

APRIL 9, 2026



2026 Legislative Half Time Update

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The information and materials presented in NHMA's events is accurate as of the date of the presentation. NHMA's training events do not constitute legal advice. For legal advice, city and town officials may contact Legal Services at legalinquiries@nhmunicipal.org or their own municipality's legal counsel. Please refer to [NHMA's Legal Services FAQ](#) for details about how our service works. For Government Finance Advice, please contact financeinquiries@nhmunicipal.org.

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AGENDA

- Crossover Status Report
- Hot Topics
- Updates on Key Bills
- First-Half Wins
- Stay Engaged



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Crossover Status Report

Bills NHMA is following:

- Total—362
 - Support—91
 - Oppose—124
- Active—154
- Killed/Interim Study—193
- Tabled—15
- Signed into law—3

1163 LSRs
filed

More than 90
LSRs
withdrawn or
8% of all bills
filed.

362 bills
tracked by
NHMA

One-third of
all bills filed
had a
municipal
component

As of 3/31/26

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Balance of Power

Governor

Republican

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/>

Executive Council

4 Republicans, 1 Democrat

<https://www.council.nh.gov/>

Senate

16 Republicans and 8 Democrats

<https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/senate/>

House of Representatives (3/31/26)

214 Republicans, 178 Democrats, 1 Independent and 7 Vacant Seats

<https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/>

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Hot Topics in 2026



- Municipal Operations
- Risk Pools
- Town Meeting/Elections
 - SB 2 Towns
- Zoning and Land Use

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Municipal Operations

HB 348: Allows municipalities to adopt an optional proof of residency requirement as part of their local welfare guidelines; requires welfare guidelines based on local market costs (support)

HB 1064: Expands municipal liability, increases damage caps, and mandates indemnification of employees (oppose)

HB 1184: Relative to issuing no trespass orders (oppose)

HB 1788: Prohibits political subdivisions from entering into or renewing any contract that includes DEI provisions and empowers any “citizen” to bring a cause of action over alleged violations (oppose)

SB 441: Requires a municipality that intends to transport a homeless individual to another municipality for shelter and substance use disorder treatment to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the receiving municipality prior to transport. (oppose)

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Risk Pools

Risk pools are created to shift risk from an individual political subdivision to the pool. Across the country, two primary types of risk pools exist: assessable and non-assessable. The Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRIP) recognizes both models.

SB 661 (oppose)

- Introduces assessable risk pools into the NH statutory scheme as the **only** allowable model
- Subjects risk pool members to potential unbudgeted, mid-year assessments

HB 1491 (support)

- Introduces assessable risk pools into the statutory scheme, but as an alternative to non-assessable pools; assessable pools remain under Secretary of State; non-assessable pools shift to Department of Insurance
- Pending Senate amendment

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Town Meeting/Elections

[HB 340](#): Updates the statute regarding electioneering by public employees (oppose)

[HB 686](#): Expands the definition of electioneering to prevent public bodies and public employees from seeking input via surveys, polls, or questionnaires (oppose)

[HB 1131](#): Changes the process for adopting the SB 2 form of town meetings (oppose)

[HB 1137](#): Makes the representative of the governing body on the municipal budget committee an ex-officio, non-voting member (oppose)

[HB 1309](#): Relative to town meeting warrants (oppose)

[HB 1526](#): Relative to the adoption of a municipal budget committee and electing members thereof (oppose)

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Official Ballot (SB 2)

[HB 1224](#): Makes major changes to default budget calculation (oppose)

[HB 1355](#): Eliminates the default budget in SB 2 towns and prohibits amendments to change to the purpose of a petitioned warrant article (oppose)

[HB 1575](#): Mandates that the budget committee determine the default budget, rather than the governing body (oppose)

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Land Use/Zoning

SB 435: Clarifies the criteria a ZBA must consider when reviewing a variance request by replacing “unnecessary hardship” with “unreasonable restriction” (support)

SB 439: Allows data centers in commercial or industrial zones, subject to local land use regulations (oppose)

SB 508: Requires municipalities to stamp and accept revised plans submitted by an applicant within 10 business days of submission and requiring all grounds for an appeal to a ZBA to be stated in the initial notice. (oppose)

SB 564: Prohibits municipalities from placing limits on maximum length or number of housing lots on a dead-end roads (oppose)

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Land Use/Zoning

HB 1010: Gives municipalities more authority to review the potential impacts of proposed multi-family projects in commercial zones on infrastructure (support)

HB 1079: Allowing accessory dwelling units to be built within or attached to certain non-conforming structures (oppose)

HB 1195: Overrides local zoning ordinances related to in-home and commercial childcare in favor of state rulemaking; allows commercial childcare by right in all commercial zones and some industrial facilities; and exempts most facilities from local site plan review (oppose)

HB 1196: Repeals Housing Champions program (oppose)

HB 1681: Enables municipalities to allow tiny houses and yurts as innovative housing structures (oppose due to technical defects)

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Other Bills

HB 164: Authorizes the state to create and maintain a website for electronic records and allows municipalities to store electronic records on the website (support)

HB 1602: Creates a manufacturer-funded, third-party battery-recycling program for specific types of batteries (support)

SB 538: Extends the eligibility terms for municipal energy projects to receive net metering compensation under alternative tariffs approved by the Public Utilities Commission (support)

SB 593: Addresses loophole in the solid waste surcharge enacted last year that inadvertently left solid waste districts out of state rebate process (support)

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No Changes in 2026

Right-to-Know Law: **SB 626**, an NHMA-supported effort to reduce “fishing expedition” requests from out-of-state vendors or AI bots, was tabled.

