care/DD(developmental disabilities) providers pay increase - \$3.3 million;
- Regional community technical colleges - \$1.2 million;
- Increased fuel and utility cost for HHS(Health and Human Services) providers - \$2.4 million.
- Disaster Relief and Alstead Flooding - \$5+ million

Tops among these special spending considerations is a one time \$500 credit for NH businesses as proposed by Senator Chuck Morse of Salem. With far more spending options than dollars to spend how to divide up this unexpected revenue will be on the top of the agenda when the legislature reconvenes.

**Discrimination Bill. SB 273**, which requires employers to make a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability if they are otherwise qualified for the job, providing the accommodation would not pose an undue hardship on the employer, passed the Senate Banks Committee. The legislation, unlike the bill that failed last year, defines reasonable accommodation, undue hardship, and qualified individual with a disability. The language is believed to be broad enough to be accommodating to small employers. A point of concern for the Chamber is the implication of creating yet another jurisdictional opportunity for those who would rather take their chances in a state court rather than the federal courts.

Please contact Teresa Rosenberger, Devine, Millimet - (603) 410-1705, or Chris Hodgdon, Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce - (603) 881-8333, if you have any questions.