

To: Dover City Council

From: Dorothea Hooper, Councilor Ward 4

Re: Legislative Update

HB1266 would give towns the option to appoint a town clerk (now they are elected). Cities now do this. This would enable towns to make a choice. It was to be voted on Feb. 6th but moved to the 12th due to inclement weather. While this bill would not affect Dover, it should be noted that there is another attempt to legislate a residency requirement for city clerks that would affect Dover.

Two separate bills are scheduled to be heard that would reduce property tax exemption for pollution control.

An agreement was reached in the Senate concerning the expansion of Medicaid.

Several dog bills have gone through the Municipal Government Committee concerning dogs. One would have the town clerks (rather than tax assessors) compile the list of dogs in the community. The other would raise the penalty for failing to register your dog.

A hot issue has been HB 1589 which calls for expanded background checks for gun purchases.

A bill passed the House allowing children of undocumented immigrants to attend college under the resident rate under certain conditions (one of which is to start the process of obtaining citizenship).

HB 1573-FN was an attempt to discontinue regional planning commissions and requiring the election of municipal planning boards. (ITL in committee).

Another bill would permit the municipal law enforcement agency to collect unwanted guns. (ITL in committee).

The House voted to extend the hours that restaurants and bars could serve liquor.

While some of these bills were killed in committee, they still go before the total House. Usually the vote upholds the committee as these are the people who have done all the research. Some, however, are such hot issues that they are heavily debated on the floor (ie. gun law). If passed by the House they still must go to the Senate and finally on the Governor's desk.

You can follow House sessions on their website as the meetings are streamed for viewing. They meet every Wednesday at 10 a.m. In addition, each bill can be found on the website and votes are recorded.