Retirement system: No NHRS-related legislation advanced in either chamber this year.

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First Half Wins

- No changes to meals and rooms tax local distribution formula
- No automatic tax cap referendums or restrictions on bonding for cities and towns
- Pair of bills taking aim at NHMA's ability to advocate and at member municipalities' ability to govern the organization died in the House; a similar bill held over from last year was also killed
- Attempt to give employees the right to bargain individually failed
- Onerous incompatibility of office bill that would make it harder for small towns to fill vacancies was killed

Thank you for helping NHMA on these issues!

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Connect With Us

Legislative Bulletin

NHMA's weekly *Legislative Bulletin* is published every Friday during the session, with a final edition in late summer.

Members can subscribe to the emailed Bulletin through our member portal at:

<https://nhmunicipal.weblinkconnect.com/portal>

- Once you are logged in, click "edit this profile" and "newsletter management." You can sign up for the Legislative Bulletin, *Newslink*, and *Town & City* magazine in one place!

Priority Bill Alerts

Throughout the legislative session, NHMA also sends out priority bill alerts asking members to take action on specific bills coming up for a hearing or a vote.

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Fast Democracy

ALL BILLS NHMA Supports NHMA Opposes

Bills by Topic:

Municipal Managers, Administrators, Select Boards And Councils Planning / Zoning / Land Use

Right-To-Know State Aid MUNICIPAL BUDGET PROPERTY TAX

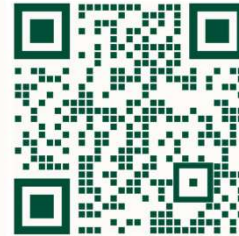
RETIREMENT Education Funding TAX COLLECTORS TRUSTEE OF THE TRUST FUND

HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS / LABOR LAW Information Technology LIBRARIES

LOCAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION MODERATORS AND OTHER ELECTION OFFICIALS

Conservation Commission Energy PUBLIC HEALTH PUBLIC SAFETY

PUBLIC WORKS Finance - All Bills SOLID WASTE TOWN AND CITY CLERKS



[NHMA Bill Tracker: FastDemocracy](#)

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What Can I Do?

Speak	Speak to your local legislators by phone or in person.
Invite	Invite your local legislators to a select board, council, or aldermen meeting.
Tell	Tell your constituents about important bills and explain their impact.
Write	Write a letter or a commentary to send to local media outlets.
Share	Share your concerns about specific bills or issues with the Governor's office.
Talk	Talk to NHMA to get additional background on these bills.
Attend	Attend the public hearings on bills important to your municipality and sign up to testify.

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Email: advocacy@nhmunicipal.org

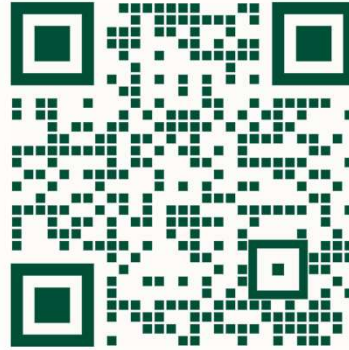
Address: 25 Triangle Park Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Members of the NHMA Government Affairs staff follow several hundred bills of interest to municipalities during each legislative session. They draft legislation to carry out NHMA's legislative policies, monitor legislative hearings, testify on bills when appropriate, and work individually with legislators and local officials throughout the process. The staff also follows numerous study committees, commissions, boards, and state administrative agencies, commenting on and assisting in the development of proposed agency rules. On occasion, staff members also work with New Hampshire's U.S. congressional delegation on federal legislation affecting municipalities.

Every Friday during the legislative session, the Government Affairs staff publishes the Legislative Bulletin, which notifies local officials of upcoming hearings, votes on important issues, and details of legislative activity during the past week, along with methods of contacting legislators on bills of municipal importance. Contact the Government Affairs department to add your name to our Legislative Bulletin distribution list.

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MEMBER FEEDBACK



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THANK YOU!

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CONTACT NHMA

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Our Vision

NHMA is known as the premier source of information and support needed for town and city officials to effectively serve the public.

Our Mission

NHMA supports effective municipal government by leveraging the collaborative strengths of New Hampshire cities and towns through education, training, advocacy, and legal services.

Our History

The New Hampshire Municipal Association, Inc. (NHMA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization of municipalities. Founded in 1941 for the purpose of exchanging information to facilitate more efficient and effective local government, NHMA was reorganized in July 2003 under the umbrella of the New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC). At that time all services provided to municipalities by NHMA were assumed by LGC except legislative advocacy, which remained in NHMA LLC, a separate subsidiary of LGC. In the fall of 2012 all "traditional municipal league services" including legislative advocacy, legal advisory services, training programs, and educational publications, were consolidated under NHMA with oversight by the NHMA Board of Directors. Currently, NHMA, Inc. operates as a totally separate, independent organization from the former LGC risk pools (HealthTrust, Inc. and Property Liability Trust, Inc.) with a board comprising only elected and appointed municipal officials elected by NHMA members.

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